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PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENTS IN MARTIN DE CARETAS

by

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B.A., University Of Victoria, 1977

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Department Of Hispanic And Italian Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1984

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Abstract

Martín de Caretas is a trilogy of novels richly endowed with literary and philosophical elements stemming from such varied sources as the Old Testament, the picaresque, Cervantes, Galdós and Baroja. In writing Martín de Caretas, Sebastián Juan Arbó avails himself of certain superficially picaresque features which serve not so much to constitute a modern adaptation of the picaresque novel as to portray cultural and social conditions for a uniquely twentieth century protagonist with timeless human characteristics. The same can be said for the author's apparent recourse to Old Testament wisdom from the book of Ecclesiastes which, like the true picaresque, gives us a pessimistic view of man's condition on earth.

The ultimate effect of Martín de Caretas is one of transcending such a pessimistic view of life on earth, ironically with the aid of elements of the wisdom from Ecclesiastes and the general ideological climate in which existentialism had come to exert considerable influence. Both the author of Ecclesiastes and the humanistic existentialists were essentially optimistic about man's potential for psychic well-being in spite of life's negative qualities. This contrasts with Arbó's earlier Catalan narratives about harsh rural life and its determination of the character of rustic people, in which one sees only the superficial pessimistic qualities associated with existentialism. Arbó, then, leads his young protagonist through an extended series of episodic adventures through which he develops as a responsible,

autonomous man over the impediments posed not so much by the inscrutable vicissitudes of life, but by well meaning adults seeking to guide him.

An ideological/formal study of these mentors and their function would embrace the aforementioned Old Testament wisdom, existential thought and picaresque features that contribute to the uniqueness of Martín de Caretas. The tripartite structure of the work affords further potential for the study of time, space (landscape) and money as constituent elements of Arbó's philosophical intention. This thesis proposes that a study of such elements may reveal that the author composed Martín de Caretas with a preconceived philosophical scheme or that, as a novelist, he was merely responding to the existing philosophical and literary climate of the time.

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Acknowledgement

My thanks must go first to my supervisor, Dr. Arsenio Pacheco, for inciting my interest in Catalan culture and letters, and for directing me along such a fascinating path of enquiry. I am also grateful to Dr. Derek C. Carr, who gave freely of his time and rendered valuable assistance in a variety of capacities too numerous to mention. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Lynne Marie Quarmby, my typist and computer consultant, without whose assistance this thesis would not exist in its present form. Finally, I wish to thank the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies, University of British Columbia, for financial support in the form of teaching assistantships.

I. A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE MODERN SPANISH NOVEL

In spite of a certain thematic continuity throughout his entire literary endeavor, Sebastián Juan Arbó has been a challenging subject for literary critics: as a bilingual writer, his work is rarely considered as a whole body, the Catalan novels being evaluated independently of his fiction in Castilian and vice versa. Also, his long and distinguished career in letters has spanned several recognized periods in the development of the Spanish novel in the twentieth century, showing stylistic consistency throughout. His devotion to realism is partially responsible for critical controversy regarding his place in the landscape of the contemporary novel and novelists: realism is recognized as a movement of singular and profound consequence for the twentieth-century Spanish novel. A dominant literary movement in the nineteenth century, its early reappearance in the 1930's underlines its function as a reaction to the state of creative fiction. Given Arbó's realist nature and his affinity with other novelistic tendencies of the previous century, a review of major currents in the novel's development through the late nineteenth and twentieth century would help us to define this author's unique place in that scheme, and in turn would aid in our evaluation of his work.

The following survey is by no means definitive: it is a selective, composite description, drawn mainly from historical works by Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Eugenio de Nora and Gonzalo Sobejano, which merely seeks to provide background and an

appropriate perspective for a critical analysis of Arbó's fiction.

Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, in his Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea, cites the advent of realism in Spain as an exception to the nation's customary tardiness in assimilating and responding to cultural trends from Europe: "El realismo decimonónico aparece en España, primero como realismo costumbrista puro, y, más tarde, como narración realista; el retraso de esas primeras manifestaciones en relación con el realismo europeo es muy relativo."¹ As examples he mentions Mesonero Romanos' Escenas matritenses and Fernán Caballero's La Gaviota, which roughly coincide with Dickens' Pickwick Papers and Thackeray's Vanity Fair. However, Torrente Ballester adds, "Lo que sucede es que los frutos valiosos de este realismo prematuro se retrasan hasta después de 1870, cuando ya Zola ha publicado Thérèse Raquin (1867) . . . es decir, en pleno auge del naturalismo"(p. 20). Torrente Ballester differentiates between this "realismo prematuro" -- that of Fernán Caballero, for example -- and what was later to be practiced by the likes of Galdós and Pereda. He characterizes La Gaviota as a "Spanish" realist narrative whose intention is to present a convincing and accurate portrait of Spanish life and culture. While this might appear mere costumbrismo, Torrente Ballester emphasizes the pioneering importance of "la decisión de tomar la realidad inmediata como materia literaria y, sobre todo, el modo de tomarla"(p. 21).

To Fernán Caballero, pseudonym for Cecilia Böhl de Faber,

Torrente Ballester attributes the comment that "la novela no se inventa, se observa." This remark is the basis for his commentary on what he believes to be a critical flaw in the burgeoning of Spanish realism late in the century. In comparing Fernán Caballero and Galdós, he speaks of the latter as having suffered the influence of positivism: "Es un realismo positivista, y este matiz permite diferenciarlo del realismo español, que es otra cosa"(p. 20). His criticism of "positivist realism" is couched in a definition of "traditional realism:"

"La novela no se inventa, se observa." He aquí una fértil profesión de fe. No la siguen a rajatabla, ni mucho menos, Alarcón o Valera; pero sí con bastante rigor, Pereda, Galdós, y los demás realistas y los naturalistas. Conviene decir aquí que la fórmula no corresponde a la del realismo tradicional, si como tal se entiende el de Cervantes. El realismo tradicional, no sólo no ha descartado jamás la imaginación sino que ha hecho de ella la columna central del edificio novelesco. Tampoco ha trabajado de preferencia con materia observada (en el sentido positivista), sino con materia experimentada, vivida Al reducirse a "lo observado," la señora B. de Faber hizo un flaco servicio a las letras españolas. No se le culpe, sin embargo, de manera exclusiva: el prejuicio lo recibió Galdós, probablemente, por otros conductos" (p. x)

Torrente Ballester goes on to say in a footnote that strict adherence to observed phenomena as novelistic material would be insufficient to produce a good novel, hence his disapproving attitude toward writers with positivist tendencies. With this he touches upon one of the major controversies concerning the advent of realism in the course of the nineteenth-century novel;

that is, the manner of representation of "reality" as fictional material. The idealistic costumbristas eschewed the baseness of reality to offer instead some moral edification and preservation of uniquely Spanish customs. They also objected to Romanticism -- the prevailing literary school during the incipience of costumbrismo -- for its "indifference to observed contemporary reality", ² its universal character and its perceived immorality. Of this period D.L. Shaw says that "the general view was that the presentation of unembellished reality would be depressing, unartistic, and probably immoral."³

Following this realism/idealism polemic, there emerges another concerning naturalism, which Torrente Ballester seems to reflect in the above quotation. While he appears to indict Galdós along with Fernán Caballero for relying too heavily on observed reality, Shaw credits Galdós (and Clarín) with effecting significant innovations in the development of realism in the nineteenth-century novel:

It is clear . . . that before and perhaps during the seventies, the idea of depicting reality as objectively as possible without either moral or aesthetic embellishments . . . had hardly been granted serious consideration. When it was not dismissed as unartistic, it was attacked as immoral. With the advent of the mature work of Galdós and Clarín, this ideal, without perhaps prevailing completely, came appreciably closer to realisation."⁴

Thus, while Galdós may have "suffered the influence of positivism", he thought of himself "not as a specialist in one branch of human behavior but as the creator of a total fictional

world drawn from direct observation of reality".⁵ In this case, too strict a comparison between the pioneering realist and the likes of Fernán Caballero would seem inappropriate.

In his chronology of realism and naturalism in Spain, Torrente Ballester limits the most characteristic products of the movement to a period between 1874 and 1890, a period in which he sees certain features of Romanticism and idealism coexisting with works by Galdós and Clarín. With the proximity of the urgent literary renovation brought about by modernism and the Generation of '98, it is not surprising that this period is not considered one of the most glorious for Spanish literature. As a movement of short duration and dubious purity, and being inspired essentially by sources alien to Hispanic experience, it still established a certain precedent for writers of the next century.

To complete the picture of the movement, Torrente Ballester asserts that the naturalists were so called "capriciously," and that they bore little resemblance to the example of Zola:

Jamás escribió nadie en España novelas experimentales, ni partió, para concebirlas, de una tesis científica, ni creyó a sus personajes conducidos por una necesidad psicológica, fisiológica o material, ni por una tara hereditaria, ni por nada que suponga determinismo.
(p. 25)

In addition, he gives us the following definition of nineteenth-century realist endeavor:

El propósito es comunicar la realidad en su verdadera consistencia por medio de un artificio novelesco; no, como en el caso de "Fernán Caballero," para ofrecerlo

al "qué dirán" extranjero, sino más bien para revelar lo que se oculta bajo la apariencia más superficial, para descubrir el envés de la realidad aparente; y no con propósitos metafísicos, sino, según se dijo, sociológicos, históricos y morales.(p. 24)

These assertions are particularly germane to the subject of this thesis. When we come to consider the nature of Sebastián Juan Arbó's fiction, and Martín de Caretas in particular these assertions would certainly help to refute, or at least temper, critical accusations that Arbó is merely a mimetic hold-over from the nineteenth century.

After the monumental renewal of Spanish letters wrought by modernism and the Generation of '98, the most direct challenge to realism arrived from abroad after the First World War in the form of vanguardism, a movement referred to by Gonzalo Sobejano as "el torbellino de la vanguardia europea, cuyo signo es enemigo de todo realismo."⁶ Eugenio de Nora, whose study of the contemporary novel is based primarily on the theory of generations and the influence of generational factors, introduces us to the awakening of this period in a chapter of his masterful La novela española contemporánea entitled "Aspectos de la novela intelectual." This chapter deals with a group of secondary authors, born around 1880, which includes the likes of Eugenio D'Ors and Salvador de Madariaga. In acknowledging the contribution of the major representatives of this movement, namely Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Wenceslao Fernández Flórez and Gabriel Miró, Nora cites certain characteristics, some of which are reminiscent of previous generations. When he

tells us that "la promoción literaria típica y cronológicamente 'novecentista' . . . ofrece en España . . . un matiz marcadamente intelectual, o incluso intelectualista,"⁷ we might consider the possibility of Unamuno's legacy. Nora himself describes Miró as "una figura casi rezagada . . . del modernismo." (II,i; p. 40). Turning then to common features of the prose of the aforementioned secondary writers, we recognize qualities resembling certain aspects of modernism and noventayochentismo, to wit:

imperativos intelectuales, morales o políticos, se sobreponen aquí a la "espontaneidad" del relato [e.g. Unamuno's Niebla];⁸ aparecen, en consonancia, formas narrativas poco o nada "ortodoxas" . . . [y] cierto alarde o complacencia en el dominio de la prosa por sí misma, de los más refinados recursos literarios, como si la narración fuera un alegre y deportivo campo de vacación y deporte de un cerebro habitualmente más grave y más altamente preocupado [this is at least marginally related to some modernist prose]. (II,i; p. 41)

Much of this, particularly the "formas narrativas poco o nada ortodoxas" would seem appropriate stages on the path to vanguardism. The advent and acceptance of the avant-garde in literature, which accompanied similar innovations in music and the plastic arts, was interpreted and expounded upon by José Ortega y Gasset in La deshumanización del arte and Ideas sobre la novela. Ortega came to be regarded as the spokesman for the vanguardist movement in Spain, and his lucid exposition of the characteristics of the "new art" is contrasted by a generally disapproving attitude on the part of certain critics who regarded the avant-garde as creatively atavistic rather than

progressively innovative.

It is not surprising that Ortega's assertions should rankle certain critical sensibilities. In La deshumanización del arte he affirms, among other things, that the new art is directed at a minority public endowed with extraordinary critical acumen; that the majority, unable to penetrate "dehumanized art," responds scornfully because it intimidates and produces feelings of inferiority; that everyday human concerns are incompatible with the aesthetic preoccupations of the movement. In Ideas sobre la novela, Ortega posits that the novel as a literary genre will soon exhaust its potential for creativity. Perhaps time has yet to test Ortega's admonitions in a definitive fashion, but in the meantime they seem to have left novelists undaunted. In any case, these ideas appear as creatively daring as the new art that they describe. While Ortega's ideas are still pertinent to an ever-present, albeit minority avant-garde, the premonitory value of his Ideas sobre la novela seems to have accompanied the vanguardist movement of the twenties into a specific historical perspective.

Sobejano refers to Ideas sobre la novela as "la culminación del proceso de subjetivización y antirrealismo que venía desenvolviéndose desde principios del siglo."⁹ He describes the acceptance of these notions as not merely a reaction against nineteenth-century realism and naturalism, but a complacent bourgeois overestimation of individualism. He accuses the bourgeoisie of forgetting "la función que la novela puede desempeñar como trasunto artístico de la conciencia

colectiva."¹⁰ Ultimately, the phenomenon of vanguardism was to be a temporally limited one. Eugenio de Nora sees a modest reemergence of realism starting about 1928, while vanguardism had not yet exhausted itself. In a chapter entitled "Tentativas de novela intelectualista, lírica y deshumanizada," Nora speaks of the minority avant-garde movement as so much "frivolity" and indicates the changing direction of Spanish letters. The particular group of novelists that Nora treats in this chapter offers little to comment on due to the "Dispersión de tendencias;" in the first place,

el sentido mismo de aquellas corrientes literarias, deshumanizantes, asépticas y antirrealistas, se oponía, casi por definición, a toda posible madurez dentro del género novelesco, condenando a los narradores potenciales al formalismo y a la esterilidad creadora.(II,i; p. 188)

Secondly, Nora points out, other more traditional writers such as Pedro Salinas and Francisco Ayala are capable of producing "intelectualista" fiction without "frivolity", others lean toward realism and still others take up the standard of humor.

He goes on to warn us that the true resurgence of realism waits for the post-war period. Nevertheless, Nora sees the beginnings of the realist renovation in these pre-war years and further, he points out an emergent dichotomy in the realist school that will continue to diverge as the movement gains momentum in the forties and fifties. On the one hand he sees a school of bourgeois realists headed by Zunzunegui (this group, in Nora's opinion, includes Arbó) and on the other hand, a socially conscious group of "proletarian" realists, with Ramón

Sender as their standard bearer(II,i;pp. 189-190). And so, in this period prior to the Civil War, Nora sees the coexistence of these divergent schools of realism with a group of slightly critical humorists such as Enrique Jardiel Poncela and the remaining practitioners of "dehumanized" fiction.

As for the waning of vanguardism, we have already heard Nora's indictment of the movement as conducive to "artistic sterility." Torrente Ballester bluntly asserts that "El arte nuevo produce irritación, por incomprensible o por irrespetuoso,"(p. 290) and also cites the limited commercial viability of artistic forms that are by nature designed for a minority public. He hints that the vanguardists' studied avoidance of sentimentality in their poetry and fiction could have contributed to the brevity of the movement's lifespan. The critical year of transition is 1930, when "la orientación general de la literatura supone, entonces, una recaída en lo humano, así como un abandono de las posiciones estetizantes o puramente intelectuales"(p. 291). The years 1931 to 1936 saw the diminishing influence and ultimate collapse of vanguardism as a viable literary movement, and, as Torrente Ballester says lyrically, "en el naufragio perecen todos los que, aprovechando la confusión, habían falsificado el arte y la poesía"(pp. 291-292).

It is in this period just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War that prevailing literary sensibilities take a decisive turn toward realism. The existing realist movement, which Nora has divided into "moderate" and critical realists, betrayed

"rasgos radical y literalmente antitéticos a los de la escuela bautizada por Ortega"(II,i; p. 191). Nora goes on, in a chapter entitled "La transición hacia el nuevo realismo", to speak of this new school as comprising "dissidents" opposed, for sundry reasons, to the rigorously narrow intent of the avant-garde. The reasons for this dissidence, says Nora, run the gamut from personally conservative views of some writers to creative hesitance on the part of others. In any case, the result of these varied motives is less diffuse. About these writers Nora says:

. . . se esboza . . . y se va afirmando progresivamente en los mejores, una rápida recuperación del realismo; una manifiesta rehabilitación de 'lo humano', del valor testimonial y de la trascendencia moral, social y política de la literatura; una nueva conciencia de la necesidad -- y de la fertilidad -- del servicio a unos cuantos valores supremos, tal como cada escritor los interpreta o concibe.(II,i; p. 281)

Choosing Humberto Pérez de la Ossa, Ramón Ledesma Miranda and Juan Antonio de Zunzunegui as the leading figures of this movement, Nora further argues that the last works of these three authors before 1939 prove definitively that the radical change in aesthetic sensibilities signaled by a new interest in realism was not produced by the Civil War. The critic concludes that these novelists lead a school of transition, that the process of this same transition continued in the post-war years and, from his perspective while writing La novela española contemporánea, that

. . . el esfuerzo que marca ese 'neorrealismo' es,

en su conjunto, ascendente, pero todavía inseguro hoy, todavía, hoy, de tanteo, de búsqueda de un gran estilo narrativo, en correspondencia con las asombrosas transformaciones y el nacimiento de un mundo nuevo a que asistimos en esta mitad del siglo.(II,i; p. 284)

The interruption of literary endeavor in Spain, effected by the Civil War, failed to curb the tendency toward realism in spite of the long period of inertia. There were, however, in the years immediately following the Civil War "una desorientación y estancamiento característicos," and, Nora adds, "la esterilidad y la reiteración mediocre constituyen la regla general, hasta, aproximadamente, 1950"(II,ii; p. 106). The outstanding and obvious exceptions to this condition are of course, Camilo José Cela's La familia de Pascual Duarte and Carmen Laforet's Nada. Nora speaks in general terms of a "crisis of the novel," which was not, as we have seen, caused by the Civil War, nor was it limited to those years immediately following the conflict. This so-called crisis began, in Nora's view, with the exhaustion of nineteenth-century realism and evinced itself even during the fertile heyday of the Generation of '98, later to reach its most critical degree during the vogue of vanguardism, in spite of the succesful novelistic experiments of that movement. At the same time, the incipient school of realism is credited with taking the first step toward the novel's rejuvenation. Both ideologically divergent tendencies of this new school of realism, says Nora, "señalan un cambio de orientación fecundo hacia la fuente siempre viva del realismo, sentando así las bases para una recuperación, incipiente pero ya

efectiva, de la novela"(II,ii; p. 107).

That a period of "desorientación y estancamiento" should follow the Civil War is not surprising, not only for the tangible and direct consequences of prolonged and bloody conflict, but also for the ambience of suspicion and fear in its aftermath, not to mention the establishment of censorship by a regime hostile to many writers for their unacceptable ideology. With the advent of Cela's La familia de Pascual Duarte (1942) and Laforet's Nada (1944), the current of realist narration continues, and as literary activity increased in post-war Spain, with the help of certain subtle means of sidestepping censorship, different tendencies within the realist school began to develop and diverge. Nora sees three trends emerging in the post war novel: some authors, "dentro de una línea marcadamente realista, muestran . . . un impulso de renovación formal, o tienden al plantamiento de una problemática intelectual o moral que llega a dominar en el relato;" another group of "narradores puros" adheres to "la creación novelesca según las fórmulas más o menos remozadas del realismo tradicional;" and finally there are

. . . los escritores que, frente a ese criterio de tradición realista, popularista y masiva . . . de la narración, obedecen más o menos abiertamente a un imperativo de selección, y tienden a una novela estética, en la que el refinamiento y la calidad de la prosa son valores sustantivos.(II,ii; p. 177)

While these developments were taking place, novelists actively sought greater contact with culture outside of Spain as

the state of post-war isolation began to ease around 1950. This group of novelists came to be known as the "nueva oleada." A chapter devoted to them in Nora's La novela española contemporánea is subtitled "entre el relato lírico y el testimonial objetivo." Nora characterizes these novelists as more intuitive than their predecessors, and weary also of their "fanatismo ciego . . . escepticismo acre . . . [y] cinicismo entre frívolo y desesperado"(II,ii; p. 287). This new movement of "ingenuous realists," influenced by Sartre's notion of "committed literature" and preoccupied with social concerns, "no hace sino reanudar una tradición viva, repristándola y procurando separar la ganga del metal puro."'' The bountiful variety and quality of works by such novelists as Ana María Matute, Ignacio Aldecoa, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and Luis Martín Santos evince a regeneration of the Spanish novel that serves to counteract many of the handicaps, internal and external, that produced the so-called "crisis."

With such optimistic portents for the state of the genre, after a period of inertia, confusion and many sincere, albeit tentative responses to successive changes in aesthetic orientation (not to mention external impediments), the novel in Spain continued its growth through the fifties and sixties with increasing attention to currents in world literature (the French nouveau roman and the Latin American "Boom", for example). In conclusion, it is apparent that the resurgence of realist narration constitutes not only a major and momentous development in the trajectory of the Spanish novel in this century, but is

even credited by some with beginning the restoration of its erstwhile degree of excellence, invoking the verisimilitude of Cervantes and the social orientation of the picaresque.

Given Arbó's preoccupation with realism (which embraces an interest in the picaresque and the realist example of Cervantes), as we turn now to a brief review of the author's life and work, we might further clarify the relationship between the novelist and his historical context with some additional, specific observations. The examples of Narcís Oller and Pío Baroja seem to parallel Arbó's unique, seemingly anachronistic situation relative to the main current of novelistic endeavor in his time. Both of these novelists puzzled critics by proffering certain fictional elements or perspectives that set them apart from the literary conventions of their time. At the same time, other broader characteristics testify to the authors' contemporaneity with those same conventions.

Oller, "primer novelista del seu temps" according to Joan Ruiz i Calonja,¹² is often associated with Naturalism. Having begun his literary career by producing quadres de costums, Oller went on to write several important novels around the turn of the century. While the influence of Emile Zola is supposed in most considerations of this Catalan novelist's fiction -- the French Naturalist wrote a prologue for the French translation of Oller's La Papallona --, Oller's novels transcend Naturalism. Ruiz i Calonja observes:

El naturalisme d'Oller, el realisme podem dir-ne millor seguint els seus crítics, és sobretot social. La pintura dels ambients diferents on fa moure les

passions de les seves figures humanes és el tret més característic del nostre novel·lista; fets certs, reals, moltes vegades viscuts, en un paisatge o escenari exacte, però amb personatges que, malgrat llur sentit versemblant lleument idealizat, reaccionen volent-ho o no convencionalment en resoldre els conflictes.¹³

Similarly, Arthur Terry observes that, while Oller is "compared with Zola himself, he is more interested in individuals and much less in generalizations about society. Nothing could be further from Oller than Zola's peculiar kind of determinism."¹⁴ This repudiation of determinism, along with an affinity for the perspective of the individual, recalls Arbó's posture in Martín de Caretas. Several of Oller's novels proffer intimate studies of an individual psyche, aided by the author's "do per a les situacions dramàtiques i angoixoses."¹⁵ In Pilar Prim, "la introspecció psicològica domina tot el panorama del llibre."¹⁶ La bogeria is the story, told in the first person, of a young man's advancing dementia and eventual suicide. There are, then, both broad and specific thematic affinities shared by Oller and Arbó, in addition to their similarly anachronistic stance (Oller clung to certain elements of Romantic idealism after its waning as a literary convention). Finally, Ruiz i Calonja says of Oller that "de cara a les modes literàries de l'època hi afegeix una solució personal dels esdeveniments i un diseg moralitzador."¹⁷ This observation, which strongly resembles the ideological culmination of Martín de Caretas, recalls an aspect of Pío Baroja's literary attitude germane to this discussion. Described by G.G. Brown as an "irascible,

uncouth individualist" and "a most disconcerting phenomenon in the literary history of the period,"¹⁸ Baroja possessed a "steady, honest, pessimistic vision of the world, with [a] deep sense of compassion and urge to moral justice."¹⁹

Baroja the novelist emerged during a period marked by an angustia vital, with such contemporaries as Unamuno and Azorín. With the futility and absurdity of human existence admitted as presuppositions, Baroja continues to insist upon a moral commitment incumbent on mankind. Much of his work underlines the struggle inherent in any attempt to reconcile man's intransigent decadence and ill-will with a notion of supreme moral values. While such a struggle might itself bring on a sense of angustia vital, it is Baroja's insistence on and presupposition of man's capacity for moral thought and behavior that set him apart from some of his more pessimistic or capricious contemporaries. This same "deep sense of compassion and urge to moral justice" recalls the sincere, if ingenuous character of the protagonist of Martín de Caretas.

It is virtually incontestable that Baroja exercised enormous influence on the craft of Sebastián Juan Arbó. The work of this Catalan novelist abounds in Barojian qualities -- thematic, stylistic and ideological --, some of which are mentioned in this thesis. Insofar as this prefatory discussion is concerned, it is sufficient to indicate a particular, yet broad ideological element shared by the two authors. D.L. Shaw asserts that "the chief feature of Baroja's personality is his inability to accept the comfortable pattern of ideas and beliefs

on which the mass of people uncritically base their lives."²⁰ This attitude is exemplified in Baroja's fiction by Aurora Roja, final volume of the trilogy La lucha por la vida. The novel's title derives from the name of a bar in which a group of anarchists fervently expound a gamut of ostensibly compatible beliefs and conduct passionate political discussions about what to them are clearly viable panaceas for society's most glaring defects. By the narrative's conclusion, Baroja has betrayed his disillusionment with the mirage of political solutions, creeds that, in his view, demand the same faith and suspension of critical thought required by religion. Manuel, the trilogy's protagonist accepts responsibility for his existence along with the limitations of his condition, having witnessed the failures wrought by his own brother's anarchist delusions.

Here, apparently, is an important Barojian legacy to Arbó, at least with regard to Martín de Cretas. Just as Baroja disapproves of the masses' uncritical acceptance of certain "comfortable" but morally compromising values, so Arbó has his young protagonist learn to reject the dogmatic views of the nonchalant Antonio Cardén and the imperious Roque Galda, in addition to his instinctive distrust of Cretas' antisocial milieu. And while Arbó eschews overtly political or religious examples, he successfully emphasizes the superiority of personal responsibility, self-reliance and autonomous decision by means of more fundamental, universal examples.

In addition to a provocative, though not uncommon interest in the individual's psyche shared by all three authors, the

examples of Pío Baroja and Narcís Oller provide an analogy to Arbó's unique relationship with the literary conventions of his time. The very "unconventional" character of these two authors, particularly their "anachronistic" qualities, exposes a dubious critical tendency which seems to insist upon an author's contemporaneity with prevailing literary practices. In the cases of Baroja and Oller, recourse to "out-moded" themes and techniques failed to undermine the quality of their art. The subsequent review of Arbó's life and work will, among other things, discuss how the author has suffered unjust relegation to secondary status because of critics' occasional, ironic lapses into uncritical and "comfortable pattern[s] of ideas."

A. NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹ Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea, 2a edición (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1961), I, 20. Further references to this work appear in the text.

² Donald L. Shaw, A Literary History of Spain: The Nineteenth Century (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), p. 44.

³ Shaw, p. 150.

⁴ Shaw, p. 151.

⁵ Shaw, p. 133.

⁶ Gonzalo Sobejano, Novela española de nuestro tiempo (Madrid: Prensa Española, 1970), p. 20.

⁷ Eugenio de Nora, La novela española contemporánea (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1962), II,i, 40. Further references appear in the text.

⁸ The parentheses are mine.

⁹ Sobejano, p. 21.

¹⁰ Sobejano, p. 21.

¹¹ Sobejano, p. 170.

¹² Joan Ruiz i Calonja, Història de la literatura catalana (Barcelona: Editorial Teide, 1954), p. 487.

¹³ Ruiz i Calonja, p. 488

¹⁴ Arthur Terry, A Literary History of Spain: Catalan Literature (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), p. 80.

¹⁵ Josep Vallverdú, Història de la literatura catalana (Barcelona: Editorial Miquel Arimany, 1978), p. 114.

¹⁶ Vallverdú, p. 114.

¹⁷ Ruiz i Calonja, p. 488.

¹⁸ G.G. Brown A Literary History of Spain: The Twentieth Century (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1972), p. 31.

¹⁹ Brown, p. 32.

²⁰ Shaw, p. 166.

II. SEBASTIAN JUAN ARBO: HIS LIFE AND WORK

A. BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SEBASTIAN JUAN ARBO

Sebastián Juan Arbó was born October 28, 1902 in San Carlos de la Rápita, a small coastal town in the southern-most portion of Catalonia near the Ebro delta and the Valencian border. His family, employed as servants by a wealthy French family with a Sephardic background, moved with their employers to nearby Amposta in 1910. It was here, on the banks of the Ebro, that the young Arbó started working as an unpaid apprentice in the office of his parents' employers. In his free time "devorava tots els llibres que queien a les sevas mans -- la Bíblia, els clàssics grecs, Baroja, els realistes francesos, Blasco Ibáñez, etc."¹ Such were the beginnings of "la vocación por las letras que había de arrastrarle al fin a la ciudad".² Before he left home however, he pursued an interest in sports, particularly football, while he cultivated his appreciation for literature. What developed into a passion for letters was aided by the study of English, Latin and Portuguese. At the age of eighteen he had written his first novel.³

Arbó's migration to Barcelona in 1927, while pertinent with regard to the conception of Martín de Caretas, was in itself not so significant to his formation as a writer. Sergi Beser relates:

La seva biografia té poc valor per ella sola o com a il·luminació de la seva obra; tan sols es destaquen unes quantes dates: la de l'arribada a Barcelona i les de publicació de les obres. Molt més

important és la seva experiència vital fins a l'adolescència, ja que es transforma en matèria literària de tots els seus relats.⁴

According to Beser, the most formative experience for Arbó was his adolescence on the banks of the Ebro, during which he was imbued with a profound sense of the relationship between the delta region and its inhabitants. The impression made on the young Arbó by this special relationship was such that the theme of the Ebro delta and its people proved to be fruitful narrative material, predominating in most of his fiction. Aside from this contact with the impressive world of delta society, the would-be author, progeny of humble people, now found himself exposed to literature. Beser asserts that this aspect of culture produced in the young Arbó a dialectical tension that was to strongly influence his early literary endeavors:

fill de pagesos, l'accés a la cultura el va desplaçant del seu medi social; viu entre ells, però no és un d'ells; com a conseqüència de tot això l'aïllament dins un món, al qual és unit per irrompibles lligams d'afecte. Aquesta posició d'Arbó es reflectirà en la temàtica de les novel·les, les quals cal examinar sempre a partir d'aquest punt. La seva obra narrativa en català, possiblement sigui l'intent d'extravertir el complex conjunt de vivències i de processos subconscients originat en l'experiència vital d'aquests anys.⁵

Arbó, thus affected by the unique bond between man and earth evident in the Ebro delta, imbued with an almost existential sense of isolation and with an intense personal enthusiasm for writing, left for Barcelona in 1927 with

manuscripts of what were to be his first two published novels. L'inútil combat, considered one of his finest efforts, appeared in 1931. This was followed closely by Terres de L'Ebre in 1932. The effect of these two novels was such that "En dos anys Arbó havia passat d'ésser un escriptor desconegut i inèdit a ésser la més ferma esperança de la novel·la catalana. Esperança que alhora era, però, autèntica realitat."⁶

The author maintained an impressive momentum with the appearance in 1933 of Notes d'un estudiant que va morir boig, a work that Arbó, as was his wont, subsequently subjected to several major revisions. The year 1935 saw the publication of Camins de nit, which Federico Sainz de Robles refers to as "la más discutida de sus obras."⁷ In the wake of such industry during the first half of the decade, there were 10 years of silence from Arbó, precipitated by Spain's Civil War of 1936-1939. His return to the literary scene was heralded by the appearance, in 1945, of his masterful biography of Miguel de Cervantes. The public success of Cervantes consolidated Arbó's reputation and set the stage for even wider public recognition for his fiction.

The post-war climate was however not a cordial one for those writers of minority languages. Although Tino Costa, another of Arbó's highly regarded works, was published simultaneously in both Catalan and Castilian in 1947, the author then turned to Castilian as his medium of expression. This change, along with Arbó's penchant for revision, posed a unique problem for critics and contributed to confusion about and

misappraisal of some of his work. Along with this change in his narrative medium came a significant shift in his thematic emphasis. In Sobre las piedras grises (1949), Arbó's first work published originally in Castilian, the author abandons his rural preoccupation in favor of an urban setting. Due to the strong presence of the rural landscape in his previous work, the change proved premature relative to the author's still developing abilities. Many critics agree, particularly in retrospect, that Arbó's best work resulted from writing in his native Catalan about the rustic life he knew insightfully and intimately. In spite of this, Sobre las piedras grises was awarded the Premio Nadal for 1948.

Arbó continued to concern himself with the urban landscape in María Molinari, published in 1954. This melodramatic and action-filled novel was composed, according to Juan Alborg, with an eye toward striking a balance between an entertaining adventure story with popular appeal and a moral statement with some intellectual appeal. Alborg declares:

María Molinari parece encerrar una intención moral. No sé si Arbó se habrá propuesto deliberadamente escribir una sátira contra cierta corrupción de costumbres . . . Pero los hechos, en efecto, parecen apuntar particularmente hacia una defensa de la integridad del matrimonio."⁸

Alborg also mentions, rather tentatively, that "Creo recordar ahora -- aunque no puedo asegurarlo -- que Arbó confesó en unas declaraciones haber tenido este propósito deliberado."⁹ If Alborg's memory serves, then all this -- that is, an equilibrium

of popular thematic qualities and fodder for the intellect, plus a preconceived didactic intention -- is significant for its relation to the conception of Arbó's subsequent novel.

Martín de Caretas is recognized as a remarkable departure from Arbó's customary themes and preoccupations. The first volume of the trilogy appeared in 1955, to be followed in 1959 by a single volume augmented with the second and third parts (each of the parts has been published independently in later editions). Perhaps the most thematically diverse of all Arbó's fictional works, the author here sustains his general interest in landscape as an essentially formative element in man's experience. In this case, however, Arbó contracts a marriage between the two spatial preoccupations of his previous work: the first volume of the trilogy is set in the asperity of a culturally retarded, rural town of Aragón whence the protagonist ventures forth, to arrive (after a virtual odyssey through the country) in the awesome and cosmopolitan Barcelona.

Critics, who variously describe the author as either imitative of obsolete nineteenth-century realism or a precursor of a new variety of realist narration, also seem to have given Martín de Caretas unjustly short shrift. Its marginal affinities with the picaresque genre have caused some critics to consider it alongside such post-war picaresque adaptations as Camilo José Cela's La familia de Pascual Duarte. Possessing none of the latter's qualities of profound sickness and rage, and even betraying a sense of gentle optimism and social justice, Martín de Caretas was bound to appear light and

inconsequential in comparison. A close reading reveals that picaresque motifs play an important, though subordinate role in the depiction of Martín's social medium. These picaresque elements function in concert with many other literary influences, allusions and themes to complete a rich fabric of optimistic commentary on the human condition which suggests a deliberately metaphysical or transcendental intention.

The interim between the first volume of Martín de Caretas and the appearance of its expanded trilogy form produced another urban novel, Nocturno de alarmas, published in 1957. Several critics noted Arbó's increasing facility with the portrayal of the urban landscape. Soon after this, however, Arbó was to return to his original, and one suspects favored, narrative theme: the landscape and people of the Ebro delta. The year 1962 saw the publication of Los hombres de la tierra y el mar, which bore the subtitle "Recuerdos de infancia." Sergi Beser quotes an interview conducted with the author by L. Gomis for Ateneo magazine, dating from 1 April 1959, in which Arbó states:

. . . he ido liberándome de una carga de preocupaciones y emociones nacidas en mi infancia al contacto con la vida del pueblo. Siempre deseé escribir sobre los problemas de nuestro tiempo especialmente los suscitados en los últimos años, pero antes tenía que liberarme de aquel lastre.¹⁰

Los hombres de la tierra y el mar, a somewhat novelized, but mostly autobiographical work adumbrated the direction taken by Arbó's subsequent fiction. In 1965, the author's only collection of short stories, Narracions del delta was published

in Catalan. Its appearance was greeted with enthusiasm, not only for the author's shrewd return to his accustomed rural landscape, but also for repairing to Catalan as his means of expression. The following year brought forth a novel in Castilian with the almost predictable title of Entre la tierra y el mar. In his "Prólogo Explicativo" the author explains:

Esta es la primera de una serie de novelas en las cuales pretendo volver y agotar, en lo posible, el tema de las tierras del Ebro, o mejor, del delta del Ebro, entre Tortosa y el mar.

La serie estará constituida por tres, quizá por cuatro novelas, cada una de las cuales formará un volumen aparte. Estarán unidas, no obstante por los personajes centrales y por el medio o ambiente.¹¹

Arbó did indeed produce several more novels on that theme: L'espera, published first in Catalan in 1968; La masia, also in Catalan, appeared in 1975; Canción de noche (1973) and La tempestad (1975) were published originally in Castilian. There were in these novels the promised commonality of certain characters and the common element of landscape that so pervaded the author's consciousness that it seems to have haunted him for most of his adult life.

B. THE CRITICS ON SEBASTIAN JUAN ARBO

Critical reaction to the work of Sebastián Juan Arbó has ranged from enthusiastic praise from the likes of Juan Alborg and Federico Sainz de Robles to Gonzalo Sobejano's curt dismissal of Arbó as a practitioner of "convencionalismo decimonónico."¹² Sebastián Juan Arbó is almost universally regarded as an author of secondary standing, in spite of his patent and considerable talents. The inscrutable and perhaps arbitrary criteria that determine the world's greatest authors may some day, contingent upon the proverbial "test of time," exalt Arbó's work to the level of primary importance, but in the meantime critical appreciation of his better qualities as a novelist is not unanimous. He is reasonably, though not overwhelmingly prolific and his work, considered as a body, is of inconsistent quality according to some. However, many critics make note of the intensity of the author's commitment to his accustomed themes of the landscape and human passion (and their mutual relationship), and to writing itself. Sergi Beser begins his introduction to Arbó's Obra catalana completa by saying "La carrera literaria de Sebastiá Juan Arbó ha estat un dels casos de més intensa vocació donats a la nostra terra."¹³ Joaquín de Entrambasaguas says in Las mejores novelas contemporáneas, "No sólo la vida sino la obra misma de Sebastián Juan Arbó, se han regido por una impulsiva vocación literaria y una infatigable labor de escritor."¹⁴ Testimonials of this type abound: Sainz de Robles goes so far as to say that Arbó is "uno de los mejores narradores españoles de hoy, de los de formación

más entera, de los que poseen intuición clara y certera de lo que debe ser la novela."¹⁵

Such endorsements notwithstanding, attendant confusion about the nature of Arbó's writing seems to stem from his very independence of evolving literary tendencies. Misappraisal is common in critical evaluations of Arbó's contribution to the literature. Frequent references to Martín de Caretas as a picaresque or neo-picaresque novel serve as examples, and further suggest a cursory or inadequate knowledge of that work. Critical misapprehension, while no curious novelty, sometimes achieves comic proportions. Some critics complain of the fastidious abuse of "ismos" as categories: others provide fodder for that very argument. For example, Sainz de Robles tells us that "Arbó es, en España, uno de los cultivadores más sostenidos del tremendismo; esto es, de la desnudez de la acción rectilínea, de su eficacia de conmoción por su carencia de elementos edulcorantes."¹⁶ While the very nature and existence of that movement has been polemicized, those of Arbó's works that could be considered tremendistas predated the vogue of that movement by roughly a decade. On the other hand, Antonio Iglesias Laguna, in his Treinta años de novela española, sees a similarity between Arbó and Bartolomé Soler for their preoccupation with the landscape of Catalonia. Iglesias tells us that "Entre Arbó y Soler existe, además, otra coincidencia: el naturalismo, que en el primero se eleva a veces a estética y poesía."¹⁷ If we accept that the true naturalist believes in a form of determinism and posits man's helplessness before nature,

then this is true of Arbó only with certain qualifications. Determinist views of life are expressed or suggested in some of Arbó's major works (Terres de l'Ebre and Martín de Caretas, for example), but in others landscape functions as a determinant of man's collective condition, rather than his individual behavior.

In turning now to specific critical evaluation of Arbó and his work, we hope to draw a clear portrait of his unique contribution and determine his rightful place among the other novelists of his time: attempts to categorize this author strictly in terms of realism, naturalism or even tremendismo can only be made with numerous reservations and qualifications. Critical confusion, and perhaps even his relegation to secondary status in the hierarchy of novelists, seems to result from incomplete attempts (or outright failure) to penetrate his very eclecticism. An overview of critical reaction to Arbó's work should help to reveal the foundation of his ideology as it is pertinent to this study of Martín de Caretas. Such a survey should also aid us in refining or correcting certain inaccurate notions about the author's creative orientation, while indicating, in addition, his wealth of eminent literary influences.

Without seeking to resolve the polemic as to whether Arbó's narration is rooted in nineteenth- or twentieth-century realism, this thesis should in part be an attempt to vindicate the author of any stigma associated with his affinity with outmoded literary tendencies. Resonances of naturalism and Romanticism in Arbó's work seem to have distracted critics from subtler and

more provocative features of his writing. While it is probable that Arbó inherited some aesthetic sensibilities from the previous century, his work shows numerous other influences, among them the Bible, the picaresque and Cervantes. Of this period between the decline of realism at the end of the nineteenth century, and its resurgence in the twentieth, any effort to separate mimetic hacks from true precursors seems risky at best. Both Sergi Beser and Gonzalo Sobejano dispute R.M. Albérès' assertion that Arbó was a precursor of the new school of realism.¹⁸ Beser points out that the French critic knew only the Castilian versions of Arbó's novels, ignorant not only of his importance to Catalan letters but also of his inheritance of a Catalan tradition of rural realist narration as practiced by Víctor Català in her Drames rurals. Sobejano, on the other hand, simply dismisses Arbó's writing as "convencionalismo decimonónico." Beser however goes on to suggest that, if Arbó was not a pioneer of new realism, he certainly anticipated another profoundly influential literary movement: existentialism. In discussing Arbó's first published novel, L'inútil combat (1931) Beser says

Cal situar aquesta primera obra d'Arbó al costat i com digna companya de La Nausée de Sartre (1938) i L'Etranger de Camus (1942) . . . Arbó, partint de l'emotivitat i l'experiència vital, mostra al seu libre una concepció de la vida semblant a la que trobem a les obres de Sartre i Camus . . .¹⁹

It is not so surprising then, according to Beser, that Arbó should be able to share these views since existentialism as such is not a schematic, procedural philosophy but rather an

ineffable sort of attitude about life. The modern variety of existentialism is thought by many people to be a response to life's unprecedented uncertainty and the horrific potential for self-destruction manifested by man during the century's two World Wars. Torrente Ballester, in speaking of this formative period for future novelists, says that with political crises in Spain and economic collapse throughout the world, the year 1930 "representa el fracaso de toda la ideología de la posguerra; y no sólo en España, sino en todo el mundo, la vida cobra un tinte acre y desagradable"(p. 286). Having written L'inútil combat at the age of eighteen, Arbó handily predates the work of the French existentialist novelists. Many characteristic features of later existentialist fiction are present in Arbó's writings. Enumerated by Beser, these are "l'absurd o manca de sentit de la vida i de les coses, el 'sentiment tràgic', la situació limit, el compromís, l'aïllament o soledat de l'individu, el sentiment d'etrangeté, la nostalgia de la puresa" ²⁰ These sensibilities are of course not exclusive to the twentieth century. They are evident in literature throughout its history: the picaresque possesses certain existential qualities, as do certain books of the Old Testament such as Job and Ecclesiastes, for example.

Because of the ineffable nature of existentialism and its abundance of aspects, any classification of authors or works as existential is a relative one. Common, widespread misconceptions about existentialism notwithstanding, its expression in literature, especially in the twentieth century,

entails certain broad contours familiar to many laymen. The aforementioned characteristics cited by Beser are good examples. In Novela española de nuestro tiempo, Sobejano distinguishes two major currents in the contemporary Spanish novel: one he calls "existential", the other "social". The leading cultivators of the existential novel are Cela, Laforet and Delibes. Among other novelists who "coinciden en ocuparse de la existencia del hombre español de su tiempo, revelando la perplejidad del individuo, su insolidaridad o muy difícil solidaridad . . . la presión decisiva de ciertas situaciones extremas y, en general, un clima de angustia,"²¹ Sobejano includes Sebastián Juan Arbó.

In his introduction to Arbó's Obra catalana completa, Sergi Beser observes that all the protagonists of his Catalan novels are alienated in their own environment; quotations from Camins de nit and the autobiographical Los hombres de la tierra y el mar sound remarkably similar to what is implied, if not stated explicitly in works such as L'Etranger. Most critics however, when speaking in general terms about Arbó are more attuned to the works' overall tone than the author's observations about man's existence. For example, Sainz de Robles writes:

Arbó es novelista esencialmente duro y áspero, intenso y amargo; mas tales dureza y aspereza, intensidad y amargura, no afectan a su talento y a su sensibilidad - flexibles y delicadas -, sino a los temas elegidos. Temas recogidos en el realismo angustioso de las clases rurales y artesanas.²²

Such terms as "duro," "amargo," "intenso," "violento" and "áspero" are frequently applied to Arbó's Catalan fiction.

Alborg, as well as other critics, makes note of the almost total absence of humor in Arbó's rural novels.²³

This harsh portrait of the human condition not only comprises a fundamental relationship between man and his dependence upon harsh and unpredictable environments, but also involves the themes of injustice and intense amorous passion. Arbó's preoccupation with life's injustice (which Eugenio de Nora calls "ingenuous"[II,i; p. 337]) will find its most provocative and judicious treatment in Martín de Caretas. In Terres de l'Ebre, it surfaces as a key element of the narrative trajectory: the protagonist, Joan, suffers a series of cruel misfortunes which have as their climax the arbitrary transfer of his tenant farm to another impoverished peasant. The loss of this land that he worked obsessively, which had become the center of his universe after the death of his wife and estrangement from his son, causes him to attempt the murder of his landlord. All this, coupled with his eventual suicide in prison, comprises a thematic whole which Joaquín de Entrambasaguas identifies essentially as "lo fundamental de la vida, el amor, que reacciona casi instintivamente, ante el imperativo ineludible del paisaje, de la geografía misma, sobre los seres arraigados en ella."²⁴

Terres de L'Ebre, more than any other of his rural novels, features landscape as an imperative agent in the life of the protagonist. The function of love, while not insignificant, is more implicit. In Arbó's other rural novels, like Tino Costa and Camins de Nit, the landscape acts more as a determinant of

the collective condition of the delta's inhabitants, which in turn influences their behavior. And correspondingly, love becomes a more explicit force in the relationships of main characters. It is a characteristic of these early (and some later) novels by Arbó that the plot is composed of numerous (some critics say gratuitous) melodramatic episodes. Here is another reason why many critics such as Nora and Sobejano identify Arbó with realist/naturalist/Romantic tendencies of the 19th century. When Arbó initially shifts his emphasis on landscape from a rural to an urban setting, the critics' foremost observation is that Arbó's artistic command of the urban environment is awkward at best, while his preoccupation with what we broadly refer to as "existential" concerns remains the same; hence a less convincing novel in the form of Sobre las piedras grises. With María Molinari, Arbó comes to better represent the urban ambience while still representing a world of melodramatic vicissitudes. Indeed, the majority of Arbó's fiction betrays remarkable thematic consistency. After producing a few failed dramas, some outstanding biographies and after briefly altering his novelistic orientation with Martín de Caretas, Arbó felt compelled to return to his original conception of creative fiction, which for him is formed by certain specific elements; the powerful influence of landscape (in this case the Ebro delta), amorous passions and their intimate linkage to man's confusion, anguish and sense of alienation and absurdity.

Martín de Caretas is the most outstanding exception to

Arbó's accustomed novelistic orientation, while it retains certain of the author's characteristic preoccupations. It would seem to be a synthesis of Arbó's interest in landscape as an essential fictional element, since both the rural and urban ambience are represented. In addition, the trilogy offers a kaleidoscopic wealth of literary influences and allusions, and an undeniably philosophical bent. The unique nature of the work demands that certain questions be confronted: what is the true significance of its particular picaresque affinities? Are its philosophical characteristics the result of a preconceived intention or simply a response to the prevailing "existential" tone of literature during the fifties? What role is played by landscape in this trilogy? What other literary influences are brought to bear upon the narrative?

These questions arise in part from Arbó's well-established novelistic tendencies: they are also suggested by certain uncharacteristic features present in Martín de Caretas. Primary among these traits to be accounted for is the trilogy's manifest association with the picaresque. In an excellent article entitled "Martín de Caretas: The Picaresque Myth Transformed", Christopher Eustis ably demonstrates that Arbó's trilogy only superficially resembles the classic picaresque form, and further that it deviates from the current of post-war picaresque adaptations that were popular not only in Spain, but internationally. If we accept Eustis' thesis, which is convincing and well-documented, what then is Arbó's purpose in borrowing certain elements from the picaresque genre? The

author presents a schematic, structurally tidy commentary both on the nature of wisdom and the nature of human life. The young protagonist, Martín, benefits from the guidance of three mentors, each corresponding to one volume of the trilogy. Each mentor consistently and repeatedly holds forth on the essential sense (or absurdity) of life (secondary characters make their contributions also). Each mentor sums up his views on life with one pithy phrase, and each becomes uniquely identified with his doctrine. Two of these three views of life could be called existential in the pessimistic, commonly conceived sense. The third view, while no less existential, corresponds to a lesser known aspect of modern existentialism that Jean Paul Sartre would call "stern optimism".

All three of these well-defined notions about the nature of life are presented to the young protagonist (with more or less arrogance on the part of the mentor) as incontrovertible, time-tested, practical wisdom. In the trajectory of the narrative each dogma is put to the test by the young protagonist's circumstances, where it stands or falls according to its practicability. Arbó's commentary on the nature and practicability of wisdom is most sophisticated and penetrating in the case of Martín's first mentor, his grandfather. In the first volume of the trilogy, Martín's grandfather appears as a repository of rustic wisdom, frequently dispensing proverbs, aphorisms and folktales of local fame. His pretense to great wisdom, combined with certain other personal traits, invokes an image of the old man as a parody of the prodigiously wise Old

Testament King Solomon. While this might seem an arbitrary assertion at first, we know, according to Sergi Beser, that the Bible was one of the influential books of the young Arbó's formative introduction to literature. Aside from various references to the Old Testament in the text, in the Epilogue of Martín de Caretas Arbó twice cites wisdom attributed to Solomon, quoting from the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. This is provocative not only because these two books form part of a larger body of profound Hebrew Wisdom literature, but also because the wisdom presented to Martín by his mentors resembles, in some cases closely, specific aspects of the book of Ecclesiastes. In addition, this Old Testament book in which life is described as "vanity of vanities" has clear affinities with at least some modern conceptions of existentialism. Lest this assertion, that Arbó might have based his ideological intention on Ecclesiastes, sound far-fetched, we know that quotations from the Old Testament abound in many of his other novels: specifically he makes use of epigraphs drawn from the pool of Solomonic wisdom which comprises the books of Proverbs, Psalms and Ecclesiastes. Aside from Arbó's allusion to Ecclesiastes in Martín de Caretas and epigraphs from the same Old Testament book in Tino Costa, Cervantes and Verdaguer: el poeta, el sacerdot i el món, the tone of the trilogy suggests an intentional ideological affinity between Ecclesiastes and Martín de Caretas. Allusions to Ecclesiastes and its existential qualities by Arbó's contemporaries Antonio Machado and Salvador Espriu demonstrate its timeless applicability and lend credence

to the likelihood of the novelist's familiarity with it.²⁵

This thesis will in part attempt to disentangle and analyze the complex interlocking pattern of these concepts: to wit, the function of picaresque elements and their existential overtones; the role of landscape, its determinist function and support of picaresque and existential undertones; the existential aspects of Ecclesiastes and their relationship to ideas presented by Martín's mentors; the view of wisdom, its practicability and abuse; and vestiges of "modern" existentialism as they relate to the protagonist's personal growth. By undertaking a formally based study of the neatly tripartite scheme of Martín's mentors, this thesis hopes to reveal Arbó's ideological orientation and the presence or absence of a preconceived philosophical intention on the part of the author.

C. NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ Sergi Beser, "Les novel·les de L'Ebre de Sebastià Juan Arbó," in Obra catalana completa by Sebastián Juan Arbó (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1966), p. 8.

² Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, Escritores españoles e hispanoamericanos, Tomo II of Ensayo de un diccionario de la literatura (Madrid: Aguilar, 1964), p. 75.

³ Joaquín de Entrambasaguas, with María del Pilar Palomo, Las mejores novelas contemporáneas, X (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1967), 3.

⁴ Beser, p. 7.

⁵ Beser, pp. 7-8.

⁶ Beser, p. 8.

⁷ Sainz de Robles, Escritores españoles, p. 78.

⁸ Juan Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española (Madrid: Taurus, 1958), pp. 281-2.

⁹ Alborg, p. 281

¹⁰ Beser, p. 8.

¹¹ Sebastián Juan Arbó, Entre la tierra y el mar (Valencia: Prometeo, 1966), p. 5.

¹² Sobejano, p. 23.

¹³ Beser, p. 7.

¹⁴ Entrambasaguas, p. 3.

¹⁵ Sainz de Robles, Novela española, p. 200.

¹⁶ Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, La novela española en el Siglo XX (Madrid: Pegaso, 1957), p. 200.

¹⁷ Antonio Iglesias Laguna, Treinta años de novela española

(Madrid: Prensa Española, 1969), II, 105.

¹⁸ R. M. Albérès, Histoire du Roman Moderne (Paris: Albin Michel, 1962), p. 72.

¹⁹ Beser, p. 11.

²⁰ Beser, p. 11.

²¹ Sobejano, p. 165.

²² Sainz de Robles, Novela española, p. 200.

²³ Alborg, p. 276.

²⁴ Entrambasaguas, p. 5.

²⁵ See XVIII (El poeta) in Antonio Machado's Poesías completas (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1969), pp. 31-3. See also Joan Fuster's Introducció a la poesia de Salvador Espriu in Espriu's Obra poetica (Barcelona: Santiago Albertí, 1963), pp. xxiv, xxviii.

III. EN EL PUEBLO

A. THE FUNCTION OF LANDSCAPE

Martín de Caretas en el pueblo opens with an epigraph from Mateo Alemán's Guzmán de Alfarache, which includes the observation that "la tierra es peligrosa".¹ While Alemán's statement is more succinct than Arbó's customary treatment of landscape, its use reflects not only the author's preoccupation with the land as an integral factor in man's affairs, but also its negative qualities as such. The text itself begins with a description of Caretas and its environs, setting a tone similar to that of Arbó's earlier Catalan novels. Adjectives such as "duro", "áspero" and "amargo" immediately come to mind: "El pueblo, Caretas, estaba situado en un paisaje rudo y montuoso, entre olivares, exiguos campos de trigo, pequeños cuadros de viñas y extensas zonas de matorrales" (p. 11). With this characterization of inhospitable, arid land and corresponding flora, the tangible presence of the town itself is ominous: "era oscuro, silencioso, de casas bajas y aplastadas, viejísimas" (p. 11). Accordingly, the collective psyche of the inhabitants is expressed in the narrator's observation that "era un pueblo de hambre, de rezos y de refranes; el refrán y la estaca habrían también podido servir como emblemas vivos de su escudo" (p. 11). Christopher Eustis points out in his study that the town's inhabitants are under the yoke of a repressive tradition and institutionally sanctioned poverty.² While this is true -- Arbó gives examples of hardships ranging from poverty-induced hunger

to religious hypocrisy and fear of the Guardia Civil -- the condition of Caretas' citizens is not merely typical of small Spanish towns. The narrator's prejudiced representation of Martín's home town is such that, although other towns may match its poverty and squalor, there is an added dimension of brutishness in the people's collective existence. Indeed, as the narrative trajectory develops through the first book and even through the rest of the trilogy, the name Caretas becomes synonymous with brutish stupidity. Landscape is a feature that functions in concert with the other environmental factors mentioned by Eustis to distinguish Caretas for its deeper dimensions of social retardation.

The initial descriptions of Caretas are unequivocally denunciatory: we have an image of arid land, scrubby flora and squalid peasant homes. The sea is distant (a detail that perhaps betrays the writer's predilection) and the nearby highway "venía de las alturas y se alejaba hacia el mar, como si huyese. Tampoco hubiese sido de extrañar" (p. 12). In the opening pages, Arbó signals a durable relationship between the coarse landscape and the men who inhabited it:

existían ruinas de viejos poblados ibéricos; todos con su entrada labrada en roca, que podía abrirse y cerrarse; todos con su cárcel y cerca siempre de un lugar pedregoso; prueba todo de la armonía que reinaba ya en aquellos tiempos entre los hombres. (p. 12)

Such "harmony" confronts Martín from all sides: as he returns home each day from school (which he attends only as a matter of convenience) he must choose between the mad assault of

a goat belonging to the local butcher (who takes perverse pleasure in the misfortunes of its victims) and the possibility of a beating, threatened by the blacksmith's son who lies in wait along another route. Even these constituted not so much a formidable threat as that to be found "en la vara de Camándulas [his schoolmaster], en la alpargata de su madre, en la cayada de su abuelo . . . " (p. 15). With such routine dangers posed by domesticated animals, juvenile rivals and even members of his own family, Arbó portrays the protagonist as having had to develop vigilance, caution and self-reliance at a young age. This indispensable self-interest is part of the near unanimity of Caretas' mean-spirited inhabitants and points to the recurring cycle of maliciousness attributed by Arbó to harsh conditions from which most of the people, through ignorance or inertia, cannot escape. In a chapter entitled "La familia entera," the narrator delivers this description of the environment's effect on the people of Caretas:

El campo, al atardecer, era un campo de muerte; los olivos se erguían como fantasmas en ademanes siniestros, con sus miembros mutilados levantados en el crepúsculo. Muchos ya no reverdecían. El frío agrietaba las rocas; helaba el río en los remansos; ahuyentaba a los animales, acobardaba a los hombres.
(p. 60)

Accordingly, an opposite extreme of harsh weather produces still more aggression and violent provocation among men. The sun's intensity seemed, among other things, to drive the crickets to a manic frenzy:

También los hombres, a veces, parecían enloquecer, y se producían disputas, riñas violentas que terminaban en sangre; se cometían crímenes. En ninguna parte las riñas alcanzan la violencia que suelen alcanzar en Caretas. Pero cuando esto ocurre, no se trata ya del hombre: es su entorpecimiento vegetal, con el denso sopor de la tierra; es la soledad de los campos, batidos horas y horas por el sol . . . ; es el sol de fuego, que se ríe en lo alto, que enloquece a las cigarras, que enciende los cerebros hasta bajo los sombreros de palma. (p. 61)

Caretas, then, is a clearly inhospitable environment and its people are uniquely malevolent. In the preceding passage, the narrator seems almost to exculpate men for such behavior, given nature's nettlesome incitement of it. That these assertions should appear in a chapter about Martín's family and home life is not casual: descriptions of Martín's parents are couched in terms of vegetation, aridity and asperity. 'Of Martín's mother the narrator tells us, "era seca, silenciosa, con manos sarmentosas y dedos como garfios. Era un manojo de espinos secos" (p. 62). She, like almost all of the characters described in this first volume, was always disposed to administer a beating to the young protagonist: she wore one of her sandals loosely, for ready access as an instrument of battery. Martín's father, according to the narrator, "era el de peor catadura; era alto como un ciprés y más flaco que un eremita, pero también duro, a prueba de aguardiente y de inclemencias" (p. 62). He was likewise ill-disposed to beneficence or clemency: during a wheat harvest, in an effort to get Martín's attention, the father pitches a lump of dry sod at the boy which, "si le acierta le deja sordo para siempre" (p.

48).

Aside from Martín's grandparents, we learn little about "aquel negro retablo" (p. 62) that is his family. Of his brothers, we learn that they discharge their frustrations on each other in descending order ending with Martín, the youngest and smallest who in turn has no one to release his anger upon. They also help to provide for the family by setting out rabbit traps in which the animals die an agonizing and horrible death. In spite of this cruelty, the family depends on the traps for its sustenance during the winter. Hence, another fundamental bond is shown between the exigencies of nature and the formation of man's character, another example for Martín of necessarily cruel responses elicited from man by nature's inscrutable vagaries.

The only family member represented in a positive light is Martín's sister Concha. She is "el garbanzo negro, el trébol de cuatro hojas" (p. 63), whose goodness and kind disposition is as inexplicable as Martín's finely tuned sense of justice. For all her well-disposed goodness however, she goes unnoticed, her pacific nature bland in comparison to the heated outbursts of her parents. The patent irony in all this is that authority-figures who, during childhood, traditionally represent protection, guidance, affection and caring are here the child's enemy, all disposed to dispense swift and harsh corporal punishment with little or no reason. Only Martín's grandfather upholds the pretense that such beatings serve to instill valuable lessons that he himself learned through even more

rigorous experience, lessons that later prove conducive to a biased and spurious philosophy. Martín at least recognizes the tenuous connection between this kind of punitive battery and the desire to effect an improvement in his behavior: "Maestros, padres, abuelos, vecinas: todos a punto para guiarle a uno por el buen camino. ¡Qué mundo, señor!" (p. 25).

To sum up, the fearsome schoolmaster Camándulas administers sadistic beatings on the basis of social class: the local priest manifests little of Christ's characteristic forgiveness and pacifism when he catches Martín, nearly delirious with hunger, stealing figs from his orchard. It is little wonder, then, that the young protagonist possesses only one superstition, all the rest having been "perdido. . . con el palo" (p. 12). Disillusioned by favorable treatment accorded the privileged children in school, the hypocrisy of the local priest and his own parents' antagonism toward him, his only irrational fear is that of mortality. He is terrified by the town's cemetery which he avoids assiduously. It is here that Martín's deep-rooted dread is manifested, embodied in the flora and fauna of the nearby cemetery. Arbó establishes this essential characteristic of Martín's personality on the second page of the text, in a reference to this mortal anxiety that mentions the protagonist by name for the first time. In this case, the narrator casually remarks on the eerie whistling of the owls in the cemetery at nightfall, and observes that "los cipreses asomaban por encima de los muros como una procesión de encapuchados" (p. 12), all of which causes Martín profound psychic discomfort.

Notwithstanding the casual nature of this initial reference to Martín, he is strongly identified with his mortal anxiety which continues to unsettle him through most of the trilogy.

In subsequent references, Martín's fear of death is almost always manifested in apparitions in the cemetery's landscape. The reader quickly comes to recognize the primary manifestations of this fear; the otherworldly hissing of owls and the cypress trees' resemblance to an ominous procession of "encapuchados". With Martín's ready disposition to such funereal imaginings, his spectral anxieties occasionally extend beyond the confines of the cemetery. On one occasion for example, just as Martín's grandfather is about to recount a ghost story of local fame, the boy's perceptions belie his terror:

Había unas nubes grandes, unas nubes negras cubriendo el horizonte; parecían monstruos, brujas con camisas hinchadas como velas, barcos extraños navegando, entre reflejos siniestros . . . El campo semejava un cementerio, y los árboles fantasmas dispuestos a darle un susto a uno así que se quedase solo. (p. 70)

In this passage, where the macabre presence of the cemetery extends to the countryside itself, and fellowship alone forestalls the attendant terror, the third person narrator implicitly describes Martín's perceptions of the landscape, which in this case are appropriate to his grandfather's vivid telling of a ghost story. Superficially, such a description, in which features of landscape seem to respond to or reflect personal moods or conditions, evokes the so-called "pathetic fallacy", a popular feature of nineteenth-century Romanticism.

Judging from this passage, critical opinion of Arbó as an imitator of nineteenth-century tendencies is understandable, given the dimensions of the author's credible portrayal of Martín's typically youthful anxieties expressed in the landscape.

With respect to such anxieties, Martín is not an abnormal boy. Fear of the dark, of ghosts, of solitude in darkness and the liberty taken by the imagination in such circumstances to interpret inanimate objects as hostile visitors from the next world, are all common characteristics of childhood. A child's dependence on his or her parents, even in a secure and loving home, is enough to cause the dread of darkness or solitude, where protection from unseen dangers seems out of reach. In addition, as for other children, the ghost story or the mere prospect that ghosts exist holds a morbid fascination for Martín (p. 69). What is surprising, however, is the extent of Martín's shrewd rationalism and the absence of jaundiced irascibility. In the universe constituted by the small town of Caretas, all manner of environmental extremes (e.g. of weather, of arid countryside, of personal behavior) lead the inhabitants to an attitude of bitterness and hostility from which there is no quarter. The citizens of Caretas in general show no will to change or even to escape. Martín's ingenuous sense of justice and outrage at the insensitivity and brutishness of his fellows is, like his fear of ghostly visitations and fascination for the ghost story, a seemingly innate characteristic common in childhood. These common elements notwithstanding, the kind of unrelenting, ubiquitous cruelty to which Martín is subjected

normally serves to cultivate irrationally anti-social delinquents, like the pícaro. In an environment so overwhelmingly cruel, how is one to preserve or develop such a sense of morality and justice as Martín possesses?

The protagonist in this case is not delinquent or antisocial. He is aware of the inherent injustice of the retarded social structure of his milieu: he understands, for example, that Camándulas can, with impunity, administer sadistic beating to the lower class children whereas he cannot do so to the privileged ones. Since no amount of classroom discipline avails to garner protest from Martín's parents, the boy routinely receives beatings which the public assumes are warranted and his fame as an incorrigible spreads on the lips of local gossips. In fact, none of Martín's anti-social behavior is willful and original. All of his misdemeanors are responses. He acts out of revenge, which is directed by his sense of justice, or merely in response to extreme hunger, a most powerful of motivators. Since, as the narrator states, all of Martín's illusions but one have been lost to the gratuitously disciplinary cane, it is possible that Arbó is suggesting a sublimation of the resultant anxiety, fear and stress into his one remaining superstition, forestalling actively hostile anti-social behavior and instead causing deep psychic fear. While Martín displays surprising normality, his fear of death is exaggerated, bordering on the obsessive: mere mention of the word causes him worry and discomfort. The translation by the protagonist's imagination of features of landscape into

terrifying, funereal images is restricted to this first volume of the trilogy. Arbó's intention is not an esoteric one. Like the hermitage that Martín is forced to see each time he leaves his home (an inescapable symbol, according to Eustis, of the town's devotion to oppressively traditional institutions), the cemetery is a morbidly intriguing, ever-present symbol of the town's collective attitude of hostility.

"La tierra era una tierra sin piedad. Como los hombres. Estos, en su mayoría, eran pequeños, o si altos, muy secos, como el trigo que crecía en los bancales, pero duros como las encinas; todos de piedra berroqueña" (p. 60): this statement succinctly characterizes the relationship between the landscape, the town and its inhabitants. The weather in particular contributes to an environment inimical to life in all its richness. The result is tenacious, resilient but perverse and limited life forms such as the scrubby, spiny, dry bush and trees described by the narrator. The inhospitable environment likewise elicits a weathered and twisted life form in the spirit of the townspeople. In Caretas, where the quality of life is materially and psychically diminished, spiritual growth is stunted by slavish adherence to outmoded and oppressive traditions. This psychic underdevelopment is a kind of stasis, as predictable as the inevitably harsh weather, which stigmatizes the town as a place of living death for its absence of variety, growth and clemency. It is a place where there is truly "nothing new under the sun", and where what does exist is painful and terrifying, at least to the protagonist.

In Caretas, with the ferocity of the weather, the asperity of the countryside and the brutality of the people, what distinguishes Martín from the rest of the populace is his unwillingness to accept the status quo. The townspeople are portrayed by Arbó as unwilling to or incapable of questioning the established social order, ignorant of more benevolent alternatives. Martín, perhaps for motives as related to dramatic expedience as to psychology, decides to experience life elsewhere. True, his grandfather has imbued him with the notion that Caretas is synonymous with cruelty and stupidity, and that remote Barcelona is a cosmopolitan place of greatness. While it sounds awesome in its own way, Martín expects a fundamental difference in the character of the people there. In addition to the attraction an urban landscape would offer to one who "vivía . . . en contacto con la tierra" (p. 137), another, more pragmatic motive based on spatial considerations causes Martín to flee his hometown: "El mundo siempre le había infundido miedo, pero ahora más miedo le infundía Caretas. Tenía que huir de allí; cuanto antes mejor y aunque fuera al mismo infierno" (p. 138). And so Martín leaves Caretas with a prejudiced view of life and man which, while fostered by the biased pronouncements of his grandfather, more implicitly and originally stems from harsh and diverse environmental elements. With such limited experience, narrow expectations of life, and remembering his grandfathers advice, both cynical and romanticized, Martín's odyssey is bound to be an exercise in disillusionment and enlightenment.

B. ROQUE GALDA: HIS PHILOSOPHY

Roque Galda, Martín's grandfather, is introduced as "el único que a Martín le trataba un poco bien, el único que tal vez le quería" (p. 25). Such a lukewarm characterization of their relationship stems from the fact that Martín is beaten by his grandfather as much, if not more so than by his "enemies." What differentiates Roque Galda from Martín's other oppressors is that the grandfather administers corporal punishment with a more reasonable pretense to imparting essential lessons to the boy. These lessons are practical ones designed to prepare the boy for life's abrasiveness rather than for its pleasant qualities. For example, when Martín is caught and beaten by the local priest for attempting to pilfer a few figs, Roque Galda's reaction is "no te digo que no cojas frutas; todo se puede hacer en este mundo, pero debe hacerse bien, y no dormir" (p. 83). In spite of the absence of moral dogma from the grandfather's admonitions, he is truly concerned about the boy's welfare, albeit in a pragmatic, non-altruistic fashion rather than an ideally moral one. The irony of Roque Galda's "protective" attitude about his grandson is that they are not related by blood: Martín's grandmother was a young widow with an infant daughter (later to be the boy's mother) when Roque Galda married her primarily out of avarice.

The circumstances leading up to the old man's installation as "rey de la casa" (p. 65) are humorous and characteristic of his roguish and paradoxically immature nature. Roque Galda admits that he married Martín's grandmother (whom he describes

as immeasurably shrewish) for her wealth, which comprised a house, grapevines and olive orchards. His motive, he explains, was that "a mí no me ha gustado nunca con exceso trabajar" (p. 96). With uncharacteristic humility, he allows that "me equivoqué; tuve que sufrirla y trabajar" (p. 96). After collecting a modest inheritance from a hitherto unknown uncle, Roque Galda quarrels with his insufferable wife for the last time and leaves with his fortune which he guards jealously in a sturdy trunk. Having given the world to believe that his inheritance is enormous, Martín's parents appear in order to offer shelter and assistance to the old man. He accepts without disillusioning them: he views their ulterior motives as license to exploit them in retribution for their mean-spirited avarice. In one of the novel's most comic sub-plots, Roque Galda imagines --with blissfully cruel pleasure-- their rushing to open the trunk before his body is even cold, to find stones, lead weights and an odd assortment of books and pamphlets. He feigns deafness while he hears details of their plans to spend his fortune. While he enjoys the meager but significant privileges the household reserves for him, he frustrates the avaricious couple whose greatest fear is that the old man will outlive them, depriving them of a legitimate investment.

Roque Galda has supreme confidence in his own discretion and wisdom, so much so that it eventually proves his undoing. Such arrogance is an essential element of his paradoxical character and figures as fodder for several tragically ironic episodes. For example, after cautioning Martín against

the sin of pride, pointing out that "la becerra mansa mama de su madre y de la ajena" (p. 104), the grandfather goes on to recount the exemplum of a one-eyed man, possessor of a fortune. By taking his wealth to the seashore, he reasoned, it could be better guarded: since no one would approach from the sea, he need only watch the land. His rear flank unsupervised, a boat landed, he was overcome by the sailors and deprived of his fortune. Roque Galda foils several attempts to break into his trunk. His vigilance notwithstanding, the old man himself falls victim to his own machinations: the ruse is exposed and Roque Galda is run out of town in disgrace and humiliation.

This bias, shortsightedness and egocentricity evident in the grandfather's personality figure essentially in his practical philosophy, with which he tries to imbue Martín for the boy's preparation for life. The nature of the grandfather's personal doctrine, and his devotion to it, is exemplified by an episode from his own boyhood, which he anecdotally relates to Martín: as a young boy, Roque Galda was taken by his father to see the public hanging of a man convicted of murdering his wife. Witnessing the grisly spectacle, the father reasoned, would discourage any misdemeanor on the boy's part and ensure his adherence to virtue and responsibility. Indeed, Roque Galda credits the experience with saving him from the temptation of murdering his intolerable spouse. However, the ghastly excess of this lesson sets the tone for the old man's notion of tuition: proverbs, exempla and aphorisms given emphasis by blows from his cane. The grandfather is sternly credulous that only

such harsh instruction could avail to save Martín from disgraceful perdition.

In keeping with the paradoxical nature of Roque Galda's personality, it is indisputable that in spite of the old man's bias and selectivity regarding the application of his dogma, he possesses an impressive command of stories, proverbs, folktales and other wisdom-related folklore: his personal failings do not detract from the quality of the wisdom he utters. However, irony figures most prominently in his failure to heed the very wisdom he confidently proffers. In Roque Galda's case, the wisdom he possesses is not so much to be practiced and heeded as it is to be displayed. As a man of modest means and accomplishments -- a failure and seeming hypocrite, one might suggest -- the accumulated knowledge of folkloric wisdom is his one claim to dignity and self-respect. It is his most valued possession.

Most of Roque Galda's repertoire is characteristically rustic. For example, he entertains Martín with the story of Juan Lanas, the local shepherd to whom the Virgin Mary appears, constituting Caretas' own miracle and effecting the establishment of the local hermitage. This story, recounted contrapuntally to great effect with that of Martín's first wheat harvest (a miserable experience of unrelenting heat, dry asperity and cruel pranks), forms part of the old man's idealized notion of rustic life. He often tells Martín that the noblest profession is that of shepherd. Aside from its appeal as a non-taxing vocation, there is the added prestige of being

commissioned by God with the "finding of Virgins." One is reminded of don Quijote's lyrical glorification of the Golden Age and the implicit understanding that he would, with Sancho, eventually retire from knight errantry to take up the shepherd's staff.

Aside from specific examples of local folklore, Roque Galda respects and subscribes to rustic wisdom in general. He is an aficionado of the Historia de Bertoldo, Bertoldino y Cacaseno, an Italian trilogy from the early seventeenth century. The premise of the first part of the trilogy is the visit of a lowly, unattractive peasant (Bertoldo) to the court of a mythical kingdom. Bertoldo engages the king -- a reputed sage, imposing in his ostentatious finery -- in debate and repartee in which they exchange esoteric, sometimes enigmatic proverbs and aphorisms. Bertoldo wins the friendly contest and thus demonstrates the superiority of rural wisdom.³ Historia de Bertoldo, Bertoldino y Cacaseno is one of the select items in Roque Galda's trunk awaiting Martín's greedy parents. The old man included it "para que aprendieran a precaverse contra las burlas" (p. 103).

With proverbial wisdom figuring in Historia de Bertoldo, Bertoldino y Cacaseno, it is not surprising that Roque Galda should use proverbs liberally as his preferred means of instruction. Popular in virtually every cultural milieu for its pithiness and potency, the proverb normally enjoys a privileged reputation as a profound and cherished form of expression, a tradition to be guarded, an enduring custom with the pedigree of

the biblical King Solomon, whose resilience as a figure of sagacity and judiciousness sustains his cultural importance even in our time. While many of Roque Galda's proverbs reveal pragmatism and common sense, they are of a different category from what we usually expect of the proverb, particularly from the Solomonic variety. In his address entitled "The Humour of Spanish Proverbs", A.A. Parker makes the following observations:

. . . it has often been pointed out that there is a strong stoic element in Spanish life and culture. But on the whole I would prefer the term fatalism. Spanish proverbs show not so much an indifference to pain and suffering as a resigned acceptance of them. . . . This submission to the inevitability of everything that happens is fatalism rather than stoicism, and it seems to me much more characteristic of Spain than the self-conscious search for virtue through indifference."

Arbó hastens to point out, on the first page of the text of Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, that Caretas "era un pueblo de hambre, de rezos y de refranes; el refrán y la estaca habrían también podido servir como emblemas vivos de su escudo" (p. 11). Eustis sees in this observation the suggestion that the town's inhabitants subscribe to "a fatalistic adherence to traditional attitudes" (p. 26). This equation of the proverb with a symbol of the townspeople's brutishness underlines how the two function as constituents of this fatalistic tradition. In this case, the proverb is not so much an instrument of wisdom as a means for perpetuating this same resignation and fatalism which, while a common feature of Spanish life, distinguishes

Caretas as especially backward.

Martín's grandfather exemplifies this attitude in his use of proverbs, most of which betray a resigned or pessimistic attitude; "Quien bien te quiere, te hará llorar" (p. 102); "Mientras hace sol, calentémonos. Cuando truene, Dios nos valga" (p. 102); and "Si la envidia fuese tiña, todo el mundo rascaría" (p. 112). As for Martín, the old man's proverbs routinely elicit an almost Pavlovian response in the boy. The narrator offers that "los refranes no le gustaban a Martín y él se sabía el por qué" (p. 100). In this case, Roque Galda makes use of a proverb to quash the boy's legitimate curiosity about the contents of the enigmatic trunk. The old man, who usually frustrates Martín's eager juvenile curiosity with his anecdotal digressions, responds with hostility, saying "No seas curioso, Martín. No conviene saber demasiadas cosas; se han de saber las necesarias" and "Quien sabe mucho, mucha pena, y quien cavila, poco vive. En boca cerrada no entran moscas" (p. 100). Unable to understand why his innocent curiosity should be met with such resounding antagonism, and associating Roque Galda's use of proverbs with frustration and reproach, Martín views the proverb as one more element in the milieu of repression, a verbal cane, as the narrator suggests.

The grandfather's practical philosophy also betrays a sense of fatalism and resignation. With a pessimistic view of man and the world, his sincere efforts to prepare Martín for the travail of human existence are of a cautionary nature. Certain phrases, which are repeated often in Martín's presence, typify Roque

Galda's view of the world. These phrases become recurrent, abstract points of reference for Martín even, and in some cases especially, when he is beyond the direct influence of his grandfather. For example, as Martín journeys through the country on his way to Barcelona, with almost every encounter with another person he recalls this admonition:

. . . si vas solo por el camino y encuentras un perro, piensa que es un lobo. Si te equivocas no perderás nada. En cambio, si piensas que es un perro y te equivocas estás perdido. Cuando se oye tronar, el agua está cerca . . . pero no olvides que a veces llueve sin tronar. ¡Cuidado Martín! (p. 104)

Hence Martín will judge future encounters against the notion that "hay que pensar que todos son lobos" and the admonition "¡Cuidado Martín!" will ring in his ears at most critical junctures.

According to Roque Galda, the world is a deceptive, menacing place in which justice is utterly ideal. He agrees with the ironic refrain of his friend, Juanín de Lara, that "Reina una bondad en el mundo . . . " (p. 35). This too recurs in the mind of the impressionable young Martín, who, when faced with the intransigent support of injustice in Caretas (i.e., his universe), occasionally recalls and concurs that "había, sí, una gran bondad en el mundo, como decía Juanín de Lara. Sí, sí, había una bondad que daba asco" (p. 123). However, Martín's grandfather himself proffers an intricate definition of life expressed in the form of a refrain, which, although another example of folk wisdom in the public domain, is uniquely his. The narrator tells us that "toda la filosofía del

abuelo parecía cifrarse en el sentido de una vieja copla que siempre repetía:

No olvides que este mundo
es un golfo redondo.
Quien no sabe nadar
vase al fondo.

Lo importante, según él, era saber nadar, 'nadar y guardar la ropa'" (p. 26).

The multiple layers of significance of this metaphor are especially apropos of Roque Galda's view of life as unpredictably and deceptively perilous. The notion that the world is a gulf that must be arduously negotiated by swimming is daunting enough: much of the metaphor's potency rests in the idea of death by drowning, a ghastly possibility for anyone to consider. Swimming, as a solution, is accessible to all, but only as a learned ability. Thus learning (and, conversely, teaching) assumes critical importance. Further, the use of the term "gulf" bears even gloomier existential implications: the word also has the sense of "abyss," "chasm," "whirlpool," "chaos," "confusion." The notion of sinking into such situations implies irretrievable perdition and hopelessness. There is also an obvious, fundamental necessity to learn how to grapple with chaos and confusion, even though these, by their very nature, imply that man is helpless and unable to impose his will on them. Roque Galda himself reveals another nuance to the metaphor's meaning. As he extols the magnificence of Barcelona to his grandson, the old man describes, with particular detail, the immense statue of Christopher Columbus at the city's

harbour, that "está allá arriba en la punta de una altísima columna: en la punta de la columna, hay una bola redonda que representa el mundo, que como sabes, es una bola y redonda" (p. 108). When a puzzled Martín asks if it is not a gulf, Roque Galda replies, "También es un golfo; es igual, pero siempre redondo, en cuesta siempre, para que no te duermas" (p. 108). Therefore, the mere learning of survival skills is not sufficient: one must continually adjust one's approach according to the situation, and one must be ever-vigilant.

The narrator tells us that "al abuelo debía Martín lo poco que sabía del mundo" (p. 26). As a typically credulous and trusting youngster whose grandfather is the only adult willing to instruct him in any way, it is not surprising that Roque Galda's pronouncements are taken to heart by Martín. Nonetheless, in spite of his condemnations of Caretas as a place of uncommon brutishness, the old man is in fact the quintessence of the town's collective malaise: unable to recognize his own participation in and responsibility for the town's social retardation, he accepts the characteristic bile and hostility as routine, fails to question its primacy and adheres strictly to an unchanging dogma, indiscriminately applied. Even though Roque Galda singles out Caretas as a particularly cruel place, his jaundiced view of life (which he extends beyond the town's limits) suggests either limited experience or the inability or unwillingness to recognize flaws in that view, flaws that experience would certainly expose. Recalling the observations made by Parker and Eustis with regard to a characteristically

Spanish variety of fatalism, the tragedy of such fatalistic resignation is its contribution to the perpetuation of oppressive traditions and social institutions. Roque Galda is, more than anything, resigned to man's internecine hostility. He indoctrinates Martín into the belief that to trust is a perilous game of chance, that people are marauding scavengers and that life is unrelentingly bitter, all in the hope that it will forestall Martín's learning first hand through harsh experience. These notions, more than anything else, define Martín's perspective of the world and further act as a foil against which his first hand experiences contrast, eventually to cede to a more reasoned and balanced view of life.

C. IDEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The specific affinities between Martín de Caretas and the picaresque genre have been noted above. While the picaresque is not commonly distinguished for its philosophical features, the major effect of Arbó's borrowing from it is one of supporting and forming part of a commentary on the nature of man's existence. Christopher Eustis ably put the relationship between the trilogy and the picaresque into perspective in his article and, as we shall see, the most patent borrowings from the genre are superficial and selective.

Since the purpose of Eustis' article is to examine Martín de Caretas in the light of a rigorous application of the term "picaresque," he offers only implicit commentary on the work's philosophical characteristics. Nonetheless, many of his observations are helpful to our purpose. Because of the casual and often corrupt use of the term "picaresque," to say nothing of brisk polemics as to the more rigorous and accurate interpretations of it, Eustis first sets out to present a precise, acceptable working definition of the classical picaresque form. He goes on to use this definition, along with the modifications wrought by twentieth-century adaptations of the picaresque, to contrast with Arbó's trilogy. The essential differences uncovered by Eustis are not only so numerous but in addition so fundamental that he handily succeeds in demonstrating the marginal affinities between Martín de Caretas and the classical form of the picaresque. Eustis asserts:

A consideration of the entire trilogy as an attempt to reconcile the picaresque tradition with an essentially sympathetic and equitable view of mankind reveals an underlying state of mind and a vague social commitment which are antithetical not only to picaresque literature but also to the main currents of Spanish narrative since the civil war.(p. 21)

While this observation is accurate enough in itself, Eustis fails to do justice to the possibility that Arbó's intention was not necessarily to "reconcile the picaresque tradition with an essentially sympathetic and equitable view of mankind." By means of a slightly different perspective, concentrating on the ideological implications of the author's picaresque predilections and selectively reviewing similarities and differences between Martín de Caretas and the true picaresque form, we hope to shed some light on Arbó's motives for presenting an optimistic view of mankind.

The most patent similarities are precisely that; patent and superficial. The trilogy's title recalls Lazarillo de Tormes and Guzmán de Alfarache. Pithy summaries at the beginning of each chapter, often jocular adumbrations of what is to come, are similar to those found in the Guzmán, not to mention many other prototypical narratives of the same period and later. Arbó even seems to allude to specific episodes from classically picaresque works. When Martín, while on his first wheat harvest, is served "una boñiga de burro" in his soup (p. 45), we are reminded of a similarly nauseating gustatory experience from the Guzmán, in which the protagonist is served an omelet of nearly hatched eggs. The episode of Martín's stay with his grandmother also

contains such allusions. His temporarily successful pilfering of figs, and his eventual seizure at the vengeful hands of his grandmother, is similar to Lazarillo's experience with the votive loaves. And the climax of the episode, when Martín sends the old woman sprawling down a flight of stairs, recalls Lazarillo's causing his first master to brain himself against a pillar.

Far more important than these superficialities is the presence of certain ideological features that can be fairly described as picaresque, even though they are not applied rigorously according to the model of the classic form. Eustis points to this imbalance:

The world of Caretas is picaresque not so much because it exemplifies a deceitful, hypocritical society, but rather because of habitual ill-will and injustice which prevail. Likewise, Martín does not resemble the pícaro through reflecting in his own behavior the vices of society nor through conforming to his own environment, but rather in that he faces this world alone and fends for himself by means of trickery and astuteness.(p. 24)

This is true: Caretas is portrayed not as typical, but as outstanding for its extreme brutishness. Also, Martín recognizes, inherently it seems, his society's defects, and although the prevailing conditions push him toward certain forms of picaresque behavior, he does not espouse outright, irrational hostility. In addition, the social conditions that force his behavior are augmented by his grandfather's urgent tutelage. In a sense, Martín is instructed to be a pícaro.

The purpose of Roque Galda's instruction of his grandson is

the boy's self-preservation which, in the picaresque circumstances of Caretas, implies the need for constant vigilance and at least initial suspicion of others. We are already familiar with some of the old man's accustomed refrains; "¡Cuidado Martín!", "Si ves un perro en tu camino, piensa que es un lobo y guárdate. No perderás nada. En cambio . . ." (p. 147). Another of Roque Galda's expressions of the importance of shrewdness and caution is couched in the terminology of sleeping and waking. After Martín's ill-fated attempt to steal figs from the priest, his grandfather tells him : "Hay que ir con cuidado, Martín. Despierto siempre, siempre sobre el quien vive . . . y si vas a un huerto a robar, que no sea el del cura;" and: "Cuidado, Martín. Despierto siempre. No te digo que no cojas las frutas; todo se puede hacer en este mundo, pero debe hacerse bien, y no dormir" (p. 83). In addition to the emphasis here on shrewd vigilance, there seems to be implicit in it the notion that moral strictures do not apply since, as in this case, the traditional upholders of morality are just as guilty of transgression as anyone. This is, in a way, also reminiscent of the portrayal of the clergy in Lazarillo de Tormes.

While Roque Galda's status as Martín's teacher/protector is one of the elements that disqualifies the boy as a truly picaresque protagonist (Eustis cites Alexander Blackburn, who sees the "absence of a fellowship" as a picaresque prerequisite), what is implied by the old man's statements is isolation, a voluntary estrangement from one's fellow man. In addition to this, Martín achieves unhappy fame in Caretas as

"las ancas de Barrabás" (p. 118) and as "un demonio; era de la piel de Satanás" (p. 132). This reputation is unjust and undeserved: it is determined and upheld by the same society that credulously adheres to oppressive traditions. Martín "no sabía como se había ganado esta fama. Ocurre como con las medallas; un día se la cuelgan a uno en el pecho sin que sepa muy bien qué ha hecho para merecerla" (p. 25). Eustis elucidates:

As long as he remains in the village he is trapped in a typically picaresque dilemma: he cannot live outside society but neither can he exist within Caretas without being persecuted and abused. Upon defending himself with tricks and schemes, his only defensive weapons, he gives rise to a series of personal disasters characteristic of an ill-fated picaresque life. (p. 25)

The alienation and solitude implied by this and Roque Galda's admonitions, plus the absurdity of the social conditions to which Martín is subjected, resemble in a broad sense certain features of modern existential thought. It has been noted that the picaresque tradition, like many other manifestations of literature and philosophy that predate what we accept as "existentialism," reflects sundry timeless observations of human existence that have since come to be associated with modern existentialism. The classic pícaro, in the dilemma described above by Eustis, is forcibly estranged from his own social milieu, alienated by the only experience of human community he has ever known. Compelled to fend for himself amid uniform hostility from all quarters, none of his actions garnering his acceptance by an approving society, it is not surprising that

feelings of alienation and a sense of absurdity should follow.

It is true that, like the picaresque form, the very nature of existentialism is disputed and polemicized, and in addition the term is often abused or inaccurately employed in casual discourse. But judging from the literary manifestations of this philosophical school of thought, it is safe to say that the solitude of the individual and the absurdity of man's condition are significant, if broad preoccupations for existential novelists. Both of these problems, perhaps more implicitly than explicitly, are present not only in examples of the classic picaresque form, but in Martín de Caretas as well. In fact these are further manifestations of what we could broadly term existential thought in Arbó's trilogy. Martín is not only alienated within his own community and trapped in an absurd situation, but he also evinces a kind of deep anguish that resembles the existencialist's preoccupation of the notion of le Néant. Death being the one experience common to all men, the end of an admittedly absurd and painful, yet somehow compelling existence, Martín's fear of mortality reflects this same kind of existential concern; that this miserable existence, which we feel a fundamental, intuitive compulsion to preserve, should end with an ominous, and even worse, unknown and unknowable experience.

Martín, with his innate sense of justice and logic, struggles against his own dehumanization, and therefore struggles to make sense of his absurd existence. In the first volume of the trilogy, stealing food out of urgent hunger,

standing up for his own innocence (when possible) and acting out of vengeance against oppressors were the extent of his self-reliant, self-defining actions. His decision to leave home is the first decision in a process which finds him gradually learning to be truly responsible for himself. It puts him in a position to be able to judge the vagaries of man's behavior for himself, according to his experiences, rather than simply accepting what he is told by authority figures.

The view of life represented by borrowings from the picaresque and the suggestions of existential thought present in Martín de Caretas is corroborated and expanded by yet another element of commentary on human existence. Many of the omniscient narrator's statements bear a striking resemblance to dolorous observations about man's existence found in the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. We have already seen that the Bible impressed Arbó as a boy, and that stories and quotations from the Old Testament appear frequently in his fiction. It should not surprise us then that a writer imbued with the Biblical ethos should betray some ideological aspects of it, especially when these complement and dovetail, in a general sense, with the ideology of the picaresque and existential thought.

Since we intend to demonstrate the affiliation of Arbó's trilogy with Ecclesiastes, it should be pointed out that this Old Testament book offers ideological features that transcend its obvious similarities to the views of life exemplified by the picaresque and existential thought. However, Arbó seems to have

schematized the ideology of Qoheleth (the self-proclaimed author of Ecclesiastes) and utilized complementary constituents of it in each of the three volumes of his trilogy. The result is an interpretation of virtually all the philosophical aspects of Ecclesiastes save one: the book's status as sacred writing. R.B.Y. Scott writes that the author of Ecclesiastes is "a rationalist, an agnostic, a skeptic, a pessimist, and a fatalist (the terms are not used pejoratively!)." ⁵ Further, he comments on the unique nature of the book compared to the other sacred writings that constitute the Bible:

In the case of Ecclesiastes, there is no . . . possibility of allegorization to bring it in line with the tone and teaching of the rest of the Bible. It diverges too radically. In fact, it denies some of the things on which the other writers lay the greatest stress -- notably that God has revealed himself and his will to man In Ecclesiastes, God is not only unknown to man through revelation; he is unknowable through reason, the only means by which the author believes knowledge is attainable. Such a God is . . . the mysterious, inscrutable Being whose existence must be presupposed as that which determines the life and fate of man, in a world man cannot change, and where all his effort and values are rendered meaningless.⁶

The pessimistic tone of the above analysis does not close the door on positive applications of Qoheleth's ideology: for example, proof of the evanescence of man's worldly affairs might encourage attention to godly matters.⁷ However, the agnostic element of Ecclesiastes also makes it the Biblical writing with the greatest potential for secular application. This being the case, it is not inappropriate to examine Martín de Cretas in light of Qoheleth's ideology, especially given the similarities

between the two.

When Scott speaks of Qoheleth's "mood of disillusionment and . . . philosophy of resignation" and his espousal of "the necessity of caution and moderation before the inexplicable," we can recognize the vague contours of Roque Galda's philosophy. However, in Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, it is the narrator that most nearly approximates Qoheleth's declarations. One of Qoheleth's basic tenets is that man suffers essentially the same conditions as the dumb animal:⁸

Díjeme también acerca del hombre: Dios quiere hacerles conocer que de sí son como las bestias; porque una misma es la suerte de los hijos de los hombres y la suerte de las bestias, y la muerte del uno es la muerte de las otras . . . y no tiene el hombre ventaja sobre la bestia, pues todo es vanidad⁹.

Qoheleth further observes in a familiar passage that:

no es de los ágiles el correr, ni de los valientes el combate . . . sino que el tiempo y el acaso salen al encuentro de todos, y que ni aun su hora conoce el hombre. Como pez que es capturado en una siniestra red y como pájaro que se enreda en el lazo, así se enredan los hijos de los hombres en el tiempo aciago cuando de improviso cae sobre ellos. (Eccl.ix.12).

There is, in the following quotation from Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, a striking parallelism with the passages from Ecclesiastes cited above.

Todo eran matas y por rodar, todo trampas . . . pero eso se lo sabía de memoria. Lo que no sabía era dónde la próxima saltaría . . . Nadie sabe la piedra con que ha de tropezar . . . La desgracia le viene a uno por donde menos puede esperar. Fue el preludio de la desgracia mayor que había de seguir a aquélla; una y otra estaban ocultas en el tiempo, como los cepos en el campo en las sendas de los conejos.

Sale el animal por su hierba; es de noche; los hombres duermen, duermen también los perros y todo está en silencio. ¿Quién ha de pensar que puede pasarle algo? Sale el animal por su hierba . . . y ¡zás!, ya está cogido por la pata en el cepo.

Así estaba el peligro oculto en la senda de Martín, como una bestia al acecho, y no había prudencia ni aviso, no había santo que le pudiese apartar. (pp. 15-16).

In Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, there are many such passages likening the protagonist to the hapless animal walking into a trap. Although these words are the narrator's, we know that the choice of metaphor is for Martín's benefit because his own family depends upon his brothers' rabbit traps for sustenance during the winter: "En invierno, los hermanos de Martín salían a cazar; por la noche . . . armaban el cepo en las sendas de los conejos" (p. 60). These traps, a gratuitously cruel recourse, are a disturbing aspect of Martín's daily reality and a vivid, if melodramatic parallel to the boy's fear and sense of alienation; not so far-fetched if we consider it the product of an ingenuous and abused youth.

The context of the lengthy citation above is a representation of the ubiquitous and unrelenting peril faced by Martín, in the persons of his mother, grandfather and the sadistic Camándulas; in the form of Caretas itself. A key element of this recurring metaphor and its relationship to Qoheleth's philosophy is that of "el tiempo aciago." In spite of Ecclesiastes' sacred character, Qoheleth, in his effort to portray man's helplessness before life's inscrutable

vicissitudes, sometimes implies the influence of treacherous fortune. Given the essential mystery of God's will posited by Qoheleth, he says such things as "una misma es la suerte de los hijos de los hombres y la suerte de las bestias" and "así se enredan los hijos de los hombres en el tiempo aciago cuando de improvviso cae sobre ellos." In the first volume of Martín de Caretas there is a strong element of superstition, expressed by Roque Galda, Martín and the narrator. Martín's ill-conceived foray into the priest's orchard occurred on "un día nefasto" (p. 79), about which his grandfather explained to him, ". . . muy serio, que aquel era un día aciago Era 13 y viernes. El diablo, según él, estaba en tales días de malhumor" (p. 83). Similar justification is given for other misfortunes that befall the protagonist. Eustis notes that, "Much like Guzmán or Pablos, he is under the influence of a pernicious mala estrella, which leads him closer and closer to disaster"(p. 25). He goes on to quote the following from Arbó's text: "Poco a poco los hechos fueron amontonándose en torno a Martín, convertidos en amenazas. El, Martín, no se daba cuenta. Era la trampa en el camino; sólo que aquí eran diez, o eran más . No había escapatoria" (p. 115). This is one of the most provocative of the many resonances of Ecclesiastes that we perceive in Martín de Caretas. It is here that Arbó draws together the notions of man's bestial helplessness to control events and the influence of insidious fortune, much as Qoheleth does in chapter ix, verse 12. In addition, both authors point to the relationship between time and inevitable misfortune. In

Qoheleth, ". . . el tiempo y el acaso salen al encuentro de todos:" in Arbó, "una y otra (las desgracias) estaban ocultas en el tiempo, como los cepos en el camino." Both imply intervention in a given trajectory. Be it the transience of time itself, or the journey of an individual through the enigmatic travail of life, time is another component of the cosmos' pervasive structure of oppression against man.

Arbó makes other, less systematic allusions to the philosophy of Qoheleth. These serve the purpose of corroborating that specific, fatalistic world view that also comprises broadly defined elements of the picaresque and existential thought. In these cases, Arbó's language does not resemble so closely that of Qoheleth, but the underlying ideology is clearly reflected. For example, Qoheleth complains of the prevalence of injustice and the absence of commensurate redress: "De todo he visto en mis fugaces días: justo que muere en toda su justicia e impío que con todas sus iniquidades campa largo tiempo" (Eccl.vii.15). Appropriately, Martín learns this fundamental lesson in school, where the difference between the privileged and the underprivileged is further exaggerated by the sadistic schoolmaster's prejudices: "a ellos, los privilegiados, no les alcanzaba la vara de Camándulas. Allí la vara detenía; la cólera del dios, ante aquellas cabezas bien peinadas, se desvanecía, o bien descargarse sobre las cabezas vecinas algo más bajas y rapadas" (p. 19). In the case of Martín and his classmates, the dichotomy is not as clear as Qoheleth declares. Martín, sometimes innocent, is also at times guilty of mischief,

however the misdemeanors for which he is punished are always responses to urgent situations like the bellicose provocations of his classmates or the butcher's vicious goat (Camándulas takes the liberty of beating Martín for his having injured the goat with a stone he threw).

The kind of injustice represented by this license to oppress the underprivileged is also more broadly expressed: in addition to Martín's vivid, first-hand experience of injustice, a subtler, more metaphysical variety is apparent. Roque Galda, to emphasize the moral of the above-mentioned ghost-story, expresses it proverbially with "Muchas veces ocurre así en la vida: que unos levantan la liebre y otros la cobran; unos llevan la fama y otros cardan la lana" (p. 93). This is reminiscent of one of the most familiar verses from Ecclesiastes, which is literally proverbial in our time: ". . . no es de los ágiles el correr, ni de los valientes el combate, ni de los sabios el pan, ni de los entendidos la riqueza, ni aun de los cuerdos el favor . . ." (Eccl.ix.11). With regard to this particular theme, Arbó's approach is stricter and perhaps more consistent than that of Qoheleth, who allows that "el tiempo y el acaso salen al encuentro de todos," but further complains that he has witnessed "justo que muere en toda su justicia e impío que con todas sus iniquidades campa largo tiempo." In the world constituted by Caretas and its people, there is no mention of the privileged suffering: ill-fortune, while described by the narrator as an apparently insidious, yet mysterious metaphysical force with some kind of perverse intelligence, seems in fact

strictly to obey divisions of social class.

Qoheleth might seem inconsistent for his apparent contradictions, but his purpose in portraying a world where the just perish and the sinful prosper is to emphasize the futility of expecting one's virtuousness to be rewarded in this life. This closely resembles Arbó's message in the first volume of the trilogy, with the added dimension of his commentary on social class. In *Caretas*, there is no justice in reward and punishment: privilege is not decided metaphysically according to supreme values such as virtue and goodness. On the contrary, it responds to utterly worldly circumstances and furthermore, it is a function of the same attitudes that sustain the town's collective brutishness..

In spite of the diverse nature of the philosophical postures that compose the whole of this portrait of the world and man's existence, there is purity and acuity in Arbó's design. He offers a comprehensive representation of a mode of human existence that knows no clemency or sweetness. The abrasiveness of this existence finds personal expression and corroboration in Martín's mortal fear and Roque Galda's grim pronouncements on life's treachery. Other factors, ideological and thematic, lend authenticity to the different levels of the author's depiction of life in *Caretas*: they flesh out Arbó's ideological concerns into a coherent whole.

The most basic level of this ideological whole is the rendering of the concrete, tangible qualities of the life of town. The forbidding landscape, the squalor and disrepair of

the buildings and the customary hostility of the people are the most patent characteristics of that stigmatized town. Insofar as the development of the protagonist is concerned, these characteristics are confirmed, supported and expanded by the authors recourse to certain thematic borrowings from the picaresque: these borrowings also serve the depiction of the concrete, quotidian qualities of life in Caretas and Martín's existence in particular. The boy's abysmal homelife, the parental neglect and poverty-induced hunger function in concert with the more general qualities of the town to catalyze his behavior and personal development. The unhappy results -- perceived as malicious mischief and earning him his ill-fame -- in turn elicit Roque Galda's advice on acquiring the defensive skills in shrewdness, caution and trickery, all resonant of the classic picaresque protagonist.

The alienation wrought by the town's persecution of Martín and his grandfather's counselling voluntary estrangement leads us to confront more abstract and intimate results of this punitive environment, results that resemble existential concerns. Martín's isolation from the rest of the community is the result of the same persecution that marks his absurdly impossible predicament. Arbó vividly illustrates that life -- vegetal, animal and human -- goes on by virtue of tenacity: it is not encouraged by the environment. The special circumstances surrounding Martín actively frustrate his fundamental attempts to survive the hostility. Therefore it is not surprising that the boy should perceive deathly manifestations in the local

landscape, and that the anguish expressed by these perceptions might support the notion that Caretas is not only synonymous with brutal stupidity, but with death itself. Caretas as an autonomous world is "un golfo redondo," perceived by Martín as an abstract, terminal void: the absurd and senseless end of his personal trajectory. It is fear and despair that motivate his departure.

While the apparent contributions of Qoheleth's philosophy to Arbó's portrayal of life resemble certain resonances of existentialism, they provide an additional dimension to augment not only the latter's qualities of abstract intimacy but also the concrete realism supported by picaresque affinities. The problems of injustice and man's helplessness to control his fate, among others, can be considered on a concrete level, but in this case, both Arbó and Qoheleth imply a treacherous metaphysical influence on daily affairs. The overall effect achieved by Arbó through all his allusions and borrowings could be characterized with a phrase used by R.B.Y. Scott to describe Qoheleth's vital attitude: "As life is cancelled by death, so all values are negated by their opposites."¹⁰ This is the basis of Roque Galda's philosophy: the more significant, more potent features of life are the negative ones. They must be given precedence over the positive aspects, accorded greater attention. Hence his admonitory counsel, "Si ves un perro . . . piensa que es un lobo y guárdate. No perderás nada. En cambio . . . " At the end of the first volume, as Martín is about to sally forth on his own, he carries with him a

psychic burden of fear, despair and an unhappy view of life and man. Suffering from the ingenuous credulity of youth and Roque Galda's confidently expressed wisdom, his journey will test the dialectic tension between his own inherent good will and judiciousness and the ominous, unsettling implications of his grandfather's insistent views.

D. NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹ Sebastián Juan Arbó, Martín de Caretas en el pueblo (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1972), p. 9. All subsequent references to this work are from the same edition and appear in the text.

² Christopher Eustis, " Martín de Caretas: The Picaresque Myth Transformed," Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos, 20, No.1 (Otoño 1980), 23. Subsequent references appear in the text.

³ The first part of the trilogy Historia de Bertoldo, Bertoldino y Cacaseno was based on an earlier, sixteenth-century Italian text entitled Dyalogo di Salomon e Marcolpho. In this case, the humble peasant is Marcolpho and the sovereign in question, as the title indicates, is the legendary Old Testament sage and king. With Arbó's patent interest in the Old Testament, the apparent affinities of his trilogy with Solomonic wisdom, and with certain of Roque Galda's characteristics seeming parodies of the prodigious qualities attributed to Solomon, closer scrutiny of both Italian texts might prove enlightening with regard to the first volume of Martín de Caretas.

⁴ A.A. Parker, "The Humour of Spanish Proverbs," Canning House Ninth Annual Lecture, 16 May 1962, Diamante XIII, (London: The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Councils, 1963), p. 22. Several of the proverbs mentioned in Parker's address appear in Martín de Caretas in humorously expanded forms.

⁵ R.B.Y. Scott, introd., trans., and notes, The Anchor Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (Garden City, New York: Doubleday,

1965), p. 192.

⁶ Scott, p. 191.

⁷ Scott, p. 192.

⁸ There follow herewith several long quotations. They are reproduced at length in order to show their procedural parallelism.

⁹ Ecclesiastes, iii, 18-19. For the purposes of this study, the edition cited is Sagrada Biblia (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1972). Subsequent references appear in the text.

¹⁰ Scott, p. 203.

IV. EN EL CAMPOA. FUNCTION OF LANDSCAPE

Before Martín sets out from Caretas, his dilemma involves two inhospitable worlds; Caretas, of which his knowledge is certain, having experienced its inclemency first-hand; and the outside world, which his grandfather alleges to be uniformly treacherous. When the unfolding juggernaut of ill fortune compels him to leave his hometown, he is fully charged with Roque Galda's ideology. His "entrada en el mundo" is marked by fear and anxiety. After conferring with Roque Galda for a last time, the town still in excitement over his spectacular escape from his grandmother, Martín departs at night. In the first volume of the trilogy, Arbó not only associates the boy's spectral imaginings with the cemetery's nocturnal aspect, but nearly all examples of the metaphor likening Martín to the hapless rabbits caught in traps include the phrase "es de noche." As the second volume opens, Martín's "miedo del nocturno" marks the inauguration of his uncertain journey. Wandering aimlessly, "se había desviado desde el principio. Con la noche, el susto, los siseos del cementerio, había doblado hacia la derecha, en lugar de hacerlo hacia la izquierda."²

Given the code of Caretas' synonymity with ignorance and hostility established in the first volume, and given the exclusivity of Martín's vital experience, the town serves the protagonist as a measure of his encounters with the world at large. The town's function as a model is supported by the

consistency of Roque Galda's ideology (applicable beyond the world constituted by Caretas) with the condition of the town's brutish inhabitants. Furthermore, the association of the town with its landscape is sustained in the mind of the errant boy. All this is connoted in the first two pages of "Los caminos del mundo," the first chapter of Martín de Caretas en el campo, to wit:

Caminaba por un llano, por campos de olivos, viñas escasas, trigales raquíuticos, malezas, en el paisaje tan conocido de Caretas; aquí y allá surgían también pinos recortándose en las alturas y también los pinos eran pequeños, retorcidos.

Dobló un recodo; ante él se abrió un campo sin árboles, una amplia extensión sobre la cual brillaban las estrellas altas en el cielo alto.

Martín se detuvo y respiró por primera vez.

Hasta allí le había perseguido la aprensión de los cipreses, del cementerio, el siseo de las lechuzas. Tenía miedo de que le persiguiesen . . . (pp. 11-12).

Here, a fundamental change in the aspect of the landscape produces a fundamental change in the boy's psychic condition: the usually ominous and awesome darkness fails to dampen his relief at tangible evidence of his escape. The unfamiliar character of the treeless plain, which offers no opportunity for misperception, is enough to alleviate the habitual anxiety about ghostly visitors that is inexorably linked to darkness. This change of mood, while merely temporary, marks the incipience of Martín's true psychic autonomy. The trajectory of the protagonist's development in this second book obeys a learning

process in which he is progressively estranged from the qualities embodied in his hometown: brutality, superstition and spiritual poverty as prevalent factors (the unquestioned norm in Caretas) are gradually challenged. Likewise, Roque Galda's ideology is in turn tested by events and openly challenged by Antonio Cardén, the hedonist truck driver who serves as the boy's protector/mentor, and by several passing acquaintances.

However, before these specific events occur, the process begins on a subtler, more profound level. Martín's adherence to Roque Galda's ideology is strong; only direct, successive challenges to the boy's acquired prejudice avail to open his mind. In the incipient stages of this process his psychic estrangement from the values of Caretas is preceded by evidence of physical distancing from the place. The first outstanding feature of this process is that Martín's mortal anxiety and fear of night is no longer manifested in apparitions in nature. For example, references to the owls' eerie hissing and the resemblance of cypress trees to hooded spectres now pertain only to Martín's memories. In fact, in the second book of the trilogy landscape for the most part realizes a function distinct from that of the first book. There is some subtle suggestion of Nature's role in the determination of man's behavior. Specifically, there is the unhappy madman, one of Martín's first encounters en route to Barcelona, who lost his mind to grief over his son's drowning in the local river: his obsessive vigil at the riverbank necessitates regular visits from his wife and daughter, who bring him the food that serves as Martín's first

meal of the journey. In a more general sense, the protagonist has numerous unpleasant encounters with farmers along his way. Arbó portrays them almost uniformly as brutes, ingrates and ignoramuses, enslaved by their dependence upon a taxing and unrelentingly difficult vocation. Such determinism, described explicitly in the first book, has only limited applicability in the second book since events are no longer confined to the insular world of Caretas. In addition, what relevance it has is implicit and understood, having seen its full extension in Martín de Caretas en el pueblo.

The principal function of landscape in this second volume emerges out of the inextricable bond between the forbidding local landscape and the collective hostility of Caretas' denizens. The town is more than merely synonymous with brutality and ignorance. Initially, any rational or intellectual boundary that distinguishes Caretas, its landscape and its people from similar countryside and human behavior elsewhere is virtually nonexistent for the protagonist. He intuitively feels that a more hospitable landscape would signal greater clemency. On the first night of his flight, when he feels like resting he notices that "El terreno no ofrecía la menor señal de bondad. Era duro y áspero, despiadado. Los árboles se levantaban severos; las alturas parecían ceñudas, malhumoradas Pero detrás de él estaba Caretas; Martín continuó hacia adelante" (p.13). In addition, his response to the good-natured teasing of two members of the Guardia Civil (who intercept him early in his journey) is: "El mundo . . . está lleno de

bandidos, ladrones, bromistas majaderos. Todo el mundo es Caretas. ¡Cuánta razón tenía el abuelo!" (p. 25).

Several other similar incidents move Martín to observe that "Todo el mundo es Caretas." While these vexing episodes remind the protagonist of his pitiable hometown, the landscape, as its aspect changes in the course of Martín's wandering, works its influence in a nearly subliminal fashion. This is evinced in the passage cited above in which Martín "respiró por primera vez" in response to a respite from the accustomed flora of Caretas. There are even more explicit examples of this kind of influence. In one case, just as Martín is mentally reinforcing his acceptance of Roque Galda's admonitory counsels, he is unable to overcome sensations of well-being:

Pasaba junto a unos árboles, con un riachuelo más allá; el agua se vertía allí cerca desde una altura, saltaba entre las piedras; en los árboles cantaban los pájaros. Martín se paró, y acaso por primera vez en su vida le gustó el ruido del agua; escuchó con agrado el canto de las aves. Habían cantado muchas veces en su vida, pero cualquiera se paraba entonces a escucharlas. Ahora les prestó atención y le gustaron. Después miró los montes y el cielo y le parecieron también hermosos. Tuvo ganas de hacer una zapateta en el aire, de ponerse a cantar. (p. 41)

There is no direct relationship between Martín's experience of gratifying landscape and improved relations with the rest of mankind. In the service of the narrative's verisimilitude, transformations in the aspect of the countryside are intermittent and do not obey a normative pattern: while much of what he sees pleases him, he occasionally passes through areas of wheat fields and olive groves reminiscent of Caretas. Those

episodes in which the protagonist responds with satisfaction to changes in the landscape serve as a fundamental, abstract precedent for other more concrete challenges to his preconceptions about the nature of life. Sensations of contentment or well-being are virtually non-existent in the first book and only slightly more present in the second book. Nonetheless, such pleasant experiences open a breach in his jaundiced view of life: they allow him, in conjunction with other processes such as his relationship with his mentor Antonio Cardén, and his own independent experiences, to confront a hitherto unknown realm of experience. And having established the protagonist's sympathy with Nature's merciful face as manifested in the landscape, the narrator then subjects the precedent to a contortion that brings this theme to conform with the rest of Martín's experience in this second volume of the trilogy; that is, a progressive disillusionment with his grandfather's dogmatic ideology.

As Martín approaches Barcelona with his mentor/protector, he recalls Roque Galda's lyrical exhaltation of the river Ebro. Like his enthusiastic descriptions of the marvels of Barcelona, images of the Ebro's majesty act as goals for the young protagonist, fuelling his will to continue the odyssey. When the truck-driver announces to Martín that the Ebro is nearby, the protagonist's response is almost predictable:

Martín se sentía agitado ante la proximidad de aquel río. Desde su niñez había oído hablar de él y lo esperaba casi conmovido, con viva sensación de gozo anticipado. Cada vez sentía crecer más en él el deseo

de ver el famoso Ebro. (p. 204)

Ironically, the protagonist's long anticipated encounter with the famous river comes on the heels of his separation from Antonio Cardén, seized by the Guardia Civil. The truck driver's absence weighs heavily on the boy who, lonely and disheartened, struggles simply to reach his intended destination. The sight of the river "no le impresionó" (p. 225). The narrator elucidates:

La verdad era que el famoso Ebro allí andaba de capa caída; causaba poca impresión; pasaba por allí estrecho y menguado, con caudal escaso, asomando aquí y allá manchas de tierra, pobladas de hierbajos sucios, sin belleza, sin grandeza ninguna. Fue para él una decepción.

Se detuvo un momento en el puente; desde allí estuvo mirando melancólicamente la sucia corriente; formaba una curva cerrada y se perdía en seguida detrás de unos árboles tristes, de unos cañaverales raquíticos. (p. 225)

The general tone of this passage, particularly the characterization of "árboles tristes" and "cañaverales raquíticos," recalls the descriptive motif employed by Arbó for representing Caretas' vital poverty. The narrator subtly allows that Martín has happened upon an uninspiring part of the river's course. With more than a little irony residing in its resemblance to the landscape of his own home, the protagonist's disillusionment is compounded by the apparent contradiction of his grandfather's tributes to the magnificence of the Ebro. By this time, between his own experiences (some of which gainsay

Roque Galda's ideology) and others' denials of the old man's infallibility, Martín's confidence in Roque Galda has been shaken, yet still not thoroughly undermined. The boy's first sight of Barcelona serves to salvage some of his grandfather's credibility.

Martín's final approach to the city is condensed into the last four pages of the second volume. In the preceeding pages, after the truck driver's arrest at the hands of the Guardia Civil and Martín's disillusioning discovery of the Ebro, there is a shift in the tempo and emphasis of the narrative: the final stages of Martín's journey are narrated selectively. Arbó describes only a few episodic experiences, such as the boy's mistaking a smaller city for Barcelona and his being defrauded during an unguarded moment in a bar. Also, temporal references are scant throughout the trilogy and those few that frame the action in this last chapter are indefinite; for example, "largos días fue caminando con aquella pena" (p.224) and "continuó caminando, siempre en aquel estado de pena, de semisonambulismo, y se acercaba día en día a Barcelona" (p.226). The vaguest of all these temporal references introduces the final episode of Martín de Caretas en el campo; Martín's arrival in the outskirts of Barcelona. The narrator tells us "Pasaron las semanas. El otoño empezaba a dorar los campos y Martín continuaba su camino" (p. 228).

The effect of such indefinite temporality and its correspondence to the protagonist's tedious but steady progress toward the city is one of dramatic contrast when it looms

suddenly before him:

. . . lo que vio allí le dejó antónito. Martín se sintió perdido como nunca, insignificante.

Estaba en el centro de un inmenso llano; delante de él y por los lados no veía nada; se sentía perdido, desamparado Lo demás en todo lo que abarcaba la mirada, eran huertos, trigales verdes, árboles frutales; casas aquí y allá, grandes edificios perdidos en el verdor; y por todas partes, postes sosteniendo hilos, torres de hierro, altas chimeneas .
 . . (p. 230)

Christopher Eustis notes that Caretas is so rigidly stuck in cultural retardation that it has yet to feel "the influence of modern ideas and modern technology."¹ Indeed, prior to his flight from the town, Martín has only second-hand knowledge of such technological innovations: when, in this same approach to the metropolis, he sees and hears at close range a train crossing a bridge, "permaneció, sin moverse, aterrado, con miedo de que todo se fuera abajo" (p. 229). Thus the bridge, the train, the buildings and the telephone poles, all elements of the urban landscape, join the greenery and fruit-bearing trees as unaccustomed features that compound the protagonist's amazement. The author then makes explicit what he merely implies at the beginning of the second volume:

En su tierra no se veían llanos como aquél; no los había. Allá eran todo montes, hondonadas, barrancos y montes otra vez, y los pueblos pequeños, sin poder asentarse bien subiendo y bajando, doblados, torcidos de costado, y lo mismo los cultivos, los bosques; todo como aguantándose de milagro. (p. 230)

This recalls the first night of Martín's flight from Caretas when, faced with "un campo sin árboles, una amplia extensión" (p. 11), he breathes "por primera vez." In addition, the boy's amazement is compounded by the fact that "se sintió perdido" and "se sentía perdido, desamparado" (p. 230). This also resembles Martín's psychic condition at the outset of his odyssey: the first words of the text of Martín de Caretas en el campo are "Debía de estar muy lejos de Caretas; pero no sabía donde. Caminaba, en realidad, perdido" (p. 11). The circularity of the protagonist's humor suggests that his acquaintance with the world is not yet complete: his diverse and sundry experiences en route to the city, in spite of exposing him to various manifestations of rural countryside, fail to inure him to the novelty of the vision before him. So tenacious is his memory of Caretas' aridity that verdure and fruit-bearing trees still form part of his amazement. More important however, while the imposing sight of the city's skyline gilded by the setting sun produces a reaction of greater intensity than that experienced by Martín when he sees the treeless plain on the first night of his odyssey, the parallelism between the two episodes is striking. It extends the function of landscape developed in this part of the trilogy. The boy's response to landscape more gratifying than that of Caretas is one of tranquility and subtle joy. In this case, "El corazón le palpitaba con fuerza en el pecho; se sentía lleno de maravilla; sentía alegría, pero también espanto" (p. 230).

The irony of Martín's similar circumstances of abandonment

and trepidation at the beginning and end of his journey points to his incomplete education as to the nature of the world. As the protagonist regards the city's dreamlike appearance, he notices that in all the phantasmagorical movement of trains and automobiles he sees no people. Here again the essential question of the landscape's influence on its inhabitants is raised again. Martín wonders: "Allí había hombres . . . pero, ¿cómo serían?" (p. 231). While, in this second volume, landscape has functioned mainly as a catalyst for Martín's intimate responses, its acknowledged relationship to the character of men was explicitly established in the first volume. As the most tangible and fundamental feature that separates Caretas from "the world," it is not surprising that Barcelona's initially phantasmagorical appearance should cause astonishment in the protagonist. Given his own implicit acceptance of Nature's influence on human behavior as embodied in his hometown, it is not surprising that he should wonder of Barcelona's residents "¿cómo serían?"

B. ANTONIO CARDEN: HIS PHILOSOPHY

The interim between mentors is, for Martín, one of vicissitudes unusual even in the semi-picaresque context constructed by Arbó. Roque Galda's prejudiced view of man, serving as the boy's only frame of reference, is neither confirmed nor definitively contradicted by the course of events up to the appearance of Antonio Cardén. The protagonist's attendant confusion is only compounded by the bewildering nature of those experiences that lie beyond the limits of the old man's philosophy.

Martín's first contact with people outside of Caretas poses no challenge to his preconceptions. He is received with oaths and hostility when he seeks lodging at a ranch house late into the night, "pero como era de Caretas, no se extrañó" (p. 15). His next encounter, on the other hand, causes him astonishment as well as anxiety. The morning after he seeks lodging at the ranch house, he is apprehended by the Guardia Civil. The fearsome reputation of Spain's national police force is a popular commonplace: Arbó refers to it several times in the first volume of the trilogy. Roque Galda, for example, tells Martín that "La Guardia Civil no es una broma Hasta los fantasmas se ponen serios cuando se trata del tricornio" (p. 75). The Guardia's reputation, however accurate or inaccurate, conforms to Martín's previous experience of injustice and institutional oppression, and in turn forms part of the boy's psychic burden. Thus it is not surprising that the protagonist's initial reaction to being caught is "debía de ser

viernes y trece Como en la tarde del huerto. 'Mala hierba has pisado' "(p. 16).

Martín's skillful attempts to extricate himself from the guardias' inquisition are to no avail. His discomfort is increased manifold when they jokingly accuse him of having stolen "las vinajeras del cura" (p. 21). This, combined with the boy's youthful credulity produces the now familiar variety of resignation common in Caretas: when the guardias determine to take Martín to their makeshift station and resolve the matter the next day, the narrator tells us: "Camino de Caretas otra vez. Mala suerte. Martín no opuso resistencia, con la costumbre de perder" (p. 20). In fact, for Martín, the episode develops in such a way as to represent the aforementioned accumulation of ill fortune: it is a reminder of the metaphysical mayhem indigenous to Caretas. Martín recalls the ballad that begins, "El día 13 de julio ..." (p. 21) as he beds down to plot his strategy. An already ominous predicament is compounded when Señor Remigio, (whom we know to be essentially jocular and good-hearted, a sympathetic guardia), makes use of a proverb that elicits a near-Pavlovian response from Martín: "Con los refranes le corría al punto un temblor por el cuerpo; le parecía oír en ellos un ruido de cayadas, la risa del abuelo ..." (p. 22). The boy's experience has shown him that proverbs augur ill rather than well for his well-being. So it is that Martín's situation, as he perceives it, degenerates even further: as he feigns sleep, the guardias' conversation reveals their amusement at his credulity regarding "las

vinajeras del cura." Unable to appreciate their sense of humor, Martín becomes furious: "El mundo . . . está lleno de bandidos, ladrones, bromistas, majaderos. Todo el mundo es Caretas. ¡Cuánta razón tenía el abuelo!"(p. 25). Just as Martín is nearly apoplectic with rage and humiliation, Señor Remigio "Se quitó la manta, como San Martín, y la alargó sobre él, pero entera" (p. 26). The protagonist, whose entire view of life could be seen as a result of classical conditioning of the Pavlovian variety, is profoundly non-plussed by the guardia's act of kindness. Infused with resignation to disaster, the pattern of progressively unlucky portents shows the extent of Martín's bias: "No acababa de salir de su asombro. Allí fallaba la filosofía del abuelo; caía por su base y con ella su fe en él. No llegaba a concebir que alguien pudiese hacer aquello, pero sobre todo, que fuese un guardia civil"(p. 26).

Impressive as the guardia's kindness was however, Martín is unable to overcome his accustomed responses: "Estaba . . . demasiado dolido de la broma; tenía aún la rabia en el cuerpo. Además ¿No habría allí una trampa escondida? ¿No buscaría el señor Remigio ablandarle para que cantase?" (p. 26). The boy continues to feign sleep, takes advantage of the guardias' slumbering and slips away from them to continue his journey.

His next independent encounter also results in kindness shown him by a stranger, again in peculiar circumstances. The hapless loco of the obsessive riverside vigil shares with Martín what is the most sumptuous meal of the boy's life. Again the

protagonist's reaction is one of bewilderment: "Se acordaba de tantos lances de su vida pasada y empezaba a pensar que acaso en él debía uno acercarse a los locos y huir de los cuerdos, según estos le habían tratado" (p. 36). The curious course of events once more causes Martín to question the dogma of Roque Galda: "dentro de él empezaba a insinuarse un cambio. 'No son todos sustos, pensaba" (pp. 40-41). He recalls Señor Remigio's astonishing kindness. Ultimately however, "tenía muchas experiencias en contrario para fiar con exceso" (p. 41). Almost immediately after the episode with the vigilant loco, this attitude of caution is confirmed and the previous displays of kindness toward Martín are thrown into the same jaundiced perspective espoused by the boy's grandfather. As the fatigued protagonist tries to hitch a ride from a passing carriage, the driver reveals himself as one of the gratuitously cruel types so familiar to the boy. Any doubts that Martín may have had as to the viability of Roque Galda's philophy are dispelled:

No, no había motivo para entusiasmarse: por cada loco que te daba de comer, había cien cuerdos que te enseñaban el garrote. El mundo estaba lleno de bromistas, de aficionados al palo. Aquí podía acordarse también de Juanín. ' ¡Reina una bondad en el mundo! ¡Qué bondad reina, no tío Roque?' " (p. 43).

The following day, memories of recent misfortunes evanescent with hunger, Martín makes use for the first time of some of the small cache of coins given him by Roque Galda. He enters a town that resembles Caretas: "parecía un cementerio"

(p. 47). When he locates a bar and tries to buy some food, he is subject to the aggressive inquisitions of the bartender. The timely intervention of the truck driver Antonio Cardén prevents the bartender's exploitation of the defenseless boy. Martín dines in peace, after which the truck driver approaches him again. Fearful of the kind of predatory opportunism manifested by the bartender, Martín "no se sintió tranquilo. '¿No vendrá por el cambio?' Tanto interés en que no se lo quitase el tabernero, ¿no sería para quitárselo él?" (p. 50). As they converse casually and Martín wonders who will come to his defense should the truck driver take advantage of the situation, Antonio Cardén reveals that he does not represent conventional society and its oppressive features. He explains that he is in flight after wrecking the truck he had been driving: the normal channels for resolving such problems he dismisses with the statement "No me gustan los líos" (p. 51). With little interest in society's structure of regulations, his display of altruism toward Martín is genuine and sincere.

Also, during their initial, casual conversation, the truck driver makes a statement which has a familiar resonance for Martín: "El mundo es una mierda"³ (p. 51). During the course of this short dialogue, they realize their kindred nature as well as the similarity of their circumstances: they agree to travel together. So it is that Martín's period without a guardian is ended, at least temporarily. The interim itself presents a hitherto impossible context for Martín's autonomous development; seeds of doubt as to the veracity of Roque Galda's

philosophy are planted, different perspectives on the nature of events emerge. The protagonist's youthful suggestibility defines his relationship with his mentor/guardians. The strength of their convictions and confidence in their ideology command Martín's personal point of view. With the advent of Antonio Cardén, Martín is again exposed to a jaundiced view of life and man which in some ways resembles that of his grandfather.

Like Roque Galda, Antonio Cardén summarizes his view of life in a single phrase and, in the course of the narrative becomes uniquely identified with it. His repeated observation that "La vida es una mierda" serves to justify the truck driver's "insouciant irresponsibility," as Christopher Eustis calls it.⁴ The phrase is most often used to convey the necessity of deriving the maximum enjoyment out of life, since opportunities for gratification are rare and unpredictable. His carefree aplomb never ceases to astonish Martín. The narrator tells us that "El mecánico le explicaba a Martín cosas de la vida. La conclusión siempre era la misma. El mundo era una mierda. Siempre lo mismo, pero el hecho no parecía preocuparle demasiado" (p. 63). This insouciance and will to enjoy life is further expressed when the truck driver, discussing the nature of things with a comically melodramatic, destitute actor, enquires, "Pero, ¿qué le pasa a usted? Desembuche. La vida, es verdad, es una mierda, pero no hay que hacer caso, no hay que tomárselo tan a pecho" (p. 68).

His hedonistic ideology at times assumes a critical

perspective. Like Roque Galda, he eschews labor as futile, undignified and inimical to happiness:

¡Hay que ver cómo trabajan los hombres! . . .
 Todos con la azada, echando los bofes, y en dos días a
 pudrir malvas, a alimentar al ciprés. La vida es una
 mierda, Martín. ¡Hay que ver cómo trabajan! (p. 79)

This observation suggests that Antonio Cardén subscribes to a particular notion of personal autonomy, though it is certainly not the conventional one. He behaves irresponsibly in terms of his society's customs (i.e., he flees the scene of his accident with the truck rather than face opprobrium, and avoids returning to Barcelona for fear of an inevitable commitment to marriage). However, he satisfies his personal convictions by refusing to subscribe to futile labor for the sake of convention or tradition. He opts for a lifestyle that affords greater potential for enjoyment: that others should choose the more difficult path merely emphasizes his good judgement.

Although the truck driver's hedonism -- it gives rise to repeated urgings like "Hay que beber. Hay que alegrarse, la vida es una mierda" (p. 110) -- is the dominant characteristic of his ideology, his excremental view of life also entails a kind of fatalism, the likes of which is expressed in the first volume of the trilogy. When he and Martín witness a farmer beating a boy of about Martín's age, the protagonist becomes enraged when the truck driver offers no assistance. Antonio Cardén's response is "No quieras arreglar el mundo La vida, Martín, es una mierda, es un asco" (p. 56). This

attitude, which implies that such intervention would be as futile as farm labor, is the final complement of the truck driver's edifice of hedonism.

Christopher Eustis points out that the period of Martín's tutelage under Antonio Cardén is, for the most part, one of clemency and enjoyment. He notes that "one never has the impression that they are involved in a struggle for life. Hunger is not a problem, for whenever they cannot live off the land they have money to fall back on."⁵ In addition to this, Martín need not suffer beatings as a part of his education. The truck driver, in his function as mentor, presents a dramatic contrast to the pessimism of Roque Galda. Whereas both employ concise phrases of parallel structure and like simplicity to characterize the nature of the world, they are virtually diametrically opposed in their emphasis. In Roque Galda's world, only harshly administered lessons serve to impart the basic education of survival. When constant vigilance, caution and suspicion are fundamental exigencies of survival, there can be little hope of enjoyment. The truck driver's devotion to hedonism affords the protagonist a respite from the kind of omnipresent danger, of which his grandfather was a prime exponent, that served the burden of prejudice shouldered by Martín. The result is further progress, albeit tentative and gradual, toward Martín's overcoming the pessimism and resignation fomented by his grandfather. While the boy's new mentor still proffers the familiar denunciation of life as travail, his emphasis on pleasure allows Martín, if not to

unravel all the conflicting views of life and ultimately to understand its essential nature, then at least to come to grips with sincerity and altruism without suspecting ulterior motives.

C. IDEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Picaresque elements in Martín de Caretas en el campo are less influential than in the first volume. The epigraph from Lazarillo de Tormes that begins the second volume is appropriate to Martín's situation as he leaves home: "Verdad dice éste, que me cumple avivar el ojo y avisar, pues solo soy; y pensar cómo me sepa valer" (p. 9). Indeed, the initial episodes, in spite of those that feature acts of kindness or altruism, emphasize Martín's solitude and necessary caution and self-reliance. The latter however, as Eustis points out, retain practically none of their erstwhile significance as picaresque allusions with the advent of the protagonist's second mentor/protector.

With these typically picaresque features temporarily lost to the protagonist's character, very little of the pícaro's accustomed behavior is manifested by Martín. The causes for such a change in the protagonist reside as much in elements absent from his condition as in the presence of a new guardian. For example, there is the extraordinarily absurd world of Caretas, in which the boy's undeserved reputation causes his alienation from his native medium; a conundrum in the first volume, it exists only as a memory or criterion in the second. It has no value as a catalyst for picaresque behavior.

The absence of more typically picaresque conditions to motivate delinquent behavior leaves only revenge as a catalyst for what could be viewed broadly as the playing of a picaresque sort of prank. On one occasion, Martín kicks a bucket of fruit into a well to avenge a farmer's beating a boy of Martín's age

(p. 58). Shortly thereafter, he sets fire to one of the farmer's haystacks (p. 61). Curiously, one sees perhaps more typically picaresque characteristics in Antonio Cardén than in the protagonist himself. The truck driver shares Martín's predilection for such vengeful pranks, which even the protagonist feels are too extreme at times. In one case, the mecánico repairs a brokendown piece of farm equipment that a group of men are laboring over. When the farmer is less than forthcoming with a commensurate, material display of gratitude ("Bueno, adiós y gracias"), Antonio surreptitiously undoes his repairs and jettisons an essential part, making further repairs virtually impossible. To Martín "La broma le parecía demasiado fuerte" (p. 88).

Antonio Cardén scarcely resembles a classically picaresque amo, though neither could he be considered a classically picaresque protagonist. His generally irresponsible attitude, evasion of rigorous labor and estrangement from society's mainstream do recall certain of the pícaro's characteristics. However, it seems that personal will, an intellectual decision, causes him to opt out of conventional society, rather than being forced into isolation by inhospitable circumstances. Also, his genuinely carefree nature denies that typically picaresque tendency to struggle for social acceptance and stature that, in reality, lies beyond the pícaro's merit and abilities. The truck driver shares none of Pablos' and Lazarillo's obsession with creating in their appearance the illusion of aristocracy or gentility.

Some of Antonio Cardén's characteristics show an affinity with those aforementioned, broadly defined features of existentialism. First of all, the basic tenet of his philosophy, "La vida es una mierda," reflects that popular conception of existentialism as a pessimistic, anguished view of life. It is true that much of the expression that existentialism finds in literature represents a dolorously absurd life and man's struggle -- likely a futile one -- to make sense of it. Alternatively, in the case of Sartre for example, existentialism is a philosophy of altruism and "stern optimism" that presupposes man's freedom to direct his own existence and emphasizes his obligation to choose and act responsibly in order to live in a worthy and exemplary fashion.⁶ In sum, existentialism generally suggests, be it in a pessimistic or optimistic manifestation, that the process of a man's struggle with the vagaries of his existence is on-going. In this sense, Antonio Cardén stands apart. In spite of his estrangement from society, his self-reliant independence and his responsible acceptance of his choice of life-style, there is a complacency in his hedonism. He seems satisfied, at least superficially, with his existence and, in addition, his admitted avoidance of certain responsibilities could be deemed cowardice.

Martín on the other hand continues to grapple with the thorny question of the nature of human existence. Ingenuous in spite of his harsh, disillusioning experience in Caretas, his ideological autonomy is still barely incipient. His perception of the various concise definitions of life is oddly literal.

Most of these definitions express essentially the same sentiment, from varying perspectives; El cómico extraviado ("La vida del hombre sobre la Tierra es un drama," "Es una tragedia . . .," "Es un sueño . . . es una pesadilla . . ." p. 68) and El viejo de Alfama ("Es un lío" p. 154) for example. This applies also to the more familiar definitions: the image derived from the truck driver's metaphor for life is less lyrical and evocative than Roque Galda's, but the effect is similar. At one point Martín expresses his bewilderment at the gamut of descriptions:

Martín reflexionó: "Este [el cómico], que es un sueño; el abuelo, que un golfo redondo; el mecánico, 'es una mierda.' ¡Menudo lío!" No se sacaba en claro qué era la vida, pero sí que no era una fiesta. A todos le debía algo. (p. 68)

The truck driver's guardianship of Martín, which forestalls the boy's active self-reliance, also effectively retards his development of a judicious, independent view of life. The protagonist is still exposed to a kind of jaundiced perspective on human existence familiar to him, literally, since birth. However, even with all those definitions that portray life as senseless anguish and travail, there is still enormous progress toward Martín's attaining that judicious perspective on life. The absence of formerly urgent hunger and ubiquitous perils, Antonio's studied avoidance of strife and Martín's own independent experiences open as never before the possibility of the protagonist's defining the terms of his own existence. In

Caretas, there is little hope of autonomous personal choice: in that environment of conformity and resignation to oppressive conventions, to choose and act independently is to risk Martín's fate. The mere absence of such prevalent oppression opens a breach in the biased perspective which, through no fault of his own, burdens the protagonist.

While the course of events leads Martín to puzzle over the discrepancies among his own independent experiences, their attendant significations and the pontifications of mentors and strangers alike, Qoheleth's philosophy again seems to leave its impression throughout Martín de Caretas en el campo. We saw that in the first book, aside from Roque Galda's marginal affinities with the Old Testament figure, it is the narrator who adopts the grim fatalism of Ecclesiastes. The function of Qoheleth's ideology in this second volume is subtler still. In this case, owing to Arbó's apparent schematization of this philosophical material, we are presented with another, paradoxical component of the ideological whole of Qoheleth's system of thought.

In the second volume of the trilogy, this particular aspect of Old Testament philosophy finds its expression in Antonio Cardén's irresponsible hedonism. While this might seem far-fetched, and any comparisons between the two must necessarily involve certain qualifications, the two philosophers in question begin from a similar premise; the truck driver, that "La vida es una mierda;" Qoheleth, that all man's pursuits are a "Vanidad de vanidades" (Eccl.i.2). And while Qoheleth's conclusions are

more demanding and numerous than those of Martín's mentor, they agree in at least some significant respects. For example, Scott paraphrases Qoheleth by saying "Contentment is life's highest good."⁷ The proverbial rub, with regard to Antonio's view of life, becomes apparent when we examine Qoheleth's actual words. He observes that "No hay para el hombre cosa mejor que comer y beber y gozar de su trabajo, y vi que esto es don de Dios" (Eccl.ii.24), and, perhaps more appropriate to the truck driver's ideology, that "no hay para él otro bien que alegrarse y procurarse el bienestar en su vida, pues el que uno coma, beba y se goce de su trabajo, don es de Dios" (Eccl.iii.12-13). Qoheleth's one condition for this pleasure-seeking is, of course, a responsible and humble attitude that Scott calls "the capacity to find enjoyment in work."⁸

Both Antonio Cardén and Qoheleth agree as to the futility of a life of excessive or ambitious toil. Even their reasoning, which leads them both to conclude that enjoyment of life is essential, shows a similar logical procedure. The truck driver, as we have seen, declares "Hay que alegrarse, la vida es una mierda" (p. 110) and further observes "¡Hay que ver cómo trabajan los hombres!.... Todos con la azada, echando los bofes y en dos días a pudrir malvas, a alimentar al ciprés. La vida es una mierda, Martín" (p. 79). His equation of such toil with life's sorrowful character, along with his resolve to enjoyment in spite of the attendant woe, recalls Qoheleth's exemplum of "un hombre solo que no tiene sucesor, que no tiene hijo ni hermano y no cesa nunca de trabajar ni se hartan sus ojos de

riquezas. ¿Para quién trabajo yo y me someto a privaciones? También esto es vanidad y duro trabajo" (Eccl.iv.8). From this and other observations such as "nada podrá tomar de sus fatigas para llevárselo consigo," (Eccl.v.14). The author of Ecclesiastes concludes that "es bueno comer, beber y disfrutar, en medio de tantos afanes con que se afana el hombre debajo del sol los contados días que Dios le concede" (Eccl.v.17).

The fundamental difference between the two perspectives is evident in Scott's summation of Qoheleth's attitude: "Thus the good of life is in the living of it. The profit of work is in the doing of it, not in any profit or residue which a man can exhibit as his achievement or pass on to his descendents."⁹ The critical element here of course is the Old Testament philosopher's presupposition that labor is an inevitable feature of man's existence. Moreover, problems reside not so much in the work itself, but rather in the individual's attitude toward it. Antonio Cardén, on the other hand, not only eschews labor as a conventional means of subsistence, but also fails to see any abstract profit or edification deriving from it. His attitude lacks the equilibrium that characterizes the humility and dignity inherent in Qoheleth's thought. The truck driver's arrogantly irresponsible attitude is exemplified in several episodes: for example, at one point he boldly enters a private orchard and, with no concessions to furtiveness begins to strip a tree of its fruit. Confronted by a furious farmer, he extricates himself from the predicament with characteristic aplomb, with no apparent fear or remorse (pp. 54-55). The

episode of his "repairing" the crippled farm equipment and its aftermath could serve as another example. Antonio Cardén is characteristically unrepentant of these particular events and of his attitude as a whole. His lyrical exaltations of his chosen life style corroborate this:

No hay nada en el mundo que valga esta vida; no hay nada como esto . . . acostarse cuando uno tiene sueño . . . levantarse cuando uno quiere y andar a la buena de Dios; comer cuando uno tiene hambre . . . y tiene comida, claro está; beber cuando uno tiene sed. No tener que dar las gracias a nadie del pan que uno come . . . cantar, comer, beber y caminar, y reírse del prójimo y hasta de su sombra. (p.182)

Later declarations of this kind, appearing in the third volume, merely confirm Antonio's intransigence in this irresponsible hedonism. As for Martín, the full significance of the contrast between Qoheleth's and Antonio's perspectives on toil and pleasure will not be manifest until after the protagonist's arrival in Barcelona. Otherwise, the wisdom of Ecclesiastes is scarcely present in the second volume. There are no metaphors likening Martín directly to hapless rabbits caught in traps, and only a few references to life's treacherously hidden snares (p.94).

In turning now to the psychic condition of our protagonist, we see that his misfortunes are still couched in terms of his being persecuted by a seemingly intelligent and selective manifestation of adversity: ominous portents often precede personal disasters that involve incredible coincidences. When Martín enters a particular town in order to buy food, for

example, he is apprehended by a farmer, one of whose haystacks the boy burned out of revenge: on his way,

un gatazo negro saltó ante él, salido de un oscuro portal. Detrás del gato apareció una vieja. Iba vestida también de negro La vieja le recordó a la vieja Mánita y a su burro, de aquel día infausto de su vida, y del momento en que él intentó quitarle unas algarrobas. (p. 90)

An already astonishing mischance is compounded when the guardia to whom the complaint is registered turns out to be the selfsame Señor Remigio of Martín's previous experience. The episode reminds us of the protagonist's situation in the first volume, which Eustis likens to that of Pablos and Guzmán, dogged by insidious adversity: "Todas las señales negras, todos los negros augurios se habían acumulado sobre él, como garrotes" (p. 92). The confirmation of such omens by events clearly encourages Martín's ingenuous superstitions. The furious protagonist "maldecía su mala estrella que le había metido en aquel tremedal" (p. 95).

While Qoheleth's references to "el tiempo aciago" and "el acaso" emphasize the inscrutable and indiscriminate penalties inflicted by Providence, the focus of such misfortune in Martín de Caretas is on the protagonist. So it is that Antonio Cardén's arrest by the Guardia at the end of the second book is as much Martín's ill fortune as the truck driver's. This episode of ill fortune is also amply adumbrated by ominous signs: the two travellers witness two funeral processions on their way into the town. These make a profound impression on

the protagonist, given his exaggerated mortal fear. In addition, the truck driver experiences vague forebodings and a compulsion to flee precipitously from the bar in which, at Martín's urging, they are listening to a local character recount the seizure of a famous regional outlaw at the hands of the Guardia Civil. The irony is not lost on the reader when two guardias enter and casually remove the mecánico. The narrator offers that "Entonces se le aclaró todo el malestar, toda la inquietud que le había perseguido a lo largo de aquel día" (p.217).

The period of solitude that follows sees Martín arrive in Barcelona with a minimum of calamity, notwithstanding feelings of loss and one temporary lapse in his accustomed vigilance. Insofar as our protagonist's psychic condition is concerned (and in particular, his view of life and the world), we have seen that his general ambience since leaving Caretas, along with certain of his independent experiences, has given him pause concerning the dogmatic philosophical pronouncements of his grandfather. In spite of the broad similarity to Roque Galda's thought evinced by Antonio's pithy view, in addition to those of secondary characters, Martín wonders which one of the definitions is the right one, much as the sincere Christian worries over which sect proffers the correct dogma. The ultimate effect is that, while our protagonist "No se sacaba en claro qué era la vida, pero sí que no era una fiesta," his own experiences and the example of the mecánico have shown him that life is not the unrelenting travail characterized by Roque

Galda. In fact Antonio communicates this by more than example alone. Many times he challenges Martín's preconceptions, both original ones and those owed to Roque Galda: of Martín's fear of death, for example he says, "no sé por qué tienes tanto miedo a la muerte Al fin y al cabo, ¿qué es morir? Morir es dormir, descansar" (p. 116). It is here that we are told explicitly, perhaps for the first time, Martín's assessment of life: "él no estaba conforme con lo que decía el mecánico; con sólo nombrar a aquella señora temblaba todo él, se helaba de terror. Le gustaba mucho la vida" (p. 117).

These thoughts come on the heels of his successful escape (with Antonio's help) from the jail cell where he was kept for setting fire to the farmer's haystack. While they could be attributed to the euphoria attendant upon his liberation, there is more to the episode than just his escape: in hot career from the jail Martín is again intercepted by the seemingly ubiquitous Señor Remigio. This time the sympathetic guardia gives the boy a sardine sandwich and counsels him to flee. In discussing the episode with the truck driver, Martín initially fails to mention Remigio's kindness. About his seizure, Martín remarks "¡Qué susto pasé Susto aquí, susto allá . . . ¿Siempre es así la vida?" (p. 115). After their aforementioned dialogue on death, the truck driver again allows that life is not all disaster and adversity: "No nos pongamos serios; ahora, a vivir ... Es una mierda, pero a veces tampoco está mal" (p. 117). This is a rare admission for Antonio Cardén: the proposition that "la vida es una mierda" and rarely tenders opportunities

for joy or gratification serves as his justification for hedonistic irresponsibility. He takes full advantage of his heightened capacity to enjoy life, but he never verbally concedes that life provides such opportunities.

When Martín finally reveals Señor Remigio's display of altruism to the mecánico, the response is one of understandable incredulity. Antonio himself labors under an ingenuously simplistic, jaundiced view of life. He tells the boy "Esto sólo pasa en Lourdes, Martín" (p. 119). Martín's ignorance of the famous grotto elicits the following explanation:

Un lugar donde resucitan los muertos, andan los cojos, oyen los sordos, por la gracia de la madre de Dios; un lugar donde los civiles dejan marchar a los presos y les dan encima pan y una sardina. (p. 119)

The truck driver subsequently establishes a dialectic that pits Caretas, a virtual hell on earth, against Lourdes, the place of clemency, benevolence and miracles; in short, an earthbound paradise. He tells Martín "Lo mejor será que pasemos Estas cosas sólo pasan en Lourdes y aquí, como quien dice, estamos aún en Caretas" (p. 120). The truth, and what Martín ultimately demonstrates to all (particularly to Roque Galda), is that the real essence of man's lot resides for the most part in the proverbial happy medium. In the meantime however, he has yet to assimilate the balanced view of life that experience proffers. Still, his experience in the second book, with and without the truck driver's guidance, signals enormous progress from his indoctrination at the hands of Roque Galda. In

addition to the aforementioned environmental factors, the boy's relationship with his mentor is of great importance. He experiences a kind of fellowship and warmth never afforded him even by members of his own family. There are moments in which Antonio's sincerity, like the practicability of his wisdom, are cast into doubt. The ingenuous protagonist suffers briefly, but these episodes serve to illustrate to the boy the fallibility of more "experienced" adults and the inefficacy of such sweeping notions as "la vida es una mierda." Martín's successful relationship with Antonio Cardén gainsays the grim solitude implied in Roque Galda's ideology. The truck driver's grudging concession that life "a veces tampoco está mal" signals the unfolding process of Martín's access to the truth of man's condition on earth, and illustrates to the protagonist the limitations of the broadly pessimistic assessments to which his first two mentors are given. The ultimate significance of all this is the boy's development of autonomous faculties of judgement. Toward the end of the second volume of the trilogy, Martín reacts to Antonio's description of Lourdes by thinking "Este se burla" (p. 119). This, among other things, evinces the process of increasing autonomy, irregular and nearly imperceptible, which reaches fulfillment in Martín de Caretas en la ciudad.

D. NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹ Eustis, p. 22.

² Sebastián Juan Arbó, Martin de Caretas en el campo (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1972), p. 11. Subsequent references to this edition appear in the text.

³ In Arbó's text, the word mierda often appears as an initial m- followed by ellipsis. It is so represented in every case in which the mecánico observes that "la vida es una mierda." Curiously, in other contexts, the word mierda, along with other taboo words, is reproduced in full. Whether this is the author's wish or an example of the vagaries of the censor, for the purpose of this study I have taken the liberty of reproducing its complete form.

⁴ Eustis, p. 29.

⁵ Eustis, p. 27.

⁶ See Jean Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism" in Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: World, 1956), pp. 287-311.

⁷ Scott, p. 231.

V. EN LA CIUDADA. THE FUNCTION OF LANDSCAPE

We recognize that a key factor in Arbó's treatment of landscape is the relationship between Caretas' harsh rural environment and the ignorant brutishness of its people. As we saw in the second volume of the trilogy, the relevance of this bond was transformed and diminished relative to its function in the first volume. For example, we saw remnants of Martín's personification of morbidity in features of the rural countryside, among other vestiges of Arbó's treatment of landscape in the first volume. However, more important in Martín de Caretas en el campo is the protagonist's gradual acquaintance with more gratifying landscape and more civil behavior, which in turns wears away at his acquired prejudice. The effect, then, is one of subtle disillusionment with regard to his indoctrination at the hands of Roque Galda and, in a broader sense, through the influence of the benighted town itself.

A similar process occurs in the third volume, although the relationship between Caretas' physical environment and its inhabitants is again of indirect pertinence. In Martín de Caretas en la ciudad, a special relationship between the urban ambience and the people of Barcelona is pivotal insofar as the function of landscape is concerned. As in the second volume, the consequence of this function is to counter an element of Roque Galda's prejudice and to offer the protagonist an

ideological alternative. At the beginning of Martín's odyssey through the country, he bears a weight of prejudices, inherited from his grandfather, that are relevant to his condition of errant solitude. As he enters Barcelona, he bears a burden of different misconceptions, likewise pertinent to his presence in the city. Presupposing a relationship between urban people and their environment, these misconceptions have their origin in Roque Galda's exalted and idealized descriptions of the city, which inspire Martín to go there.

Appropriately, the third volume opens with a memory of one of Roque Galda's descriptions of the city, punctuated by Martín's astonished exclamations as he recognizes already familiar landmarks. The fidelity of the old man's portrayal of these physical features serves to rescue his reputation from the discredit it suffered on the protagonist's discovery of the Ebro. When the boy finally confronts the statue of Christopher Columbus at Barcelona's harbor, "parecía que se conocieran de antiguo, que hubiese de bajar allí para saludarle. '¡Hola!, Martín.' Y él: '¡Hola!, señor Colón!' Y el señor Colón: 'Ya lo has visto Martín, soy yo. No te engañó tu abuelo.'" This fantastic conversation, the product of a youthful imagination, manifests the profound and durable influence of Roque Galda. The old man was literally the only authority figure to take a personal interest in Martín during the boy's formative years, acting as both parent and teacher. Implicit trust in adults and the later experience of disillusionment at their fallibility are common phenomena in the psychological development of young

people. Bound to Martín's love for his grandfather is a will to have faith in his dogma: since the boy owes all his knowledge to the old man, to brook contempt for that knowledge is to draw the nature of his very existence into question. Therefore, throughout the second volume, Martín reacts defensively to aspersions cast on Roque Galda's wisdom, even after immediate experience has begun to underscore its faults. With his journey through the country turning out to be an exercise in "desengaño," this corroboration of Roque Galda's knowledge is welcomed by the protagonist, especially in this time of insecurity and confusion.

While the old man's lyrical images of Barcelona seemed fantastic to the boy in the austere context of his hometown, his initial experience of the urban landscape exceeds even the heightened expectations he owes to his grandfather: "Se sentía maravillado, emocionado. Todo lo que le había dicho el abuelo era exacto. Parecía que estuviese soñando" (p. 12). In the final pages of the second volume, the city seen from afar is a dreamlike vision that causes amazement and trepidation in the protagonist. To this now is added the vindication of Roque Galda and Martín's immersion in an overwhelming plethora of sensory stimuli that results in a kind of stupefaction, compounded at every turn by successively amazing sights. Las Ramblas proffer "¡Cuántas flores, Dios! ¡Cuánta gente!" (p. 12), an unaccustomed spectacle for a native of Caretas. Near the waterfront, seeing an enormous train at close proximity, "aquí en la ciudad, en medio de la calle, le hizo un efecto

formidable, le maravilló, y lo estuvo mirando absorto, fascinado" (p. 13). What the narrator calls "aquel pasar de asombro en asombro" (p. 15) comprises, among other wonders, the boy's first glimpse of the sea, the kaleidoscopic aspect of myriad vessels in the harbor, a proliferation of genteel-looking people, shops proffering exotic foodstuffs and conspicuous consumer goods, automobiles and all manner of buildings. One is tempted to invoke the term "culture shock" to describe the reaction of the boy from the natural, material and spiritual desert that is Cretas. It is ironically appropriate, then, that the phantasmagorical culmination of Martín's first day in the city is Antonio Gaudí's Casa Milá, known popularly as "La Pedrera." Like Columbus' statue, it holds a special fascination for the boy owing to Roque Galda's frequent references to it. Barcelona offers several examples of Gaudí's unique style, which flies in the face of the symmetrical and rectilinear conventions of architecture. When Martín happens upon the house, its surreal appearance -- "Como un acordeón roto; como si estuviera borracha" (p. 15) -- causes him to think that "En su vida había visto casa más extraña, ni más fea, según las nociones que el tenía" (p. 16). Gaudí is considered one of the most daring and innovative of modern architects, and Martín's notions that the house is strange and ugly underscores his aesthetic simplicity and earthy pragmatism. There is also some irony in the boy's opinion of the unorthodox structure: the house represents the extreme of Barcelona's opposition to the austere world of Cretas. Such examples of avant garde culture are usually

accessible only to urban populations and Roque Galda has told the boy that "'¡Casas como aquella, Martín, sólo se ven en Barcelona!'" (p. 16). Thus it forms part of the old man's panorama of the city's superiority. Further, it serves the aforementioned purpose of reestablishing Roque Galda's credibility and in turn completes that edifice of misconceptions that gives rise to another round of disillusioning episodes.

At the end of Martín's first day amid the urban confusion, its intense and alien character elicits a nostalgic response from the protagonist:

Se sentía cansado; estaba ya harto de palacios; harto de luces, de movimiento y de ruidos, casi mareado. Sentía deseos de salir de aquel marmágnum, de encontrarse sólo, con el cielo y las estrellas, con el campo donde cantaban los grillos, al que estaba tan acostumbrado Estaba, sin embargo, en las Ramblas e iba en busca del campo (pp. 19-20)

His immersion in this alien medium results in disorientation and a sense of abandonment. According to the narrator, at this juncture it is the boy's belief in the imminent return of Antonio Cardén that sustains him in spite of his misgivings. More to the point however is his "fuerza de adaptación maravillosa, fruto de su espléndida experiencia" (p. 22). On a most fundamental level, it is not surprising that the enormous gulf between the social and cultural retardation of Caretas and the technological modernity of Barcelona should awe and dismay the protagonist. However, when we learn that Martín "había recobrado rápidamente el dominio de sí mismo" (p. 22), we

recognize the more abstract function of a key element in Arbó's conception of landscape, that is, its influence on human behavior.

As we have seen, in Martín's initial, superficial exposure to the city, the boy's esteem for his grandfather's sagacity is reconfirmed after the many challenges to it on the journey through the countryside. Attendant upon the ideological whole that is Roque Galda's philosophy is the notion, expressed frequently by Martín in the first and second volumes, that urban people (i.e. those from Barcelona) are superior in practical knowledge and social skills. The old man's apparent wisdom, and particularly his confidently dogmatic pronouncements on the nature of life and man, lead Martín to think "Era nada menos que de Barcelona. Parecía imposible que . . . desde aquella ciudad tan grande, tan hermosa, hubiese ido a parar a Caretas, y en aquella casa."² In the second volume of the trilogy, Antonio Carden's example inspires a similar kind of near reverence. His insouciant audacity in pilfering fig's in the presence of their owner causes Martín to marvel " 'Debe de ser de Barcelona . . . cosas así sólo las saben hacer los de Barcelona; hay que ser de allí para saber andar por el mundo.' "³

Notwithstanding this association of savoir faire with urban breeding, Martín is moved to wonder "¿cómo serían?" of Barcelona's inhabitant's when he catches his first glimpse of the city from afar: there are no signs of life in the bustling resplendence and he has yet to see a native in his natural habitat. When he finally sees these city dwellers in the thick

of the chaotic urban milieu, his respect for their worldly wisdom is compounded by their apparent gentility and refinement, qualities unknown in Caretas. By virtue of their elegant dress, this special class of people is an integral factor in the sumptuous vision that accompanies Martín's introduction to the city:

Martín miraba ahora a las personas, a los "señores;" todos eran "señores" allí, o las señoras; todas eran también "señoras." ¡Qué lujo! ¡Qué finura . . . !

Desde el primer día, la gente, los de Barcelona, le habían despertado admiración; miraba con la boca abierta. Pasaban serios; pasaban con sus trajes, sus estupendos abrigos -- ¡Qué bien debían de ir para el invierno! --, lejanos, como si dijese: "Soy de Barcelona." (p. 14)

Thus the character of these people, as Martín imagines it, is as worthy of admiration as the material examples of the city's grandeur: the gentry was a minority in Caretas, where the gap between upper and lower class was manifest. In this case, the elegance and sophisticated mien of the people are even more impressive to the boy for their seeming uniformity and omnipresence. Perhaps the essential feature of Martín's observation above however is his attention to their mode of dress. One detects a note of longing when the protagonist, attired literally in rags, observes "¡qué bien debían de ir para el invierno!," no doubt recalling the brutal winters of Caretas.

Martín concludes from this experience, in addition to his preconceptions, that these people constitute an admirably superior class. At no time does the narrator suggest that such

characteristics, superficial and deceptive as they are, cannot be acquired by the protagonist. Indeed, his flight from Caretas is predicated upon the promise of self-betterment. At this juncture Martín still perceives such superficialities as substantive. In addition, he has reason to believe that one's mere presence in Barcelona can allow for psychological as well as material improvements. Roque Galda cautiously testifies:

Si ves a uno que camina y a cada dos pasos vuelve la cabeza, es de Caretas. Les ha quedado esto de los sustos pasados. Antes de acercarte a él, asegúrate de quién es; es verdad que allí se mudan, se ablandan; pero de todos modos, no te confíes demasiado. (p. 11)

In this observation we see another example of the dialectic of these two antithetical realms. In other cases, contrasts are expressed solely in terms of physical dimensions, e.g. "'Hay una plaza que se llama "de Cataluña." En ella caben tres Caretas, con su iglesia y todo, y aún sobra espacio.'"⁴ In this case Roque Galda makes an implicit but cogent commentary on the people of Caretas and Barcelona and their respective worlds. Given Caretas' well established ill-fame, and in spite of the old man's cautionary tone, to say that immigrants from Martín's hometown "se ablandan" is to testify to Barcelona's salubrious character.

In the same descriptive monologue, Roque Galda makes another casual observation that epitomizes one of the trilogy's important themes, couched in a description of the Plaza de Cataluña:

En un ángulo de la plaza, hay una mujer desnuda, agachada en un campo de flores; parece de verdad; es de piedra. Esto ocurre allí en muchas cosas; parecen verdad y son mentira; son puras filfas. No te dejes engañar. (p. 11)

This statement appears on the first page of Martín de Caretas en la ciudad and its service to Arbó's sense of irony could hardly be more effective. First of all, for one who intimately knows the role of deceiver (e.g. his ruse involving the trunk that contains his "fortune"), he has also contributed to Martín's susceptibility to false appearances through idealized representations of Barcelona. Secondly, after having invoked this memory of the old man's monologue, the protagonist fails to take heed of this timely admonition on his first day in the city. In any case, having become accustomed to both encouraging and disheartening experiences of disillusionment, Martín's admiration for the residents of Barcelona is shortlived: "A los tres días estaba decepcionado" (p. 21). In addition, his opinion of them shifts to the opposite extreme. Rather than the dignified sophisticates he had imagined "eran, por el contrario, unos grandes bobos, los más simples que había en el mundo" (p. 22). For example, Martín witnesses a large and impassioned crowd congregated around a tree in which a cat has stranded itself. The crowd swells until the thoroughfare is blocked, requiring police to remedy the congestion. In another case, a quarrel between two men becomes a comically chaotic furore, again drawing the attention of large numbers of idle passers-by: "Martín estaba asombrado, no lo comprendía. Había visto dos o tres casos parecidos; por cualquier bobería ya estaba la gente

amontonada inquiriendo . . . alborotando" (p. 22).

As Martín begins to forge personal relationships in the city, particularly with the little golfo Juanillo and sereno /mentor Señor Torío, he emerges from his prejudice -- the issue of extremes of opinion -- to a more balanced view of city people. Before these personal relationships develop however, Martín does find a part of the city whose inhabitants make him feel at home. Near the customs-house, the boy happens upon a lively street scene in which he witnesses, among other things:

. . . niños que ensayaban ya en los trucos; mujeres pintadas, con vestidos de colores y mucho metal en las muñecas, que llamaban, al pasar, a los hombres; parecía como si estuviesen siempre un poco de fiesta, siempre en plan de viva la alegría; estaban a todas horas al acecho, a ver si pasaba algún tonto. Eran como cazadores en invierno -- así lo pensó Martín -- preparando ligas, lazos, trampas. (p. 24)

This scene, while stimulating Martín's senses in a fashion similar to that of his earlier experience with urban bustle, betrays a difference in the participants' attitude. The purposeful, well-dressed citizens that Martín first saw were described as "serios." We also infer that these constituted the same urban class to be inordinately fascinated by insignificant events. On the other hand, these street revellers not only show a joie de vivre, but their larcenous intriguing elicits empathy in Martín: this urban underclass conducts its affairs according to the principles that guided Roque Galda in his education of Martín. In fact the boy is relieved to discover a segment of the urban population not given to gratuitous silliness.

Arbó describes two swindles witnessed by Martín, to which

the boy has almost identical reactions. The first is a case of absurd street theater in which an already unhealthy looking man lies on the sidewalk with an enormous stone on his chest. Another man with a large hammer strikes the stone repeatedly "con brío, con alegría" (p. 25) for the purpose of breaking it, thereby constituting a spectacle worthy of remuneration from a crowd of on-lookers. When the feat is accomplished, the boy charged with passing the hat dashes off with the receipts, leaving dejected participants. Martín has sympathy for them, "pero se reía también viendo la ligereza del rapaz" (p. 26). The other swindle is the well-known "timo de las misas:" it concerns an old woman who, falling victim to her own greed ends up with an envelope full of newspaper clippings which she had thought were bank notes. Again Martín feels pity, "pero le hacía reír el truco; le hacía también reír la bobería de ésta, que creía que iba a hacerse rica de golpe" (p. 28).

Thus mitigated his disappointment at the existence of such foolishness in the city, Martín concludes at this early juncture:

¡Qué bien estaba Barcelona! Cada día descubría cosas nuevas. También aquí había trampas a cada paso, y aquí era más difícil descubrirlas; todos iban igual, en sus trajes. Aquí nadie podía adivinar dónde estaban los pillos, los ladrones, los granujas; pero no cabía duda que estaban; a veces, le parecía que lo eran todos. (p. 28)

The above quotation reveals that the protagonist is beginning to come to grips with the thorny problem of deceptive appearances. Also revealed is a curious element that plays an important part

in Martín's perception of urban people. It must be born in mind that the protagonist goes about dressed literally in rags, and must appear grievously impoverished to the objective observer. His tatters are occasionally the source of humiliation for Martín, and are a constant reminder of his humble origins. Although he initially perceives all barceloneses as "señores," and later sees "marineros borrachos" and "mujeres pintadas" (p. 24), he seems to equate them all by virtue of the state of their attire, as opposed to his pitiable tatters: "todos iban igual, en sus trajes." Failing to perceive class differences among these different segments of the urban population, Martín further associates the urbanites with the notion that "había trampas a cada paso." In previous expressions of this idea, particularly in the first volume, these snares in the boy's path are mainly a function of hostile mischance. People, while often agents of the cosmic conspiracy, are usually aided by unlucky coincidence in their persecution of the protagonist. In the case of these city folk, they are virtually synonymous with the proverbial traps along man's path. Worse still, their uniformity in the boy's eyes suggests to him that the workings of fortune are even more random: no one, Martín believes, can differentiate between the criminals and the decent folk.

Still, the protagonist welcomes the notion that "no todos eran bobos en aquella ciudad" (p. 28). What this discovery signifies to Martín is a familiar pattern of human behavior and a kind of social order to which he is accustomed. This period, marked by the boy's condition of solitude, strongly resembles

Martín's state of abandonment at the beginning of the second volume. It is during these intervals without the guidance of a mentor that the function of landscape is most dynamic. To one who "vivía en contacto con la tierra," the suggestions of the physical aspects of landscape are an intimate factor in the boy's moods. In addition, a relationship between human behavior and these different faces of man's environment is presupposed: Martín ingenuously accepts the notion that certain environmental characteristics guarantee a given pattern of behavior.

In the second and third volumes, these intervals in which landscape exercises its greatest influence on the protagonist coincide with an initial consolidation of his bias: despite experiences of mixed character, some of which run counter to his prejudice, the boy finally resolves to be vigilant, suspicious and self-reliant just at the moment he is about to forge a relationship with his next mentor. This bias, along with his experiences to the contrary, constitutes the crucial dialectic through which the ideological foundation of the second and third volumes emerges.

In Martín de Caretas en la ciudad, the protagonist is impressed by many experiences that contradict his acquired bias. His friendship with Jaime, an erstwhile enemy in Caretas, is an example. Another--the deciding factor in his genuine, final acquisition of a balanced view of life--is his protection and tutelage at the hands of Señor Torío, the humble sereno. With the advent of this mentor, the dynamic participation of landscape is displaced and its function thereafter is largely

implicit. In the second and third volumes, the superficial value of landscape is one of contrast to the protagonists's benighted place of origin. This in turn is inextricably bound to landscape's supposed intimate determination of its inhabitants behavior. As a criterion for judging people, landscape fails Martín. So it is that the boy's concentration shifts away from the ephemeral suggestions of, or acquired biases about landscape in its determinist function, and succumbs to the more tangible, protective presence of, in this case, Señor Torío.

B. SEÑOR TORIO, HIS PHILOSOPHY

Señor Torío is the humblest of all of Martín's mentors, and paradoxically, in the final analysis, the most influential. His philosophy is one of pragmatism and moderation, and betrays none of the negative or fatalistic overtones that characterize the ideologies of Roque Galda and Antonio Cardén. With regard to Martín's previous two mentors, we saw that his grandfather's ideology comprised elements associated with the characteristics of the pícaro: vigilance, caution, astute recourse to trickery for self-preservation. In the case of Antonio Cardén, we recognize in his philosophy elements of a pessimistic, broadly interpreted view of life from an existential point of view; the vexing absurdity of life, the futility of adhering to fatuous social conventions and the ensuing condition of solitude wrought by such a view. In both mentors we saw affinities with the philosophy presented in Ecclesiastes. Insofar as Señor Torío is concerned, his ideology is so succinct, and so thoroughly resembles certain aspects of Qoheleth's ideology, that virtually all discussion of Ecclesiastes as it relates to Martín de Caretas en la ciudad will gravitate around the observations and counsels of the humble sereno.

This is the culmination of a process that spans the entire trilogy: with each volume, Qoheleth's pragmatic cosmology becomes increasingly concentrated in the philosophy of the mentors. That is to say, in the first volume those assertions that resemble Qoheleth's very words, and their underlying ideas, belong mainly to the narrator. Roque Galda's affinity with this

Old Testament philosophy is marginal. In the second volume, the hedonism of Antonio Cardén -- as well as certain other characteristics -- is expressed in terms that parallel specific phrases from Ecclesiastes, but the underlying ideology lacks the moral conditions imposed by Qoheleth. In the philosophies of both mentors, there are likenesses to elements of existentialism. The elements of Señor Torío's philosophy that distinguish it for its resemblance to Ecclesiastes are those of clemency, a sense of responsibility and humility that are lacking in Martín's other two mentors. The "positive" nature of Señor Torío's ideology also evokes the Sartrean concept of existentialism as an instrument of man's betterment.

The sereno reflects several aspects of Qoheleth's wisdom: it is in Señor Torío that Arbó fleshes out his schematicized representation of Qoheleth's wisdom. The prime vehicle for this exposure of the more optimistic and moral face of Ecclesiastes is the sereno's "filosofía del clavo." Soon after Señor Torío intervenes in Martín's vital trajectory and offers him companionship and a nocturnal refuge, he proffers an unsolicited monologue on the nature of existence for the protagonist's benefit just as previous mentors had done. This "filosofía del clavo" epitomizes the sereno's humility and indifference to the ambitious struggle for wealth and social status. This is not to equate him with Antonio Cardén's sort of indifference, however: one of the sereno's first counsels to the protagonist is that he should work, a notion that we know would have horrified both Antonio Cardén and Roque Galda. Señor Torío, like Qoheleth,

speaks of one's underlying attitude toward labor as it relates to excessive ambition or the temporal well-being of the spirit:

"Todos los oficios tienen sus pros y sus contras, Martín Hay que resignarse porque hay poco para escoger, y cada día menos Hay más hombres para los oficios que oficios para los hombres la mayoría tenemos que coger lo que podemos, no lo que queremos. No se puede estar, Martín, esperando un poco al aire, como los milanos; acaso a ellos los alimente Dios, así lo cuentan por ahí, y yo no me meto en ello; yo sólo sé que el que espera de lo alto está arreglado. Hay que asirse a un clavo, aun que sea tan viejo, tan oxidado, tan podrido como este mío. El caso es no perderse, no ir por ahí a salto de mata" (p. 72).

When the sereno speaks of resignation, it is not a question of fatalism or cowardice but an eminently rational sense of pragmatism. This attitude is further envinced when Señor Torío tells Martín "hay que asirse a un clavo Y no te creas que todo sean glorias las apariencias engañan; no te fíes de apariencias" (p. 73). In these statements, Señor Torío counsels the protagonist, rather implicitly, that the ambitious pursuit of unreasonable, idealized goals for the purpose of self-aggrandizement is, to paraphrase Qoheleth, futility and grasping at the wind. The sereno later makes these sentiments more explicit:

"Me he convencido de que en esta perra vida sólo es feliz el que se conforma con lo que tiene. Veo muchos que tienen riquezas, que viven con lujo; cuando considero lo que les cuesta, dejo de tenerles envidia." (p. 213)

While these declarations of Señor Torío's fail to show the

kind of striking, nearly literal, parallelism with Ecclesiastes that is apparent elsewhere in Arbó's trilogy, the fundamental ideology shows a strong kinship with that of Qoheleth. Of the several aspects of this Old Testament wisdom reflected by the sereno, the principal ones are an exhortation to avoid the futile pursuit of wealth and the related notions of the vanity of ambition and the value of accepting one's true limitations. We have already cited R.Y.B. Scott's interpretation to the effect that "The profit of work is in the doing of it, not in any profit or residue which a man can exhibit as his achievement." Señor Torío admits that his vocation is a humble one, but he knows it affords him a kind of dignity denied those whose social status is derived from their wealth. He relates to Martín the story of the marquis whose friends abandoned him upon his financial ruin: "'El ser pobre, Martín, tiene esta ventaja: que si tienes un amigo sabes que lo es de verdad'" (p. 215).⁵

Scott also summarizes Qoheleth by stating that man "can find serenity only in coming to terms with the unalterable conditions of his existence, and in enjoying its real but limited satisfactions."⁶ This evokes Qoheleth's repeated observation that "No hay para el hombre cosa mejor que comer y beber y gozar de su trabajo" (Eccl.v.16). In Arbó's characterization of Señor Torío, enjoyment is not an explicit element of the sereno's vocation, if our criterion is a literal approach to Ecclesiastes. The boy's guardian discharges his duties stoically (Martín as a representative of Spain's most depressed class sees irony in Señor Torío's voluntary vigilance

over the estates of the wealthy). There is however no bitterness in his kind of resignation. His assertion that "sólo es feliz el que se conforma con lo que tiene" evokes the spirit, rather than the letter of Ecclesiastes' text. Qoheleth underscores the absurdity of man's esteem for material wealth which is devoid of any transcendental value: he describes his own prodigious accomplishments and his accumulation of unprecedented wealth only to conclude that "miré todo cuanto habían hecho mis manos y todos los afanes que al hacerlo tuve, y vi que todo era vanidad y apacentarse de viento" (Eccl.ii.11).

While Qoheleth uses his own example to emphasize the ephemeral value of wealth, Señor Torío provides examples from the lives of people he has known through his vocation. The sereno recounts the story of a German family whose wealth provides no buffer for a chain of grievous calamities that culminate in madness and death. The destitute marquis, a familiar eccentric in Señor Torío's neighborhood, is another victim of fortune's indiscriminate ire: "'Ya lo ves, Martín: tenía millones y no le quedó ni un real; tenía amigos que, de escucharlos, se habrían matado por él; se fueron los reales, desaparecieron los amigos'" (p. 213). In these two examples, the rich are not guilty by virtue of their wealth, nor is wealth the source of their misfortunes: it merely fails to serve a transcendental purpose commensurate with the esteem accorded it.

However, Señor Torío also acknowledges the sin of greed which in turn recalls Qoheleth's admonishments against consuming the precious gift of life in pursuit of essentially valueless

wealth. In Ecclesiastes we are told "El que ama el dinero no se ve harto de él, y el que ama los tesoros no saca de ellos provecho alguno; también esto es vanidad" (Eccl.v.9). The sereno dispatches the subject with the concise observation that "La plata vuelve locos a todos" (p. 159). This brings us back to the notion, stated explicitly by Señor Torío, implicitly by Qoheleth, that it is wise to recognize the reasonable limitations of one's existence and function within them.

We have noticed that Martín de Cretas comprises elements of a broadly and popularly understood interpretation of existentialism. Many of these same elements could be applied to Ecclesiastes, insofar as its "ideal moral . . . está muy lejos de la revelación evangélica,"⁷ implying that man must accept his responsibility for himself since God does not intervene dramatically on his behalf. It is interesting to note at this juncture, having established the empathetic ideologies of Qoheleth and Señor Torío, the definition given to the term "despair" by Jean Paul Sartre: "It merely means that we limit ourselves to a reliance upon that which is within our wills, or within the sum of the probabilities which render our action feasible."⁸ In the address from which this definition is drawn, Sartre undertakes a defense of existentialism from popular misconceptions and attempts to portray this philosophical attitude as one with collective applications and benefits, rather than introversion or self-obsession. In any case, the first steps in this process are the individual's accepting responsibility for his actions and choices, and also accepting

the vagaries of our existence on its rigorous terms, not our own. To quote the wisdom of Qoheleth, "Lo tuerto no puede enderezarse, y lo falto no puede completarse" (Eccl.i.15); that is, to attempt to impose our will upon the inscrutable nature of our existence is pitiable folly.

What relevance all this has for the protagonist is not immediately apparent. Martín shows none of the irrational expectations of personal greatness, rapacious ambition or lust for wealth that Señor Torío and Qoheleth warn against. It is in a different way that the boy tends toward the futile attempt to impose his will on the ways of fortune. Martín has inherited behavioral standards and criteria for judging men and situations from his previous two mentors. The consequences of this kind of bequest, in addition to the harsh, one-sided lessons of his childhood, are the biased expectations of his fellow man and of his own existence that must be overcome if he is to develop into the serene, content, responsible and self-reliant model espoused by Qoheleth and Señor Torío.

Aside from his ideological contributions to Martín's development as a person with a judicious sense of autonomy and a balanced view of life, the sereno makes an impression on the boy with an act of unexpected altruism. When the sereno approaches Martín on a cold night and offers him shelter, the boy responds with his customary suspicion: a previous offer of lodging and food had disastrous results. In a comic episode shortly after Martín's arrival in Barcelona, a seemingly friendly tabernero extracted hard labor from Martín in exchange for "free" room and

board. It turns out, however, that the sereno's introduction with a protective gesture parallels that of Antonio Cardén, and the author observes that "El señor Torío, al revés de tantos, resulta mejor de lo que parecía" (p. 71, chapter summary). A nocturnal refuge for Martín in the city is in itself a significant factor in his passage toward tranquil self-reliance: it quells one element of urgency in his condition and sets him apart from the sympathetic but larcenous guild of golfillos with which he is already acquainted.

The narrator plays on a literary and real-life commonplace; that of the youth in abandonment who falls prey to the seamy realities of the urban netherworld. The refuge offered by the sereno is optional: the fact that Martín eventually goes to stay with his boyhood acquaintance Jaime and frequently returns to take Señor Torío's counsel testifies to the voluntary nature of the relationship. It is no longer a question of the exigencies of survival. By the time Martín leaves the sereno's daily supervision, he is no longer in danger of criminal perdition. Even if he engages in minor mischief with the golfo Juanillo, his path is decided. When Señor Torío initially expounds on his "filosofía del clavo," Martín is charmed but "en el fondo no estaba muy conforme con lo que decía. El tenía algo de aventurero . . . " (p. 73). After the protagonist's first exposure to this ideology of humility and responsibility, it is not long before Jaime arranges employment for Martín as a wandering vendor of cigarette lighters, an unaccustomed and, for Martín, conventional lifestyle. As he opts for stability in

this choice, it is a symptom of the conversion of his ideology. Other factors flesh out and elucidate, in a largely implicit fashion, the evolution of Martín's conversion to a new ideology, one that Señor Torío espouses explicitly. We turn now to an examination of these factors.

C. IDEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Leaving aside Señor Torío's "filosofía del clavo" for the moment, there are other, more dramatic factors in the mitigation of Martín's ideological bias. These other processes implicitly serve the sereno's philosophy of humility and moderation, while they more explicitly function to negate the mean spirit of Roque Galda's view of man, which still afflicts the protagonist. There are numerous possibilities for the tenacity of the old man's ideas as they influence Martín; he was the boy's dominant authority figure during a most formative period of childhood; the effect of experiences that gainsay Roque Galda's view is eclipsed with the advent of the second mentor, Antonio Cardén, who holds opinions not unlike those of Martín's grandfather; and, there are also experiences that corroborate the prejudice of Roque Galda. As we have seen, these often occur at moments when Martín is beyond the direct protection of a mentor. It is during these periods of abandonment that he is arrested by the Guardia Civil and swindled out of money, for example.

Before Señor Torío's protective intervention in Martín de Caretas en la ciudad, the protagonist is chastened by an experience that results from a lapse in his vigilance. The promise of free room and board entices the boy to accept a job in a bar. The episode develops into a comic series of duties better associated with indentured servitude. The scene culminates in "la cocina del infierno," the deciding factor in the boy's resolution to flee. At this juncture it is germane to recall his earlier disillusionment with the foolishness of

Barcelona's citizenry and his subsequent admiration for the intrigues of the urban underclass he discovers near the customs-house. Martín is comforted by the existence of people who are astute by the standards he inherited from Roque Galda: it suggests to him that the urban milieu holds a place for him.

This lesson is brought home by his own succumbing to the impossible offer of free food and lodging. When Martín extricates himself from the bar after one day, he reflects happily on the outcome:

La experiencia . . . no había resultado perdida. Barcelona no era la que había imaginado los primeros días; tampoco era la que había creído después . . . Se sentía muy conformado en la idea de que tampoco aquí había que dormirse; que, según en qué circunstancia, el lecho malo era el mejor; que había, sobre todo aquí, de guardarse de ofrecimientos demasiado agradables; mirar que no le sorprendiesen y . . . no caer nunca en la tentación de aceptar una cena de balde. (p. 35)

Such is Martín's mood when Señor Torío makes his appearance. The protagonist, having already met the little golfo Juanillo, has in the same spirit successfully avoided losing money to the card-sharking urchin. The sereno's offer of nocturnal shelter arouses Martín's skepticism, but the urgency of his condition presses him to accept. The narrator interjects: "Siempre le había sorprendido la bondad, pero ahora, después de la experiencia del bar, todavía le sorprendía más" (p. 44). Soon after their relationship is forged, Martín recognizes the fundamental goodness of Señor Torío: from this new perspective the sereno's act of altruism is no longer

questionable. Martín's prejudice, in turn, is only partially mitigated. Thus the protagonist is unprepared for another unexpected act of altruism, one of far greater consequence.

Martín's reunion in Barcelona with Jaime, his erstwhile boyhood enemy, is a critical turning point in the course of the third volume, as well as in the trilogy as a whole. In the earliest chapters of Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, Jaime as one of the privileged youths in Martín's school is the bane of the protagonist's existence. An abiding and intense dislike distinguishes Martín's feelings for "Jaimito." The nature of their reunion and subsequent relationship is so anomalous that, in order to introduce it, Arbó resorts to an extension of his function as omniscient third-person narrator that he seldom invokes. The first two pages of the chapter in question are rendered entirely in the third person. The narration does not recount actions or events: rather it describes omnisciently the "conversion" taking place in the protagonist's intimate attitude toward his existence and his fellow man. As with his pithy summaries that open each chapter, the narrator adumbrates without undermining the dramatic tension of unfolding events.

This chapter carries the droll title "Martín tiene una sorpresa" and in the first sentence the narrator will admit only that the protagonist "se topó con un antiguo conocido" (p. 96). What Arbó goes on to describe are the effects of this meeting, observations of a general nature commensurate with the ideological background of the protagonist's vital course:

Martín se alegró en gran manera, no sólo por el encuentro; también porque el caso se acomodaba a una nueva disposición suya de espíritu, una manera nueva de pensar, y hasta de sentir, que iba insinuándose en él desde hacía algún tiempo.

Martín, en efecto, poco a poco, sin apenas darse cuenta, había ido cediendo; había ido pasando al bando opuesto. No era cosa, ciertamente, de descuidarse, pero tampoco de pasarse la vida con la mano en la lanza; además, para lo que tenía que perder, no valía la pena demasiado. Esto, los millonarios. (p. 96)

This particularly dramatic episode, insofar as Martín is concerned, is the definitive refutation of Roque Galda's ideology and brings to a head a process sustained by many similar, though lesser events that merely nonplussed, rather than impressed the protagonist. Those earlier, minor episodes in which Martín was the beneficiary of some altruistic act elicited a response like "No son todos sustos," expressed as the protagonist's own words. Nowhere else in the novel does the narrator avail himself so exclusively of Martín's intimate condition. This maximum extension of the narrator's omniscience brings us to consider Arbó's use of the third person point of view.

On the surface, we recognize the author's use of third-person narration as perhaps the single factor that serves most to distinguish Martín de Caretas from the true picaresque convention. If we accept that Arbó did not intend to produce a faithful adaptation of the picaresque novel, but rather merely availed himself of certain characteristics to suit his ideological purposes, we need not account for his use of the third person strictly in terms of the picaresque convention of

first-person narration. Nonetheless, contrasts between the two can serve to shed light on the narrator's motives for choosing third-person omniscience.

In the picaresque tradition, the narrator has a special, personal interest in imparting his experiences and their consequences to others. The confessional, first-person perspective is anchored in a fixed moment, the conclusion of the protagonist's course. The material of this trajectory is subject to a process of selection, which accounts for a sometimes episodic, though usually chronological arrangement. The center of ideological gravity naturally resides in the protagonist. The personal and exclusive nature of the narration fails to serve any sense of relativity with regard to supreme or prosaic values. Francisco Rico, with reference to Lazarillo de Tormes and Guzmán de Alfarache, sums up as follows the nature of the picaresque novel's point of view:

. . . los ingredientes principales tendían a explicar la situación final del protagonista, de la que era elemento notabilísimo el hecho de redactar una autobiografía: los núcleos mayores del conjunto daban cuenta del personaje como narrador, justificando la perspectiva que, a su vez, decidía la existencia y el contenido de las memorias, de suerte que la novela quedaba rigurosamente cerrada. En ambas obras, la autobiografía presentaba toda la realidad en función de un punto de vista.⁹

Although Martín de Caretas comprises a narrative course with a distinctly episodic tempo, only rarely does Arbó invoke the kind of vague temporal references that signal a chronological gap. This illusion of temporal continuity, along

with the omniscient voice of the narrator, leaves no room for doubt in the reader's mind that Martín plays no role in the selection of events to be represented. Hence the work appears not to be so "rigurosamente cerrada." The omniscient narrator of Martín de Caretas is of course selective in his own way: he chooses to represent actions and events to suit his particular purposes, just as the pícaro /autobiographer does. Given Arbó's interest in demonstrating the superiority of certain ideological values over other, his purpose could only be served by third person narration, whereby the relativity of these values could be established beyond the protagonist's ability to know. The suggestion of objectivity -- a device to weigh the different value systems against each other -- allows Arbó to elucidate and justify his own bias. For example, in the first volume, Roque Galda's counsels seem appropriate to the protagonist's hostile circumstances. Having established that system of values, the protagonist then enters a new realm on his journey through the country where a different set of values begins to challenge the boy's acquired view of man and existence. Thus begins that process of the protagonist's philosophical conversion upon which the narrator's ideological intention is based throughout the rest of the novel.

The picaresque's traditional recourse to the style of memoirs fixes the protagonist's maturity as the point of departure and, as we have seen, tends toward an episodic format. In the case of Martín de Caretas, the advantage of the third person point of view is its penetration into the evolution of

the protagonist as it is influenced by extraneous factors. Initially Martín is a kind of tabula rasa, and as the dynamics of conflicting ideologies give him pause, he begins his development toward true autonomy and self-determination. In the same way that Martín's spiritual growth is better served in all its aspects by third person narration, so is the novel's sense of linear development. The narrative begins in the protagonist's early adolescence and proceeds consistently and chronologically to represent about three years of Martín's life. In other words, the novel comprises a coherent progression from a beginning to a conclusion.

To summarize, the above quotation from Martín de Caretas epitomizes the service of third person narration to Arbó's apparent ideological goals. Whereas Martín often responds to events that challenge his prejudice with phrases like "no son todos sustos" or "no tenía razón el abuelo," his intimate perspective relative to this gradual conversion does not permit him to expound on it explicitly and objectively in the way of the omniscient narrator. Since only the narrator knows at this juncture of Martín's ideological odyssey, his perspective allows the observation that the protagonist "había ido pasando al bando opuesto:" there is nothing to indicate that Martín himself views the situation as a dialectic of extremes. He is aware of "una nueva disposición suya de espíritu," but the choice of verbs and progressive verbal constructions in the phrases "una nueva disposición . . . que iba insinuándose en él desde hacía algún tiempo" and "había ido pasando al bando opuesto" denote

the implicit, evolutionary development of Martín's conversion.

Arbó's habit of vaguely or partially disclosing in advance certain features of the narrative, to be fully recounted later, is another unique prerogative afforded by the omniscient perspective. In addition to practising this technique to portray Martín's intimate transformation, the author also takes the liberty of addressing the reader directly. After having discussed the consequences of the grand reunion at some length, having revealed neither the identity of the "antiguo conocido" nor his kindnesses, Arbó suddenly shifts his attention, as if chastened by the kind of impatience Martín displayed at Roque Galda's digressions from otherwise good yarns:

La vida . . . Pero acabemos, por San Ambrosio, charlador celeste, llorón sublime y defensor de grandes causas, que no vamos a terminar en un año. Esto pensará también alguno escuchando esta monserga. "¡Vaya lata!" exclamará para sí y no le faltará razón. Vayamos, de una a Martín y al encuentro que tuvo aquella mañana y no nos metamos en caballerías. ¡Por el santo santo! ¡No volvamos! (p. 98)

The narrator's abrupt reaction to his own sentimental sobriety is well served by the jocular and self-effacing tone of the paragraph. The reflective and serious character of the preceding paragraphs, in light of the abundance of views on life and man encountered consistently along Martín's vital course, makes it appear to the trusting reader that the narrator is about to proffer his own view. Arbó shrewdly breaks the spell of emotionalism and resumes his account of the protagonist's immediate experiences. We learn that Jaime, while still

imperious and arrogant, instantly takes an interest in Martín's welfare. He buys the protagonist a new suit of clothes, which alleviates another of Martín's urgent conditions (the boy keeps his rags however, to avoid alienating his good friend Juanillo). Also, it is Jaime who introduces Martín to employment which, however modest, marks the final and definitive phase of the protagonist's ideological development.

And while Martín's renewed relationship with Jaime is definitive proof of Roque Galda's failings as a philosopher, and also proves a kind of salvation for the boy faced with a formidable urban milieu, it is the little golfo Juanillo that offers true friendship: Jaime's intervention produces tangible improvements in Martín's living conditions and heralds the consolidation of a balanced view of life, while the humble golfillo provides the protagonist with a heretofore unknown sort of fellowship, that of a peer. Aside from the humorously grotesque appearance of his ill-fitting rags, the engaging golfillo tries to lure Martín into a game of cards on their first meeting, soon after the protagonist's arrival in the city. Juanillo, a native of Seville, also sports an exaggerated form of his regional dialect, replete with a comical reverse ceceo that often confounds the protagonist to the point of incomprehension.

In spite of causing the protagonist certain petty aggravations, Juanillo is a thoroughly sympathetic character. As we have seen, soon after the two boys meet at the statue of Columbus, Martín sets out on a steady course of estrangement

from the lifestyle embodied by Juanillo. Nonetheless, an empathy exists between the two that leads Martín to participate in Juanillo's ill-advised schemes, such as the repeated attempts to recover a legendary cache of silver from a mysterious abandoned house. This sustained subplot becomes another exemplary experience for the protagonist: Señor Torío offers the analysis of its moral consequences and Martín gains insight into the character of his friend and into the futility of irrational ambitions.

Martín is dubious from the outset about Juanillo's proposal: "le pareció muy poco trabajo para la plata que prometía; pensó que aquello debía de ser una fantasía, un sueño de Juanillo, nacido de. . . sus deseos de verse con 'parné' a poco precio, en lo cual se parecía a todo el mundo" (p. 82). In spite of his reservations, the protagonist "acepta la proposición por amor del riesgo" (p. 82). The mission is doomed to failure by more than the apocryphal nature of the treasure. The house is guarded by a night watchman, and Juanillo's ill-health and frailty threaten to expose the intruders. Their initial foray sees them first terrified by a ghostly apparition -- the destitute marquis of Señor Torío's acquaintance -- and then surprised by the sadistic night watchman, also known to the sereno. Martín escapes unscathed only to see his companion, debilitated by tuberculosis and malnutrition, beaten mercilessly by "el gordo Antón."

The little golfo labors under a general delusion, one of entertaining fantastic and unreachable goals. Juanillo's chosen

vocation, once he leaves his youthful cardsharpping, is that of bullfighter. When Martín, encouraged by his own easy success at selling lighters, suggests the same livelihood to his friend, "Juanillo . . . no manifestó ningún entusiasmo; no quería saber nada de compras y ventas, a él sólo le interesaban los toros; o sería 'torero o naa'" (p. 207). Thus divorced from reality, his abstract longing for easy wealth is compounded by an inability, or lack of will, to recognize the immediate limitations that his poor health, poverty and condition of abandonment impose on his plans. Minutes after his drubbing at the hands of the sadistic Antón, Juanillo resolves to return with Martín to the mystery house to extract revenge and recover the treasure, all to the protagonist's dismay. Their next attempt on the house ends in nearly identical fashion, with Juanillo succumbing to his limitations and suffering another humiliating attack by the guard. In the end it is Martín who, in light of their failure to secure the treasure, at least extracts appropriate revenge. While the moral lesson of the experience is lost on Juanillo, it serves to chasten Antón, who not only suffered physical injuries as a result of Martín's justifiable vengeance, but failed to extract payment for his services as guardian of the house. His delusions led him to undertake his vigilance of the property without making formal arrangements with the owner in the hope he would be paid out of appreciation for his good will. Señor Torío chides him for acting thus out of greed: the entire episode prompts the sereno to observe that "La plata vuelve locos a todos."

In the example of Juanillo, Martín has an object lesson in the futility of irrational expectations. The little golfo embodies qualities that would appear an almost systematic synthesis of those that Jean Paul Sartre and Qoheleth warn us to avoid; futile ambitions, desires and expectations beyond our means, evasion of self-determination and responsibility, among others, all interrelated notions. The protagonist is witness to the extreme consequences of such delusions when the golfillo, his closest friend, succumbs to tuberculosis. Juanillo's last hours and the scene of his funeral are the novel's most somber and poignant moments. For one so terrified of mortality as Martín, the lesson is a powerful one. A desperate attempt to save Juanillo by prevailing upon Jaime's father, a medical doctor, is greeted with incredible callousness: "¿Tú crees que por un golfo cualquiera, por un perdido, iré yo a molestar a la gente?" (p. 248). With the inevitability of death and his own impotence in the face of it definitively manifested, albeit in melodramatic terms, Martín's changing view of life receives still more impetus: "aparte de la pena que le causaba la pérdida de Juanillo, continuaba con su miedo a la muerte. No; con la muerte, nada. La vida era estupenda, se estaba bien aquí a pesar de los majaderos, de los granujas, de los ladrones, de los bromistas, etc." (p. 272).

In concluding this discussion of the golfo Juanillo and his relationship with Martín, it is germane to treat briefly the manifest affinities the author shares with Pío Baroja. Baroja's influence on Arbó can hardly be overstated: the massive (some

ungenerous souls would say obsessive) biography, Pío Baroja y su tiempo, is alone evidence of a prodigious preoccupation. Stylistic and thematic affinities with the prolific Basque abound in Arbó's fiction. To cite only a few broad examples, the anguished protagonists of Arbó's early Catalan novels reflect a view of an alienated, absurd existence in an irrational world, like that of Andrés Hurtado in El árbol de la ciencia. Also, on the inside cover of the Austral edition of Martín de Caretas, the author is quoted as saying "creo que la sencillez y la claridad son las principales virtudes (del escritor, en general, y del novelista, en particular), y son, en el fondo, el atributo de los más grandes." Similar convictions are espoused at length in Baroja's article "La intuición y el estilo."¹⁰

With regard to the question at hand, Martín de Caretas manifests certain special resonances of Baroja's diverse legacy to Arbó. In accounting for the numerous picaresque adaptations among post-war Spanish novels (Martín de Caretas among them), Gonzalo Sobejano recognizes Baroja as an important intermediary: " . . . en la obra de Pío Baroja -- particularmente en La lucha por la vida -- encontraban estos escritores un eslabón próximo" of the picaresque tradition.¹¹ La lucha por la vida, Baroja's trilogy which comprises the novels La busca, Mala hierba and Aurora roja, has particular relevance with regard to Martín de Caretas. Baroja's young protagonist Manuel Alcázar is sent from a small town to Madrid, in order to rejoin his mother and "aprender un oficio."¹² Although the action of all three

novels is confined to a depressed section of the city, the protagonist is exposed to different media within the urban context, whose abstract or ideological dimensions are more pertinent than material considerations. Baroja convincingly depicts the horrors and degradation of urban indigents, prostitutes, golfos and criminals in an utterly hopeless situation. Manuel participates marginally in this world when he befriends and sometimes accompanies a group of golfos who perpetrate occasional delinquent acts. The protagonist also sustains a picaresque succession of menial jobs, from which he gains insight into a different kind of human misery. According to Beatrice Patt, Manuel is "pessimistic and hopeless, . . . sees life as sad and incomprehensible and is convinced that human motives are invariably vile and egotistical."¹³ Robert Hasting, an odd sort of mentor "who unequivocally exemplifies the influence of Nietzsche on Baroja's thinking at the time,"¹⁴ counsels the protagonist in the hope of inspiring some sort of decisive action on Manuel's part. The final volume of the trilogy finds Manuel in close contact with a group of anarchists, one of whom is his brother Juan, recently escaped from a Seminary. Their hopeful, millenarian speculations about a just and peaceful society are put in a definitive perspective by Manuel and he speaks to his deceased brother:

¡Te has ido al otro mundo -- y miraba el cadáver de Juan -- con una bella ilusión! Ni los miserables se levantarán, ni resplandecerá un día nuevo, sino que persistirá la iniquidad por todas partes. Ni colectiva ni individualmente podrán libertarse los humildes de la miseria, ni de la fatiga, ni del

trabajo constante y aniquilador.¹⁵

In spite of the pessimistic tone of Manuel's remarks, bearing a certain resemblance to Ecclesiastes and coming as they do at the very conclusion of Baroja's trilogy, both Patt and Arbó do not discount the undercurrent of hopefulness implicit in the novel's outcome. Arbó describes the character of Juan as "el sueño de redención . . . el héroe de su libro, que es el sueño del autor."¹⁶ Patt observes that "although the total effect is dreary and pessimistic, each of the three novels ends on a note of hope . . . Baroja is not yet ready to follow his own thinking to its logical conclusion but seeks . . . to mitigate the consequences of his apparent nihilism."¹⁷ Manuel's personal trajectory is, like Martín's, one of gradually opting for a lifestyle of responsibility and stability: he "is finally integrated into the bourgeois society of his time to marry and to become an upstanding and respectable citizen."¹⁸ While both Manuel and Martín resemble the model of Lazarillo in this regard, there should be no dishonor associated with their option, since they act out of reasoned pragmatism, the fruit of relatively wide experience.

In spite of numerous obvious affinities between these two trilogies, there are fundamental differences of conception. Baroja's preoccupation with the problem of Spain and its atrasamiento is well known. In his articles "Patología del golfo" and "Mala hierba" he relates this national complex to the character of the golfo, and the issue of his observations is

particularly germane to this study.¹⁹ In "Patología del golfo," Baroja sets about defining the term golfo, which he admits is a formidable task. He asserts that golfería exists in all social classes, not just among the poor as the popular conception would have it. Having established the universal nature of this phenomenon, Baroja proceeds with an almost anthropological analysis of its origins:

. . . es una forma que ha nacido de nuestro raquíptico medio social, es un tipo separado por una causa cualquiera de su medio ambiente y que reúne en sí mismo todas las aspiraciones de su clase.²⁰

The aspirations that Baroja refers to would seem to be those of only the most petty variety. The frail social fabric that gives rise to such ignoble desires is in turn weakened by a relatively new political system: democracy. In all, Baroja seems not to indict the system as such, but rather condemns its peculiar manifestation through the filter of Spanish society:

Una de las causas de la golfería es la democracia; yo no soy enemigo de ella . . . pero la democracia nuestra, la que gastamos en España . . . no ha sido más que un camino abierto a todas las ambiciones pequeñas, a todos los deseos mezquinos y malsanos. Ha hecho que el hombre busque su progreso social más que su perfeccionamiento moral; ha producido en todos la ambición de representar más que la de ser.²¹

This is a curious observation when we recall the example of the impoverished squire in Lazarillo de Tormes, who seemed to manifest the same symptoms. Oddly, while Baroja decries the

collapse of social classes due to the democratic system, in which people lose sight of the defining characteristics and respective morality of their class, in "Mala hierba" he laments that "Estamos dominados por la plutocracia más absoluta. El dinero nos ha hecho perder una porción de ideas, quizá falsas, pero que nos sostenían. Nos industrializamos para todo lo malo."²² Whatever Baroja's opinions as to the causes of this golfería, the effects that he underscores strongly resemble some of those characteristics that Sartre, Qoheleth and Señor Torío caution us against; futile striving for social status, irrational materialism, ignorance of or disregard for our personal limitations. Some of these traits could be used to describe Juanillo: he is undeniably guilty of unrealistic aspirations. However, while he corresponds to a general, popular conception of the golfo -- a destitute, urban youth who earns his living by means of shrewd, sometimes larcenous trickery --, his function in Martín de Caretas carries him far beyond Baroja's anthropological definition: " . . . el golfo es un hombre desligado por una causa cualquiera de su clase, sin las ideas ni las preocupaciones de ésta, con una filosofía propia, que es generalmente negación de toda moral."²³ Juanillo is even further distinguished from this concept of the character of the golfo when Baroja elucidates on this "filosofía propia:"

En todas las clases el golfo tiene la misma filosofía, el egotismo, la filosofía del yo. Al perder la moral de su medio ambiente, al no tener utilidad para él los preceptos morales de su clase, desaparece de su espíritu toda relación de deber para con los demás.²⁴

If we apply this definition rigorously as we search the pages of Martín de Caretas, the grandest golfo to be found therein is the character of Jaime's father, Caretas' former medical doctor. His callous response to the boy's pleas to help the dying Juanillo epitomize this attitude of egotism and insensitivity toward others, even more absurdly ironic coming from a purported healer and servant of human welfare. If we accept Baroja's assertion that la golfería occurs in all social strata, perhaps we should, for the purpose of this study, posit the obverse of this notion and suggest that altruism and goodwill can also occur in all social classes, even among the grievously destitute. Juanillo's small acts of selflessness in Martín's favor are no less significant for the golfilllo's extremely modest means. The narrator, describing Martín's reflective state in the aftermath of Juanillo's death, makes use of the little golfo's example to put Martín's ideological odyssey in relief:

Ahora sabía que también en Barcelona hay gentes que viven en el mayor abandono, gentes que perecen de hambre y frío. Como en Caretas, y más aún que allí. Había visto casos que nunca había podido imaginar; había descubierto la bondad donde menos lo esperaba, y donde menos lo esperaba la maldad. Ahora sabía que en un golfo cualquiera, en un Juanillo, en un Panda, despreciados, se oculta a veces un alma más hermosa que en el señor médico de Caretas, con todos sus títulos, todas sus amistades, rodeado de reverencias.
(p. 256)

It must be borne in mind that Baroja's perspective, insofar as "Patología del golfo" and "Mala hierba" are concerned, is rational, nearly empirical. He is preoccupied with what he

perceives as flaws in the Spanish character: this is reflected in his novels as well as essays. While his fiction, in particular, reflects a tendency to view life as absurd and tormenting, his emphasis on a peculiarly Spanish form of perversity endows his work with a sense of concrete social commentary. This contrasts, in a general sense, with Arbó's brand of universal commentary on human existence. Still, it is undeniable that Barojian concepts provided Arbó with an ideological foundation to be expanded and, to a certain extent, mitigated.

In conclusion, the whole of this third volume of Martín de Caretas is directed toward the alleviation of Martín's stern ideology of mistrust and isolation. The process herein is one of disillusionment, of toppling preconceptions. The protagonist's experiences, even at the expense of his accustomed principles, are not wholly negative: lessons are imparted to him without accompanying blows. Landscape contributes to Martín's ideological equilibrium by virtue of its failure to verify that preconception linking Barcelona with uniformly superior people. The character of Señor Torío corroborates the protagonist's amended, balanced view of urban man, or rather man in general. Of Martín's three mentors, the sereno lacks the authoritarian or dogmatic attitude that distinguishes his predecessors. His protection forms part of a complex that allows the protagonist to opt out of the lifestyle of the golfo, to which the boy could have been thoroughly susceptible given his initial state of abandonment. Finally, we see unprecedented ideological

significance concentrated in the persons of two secondary characters. With Martín's acceptance of responsibility and stability, the chain of events represented by the harsh predictability of his mala estrella in Caretas and the very unpredictability of his rural odyssey is displaced by these unprecedented personal relationships. According to the protagonist's preconceptions, these two would have seemed unlikely altruists: ultimately, their contributions to Martín's rationally balanced maturity are decisive.

D. NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹ Sebastián Juan Arbó, Martín de Caretas en la ciudad (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1972), p. 12. Further references appear in the text.

² Arbó, Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, p. 95. In light of this discrepancy, Roque Galda wishes not to disillusion Martín. He explains that "La suerte no me acompañó Me tocó, en verdad, el terno negro, la lotería de los grajos."

³ Arbó, Martín de Caretas en el campo, p.54.

⁴ Arbó, Martín de Caretas en el pueblo, p. 105.

⁵ Señor Torío's repudiation of wealth in favor of peace of mind is interesting to note, especially in view of his vigilance of the homes and property of people more "fortunate" than he is. While Martín is nonplussed by Señor Torío's willingness to protect the wealth of others, it is clear to the reader that Arbó's purpose in conceiving of the boy's third mentor as a sereno was not casual.

⁶ Scott, p. 206.

⁷ Sagrada Biblia (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1972), p. 797.

⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism," in Existentialism from Dostoesvsky to Sartre, ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: World, 1956), p. 298.

⁹ Francisco Rico, La novela picaresca y el punto de vista. (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1970), p. 116.

¹⁰ See "La intuición y el estilo" in Pío Baroja's Obras completas, VII (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1949), 965-1099.

¹¹ Sobejano, p. 219.

¹² Pío Baroja, La busca, in Obras completas, I (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1946), 262.

¹³ Beatrice P. Patt, Pío Baroja (New York: Twayne, 1971), p. 95.

¹⁴ Patt, p. 95

¹⁵ Pío Baroja, Aurora Roja, in Obras completas, I (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1946), 643.

¹⁶ Sebastián Juan Arbó, Pío Baroja y su tiempo (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1963), p. 350.

¹⁷ Patt, p. 97

¹⁸ Patt, p. 94

¹⁹ See Luis Maristany, "La configuración barojiana de la figura del golfo," in Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, 45 (1968), pp. 102-22. Maristany examines, among other things, the relationship of the articles "Patología del golfo" and "Mala hierba" to the first two novels of the trilogy La lucha por la vida.

²⁰ Pío Baroja, "Patología del golfo," in Obras completas, V (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1948), 55.

²¹ Baroja, "Patología del golfo," p. 56.

²² Pío Baroja, "Mala Hierba," in Obras completas, V (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1948), 42.

²³ Baroja, "Patología del golfo," p. 56.

²⁴ Baroja, "Patología del golfo," p. 57

VI. CONCLUSION

A review of Sebastián Juan Arbó's fiction, as well as his non-fictional works, reveals preoccupations that are synthesized into the ideological foundation of Martín de Caretas. For example, Arbó's choice of Miguel de Cervantes and Oscar Wilde as biographical subjects underscores the author's interest in the effects of inscrutable fortune on man's view of his existence. In his foreward to Oscar Wilde, Arbó observes that "en pocos escritores como éste se ensañó con igual violencia la fortuna, una vez que lo hubo derribado del pedestal de triunfos sobre el cual le había alzado."¹ The biographer seeks, among other things, to emphasize the process of cause and effect in the Irish poet's fall from grace. The life of Cervantes, too, provides examples of extreme vicissitudes. While Martín de Caretas does not represent circumstances of such sobering consequence, there is a manifest interest in the mysterious and terrible forces that play upon our existence.

This preoccupation is also evident in Arbó's early Catalan fiction, particularly Terres de L'Ebre, in which we also see the author's trademark portrayal of a close bond between man and the terrain he inhabits. The presupposition of such a bond lends itself to the representation of the terrifying vagaries of fortune: depressed rural folk, especially farmers, in an already underdeveloped nation receive the full brunt of nature's wrath. They are unable to escape its sometimes disastrous effect on their lives. Arbó's interest in this intense relationship is undeniable. We have seen in the first volume of Martín de

Caretas how dominant the harsh vagaries of nature are in the lives of the poor residents of Caretas, and how they effect the collective character of the people. To return to the example of Terres de L'Ebre, the protagonist's obsession with his sorry parcel of land is an effect, rather than cause of his personal disaster. After the accidental drowning of his young wife, leaving him to care for an infant son, "el trabajo incesante, desesperado, es como una borrachera" for Juan, the protagonist.² This futile, all consuming effort, reminiscent of Qoheleth's warnings, accompanies a condition of alienation, solitude and a simmering, impotent rage at the absurd blows dealt by life. Recalling the existential portraiture of human life that was to develop through the literature of the forties and fifties, these elements filter through to Martín de Caretas as well, but again they lack the somber, pessimistic, grievous potential of their function in Arbó's early Catalan fiction.

Critical consensus favors these early novels in Arbó's native language for their compelling unity of conception. However, Martín de Caretas would seem equally impressive for its prodigious diversity, at least with regard to the selection and management of disparate ideological elements to form a unique philosophical manifesto. Some critics have allowed the literary excellence of Martín de Caretas. Juan Alborg observes that "El Arbó genuino -- dejando aparte el Martín de Caretas, de calidad y especie singulares -- se encuentra en las novelas de la tierra y de sus hombres" ³. In addressing the popularity of Terres de L'Ebre, Antonio Iglesias Laguna confesses that

"Personalmente, estimo que Martín de Caretas quedará como su obra capital."⁴ While some, like Alborg, recognize the trilogy as "un libro estupendo, un libro delicioso",⁵ few, if any, have grappled with its philosophical features.

The trilogy, to judge from its diverse thematic borrowings and its neatly componential structure, betrays a systematically philosophical design, an analogy to the real-life process of learning to accept existence on its own, sometimes rigorous terms. The balanced view of life attained by Martín at the end of the trilogy is the result of a process of disillusionment, of learning by trial and error. He proceeds from a condition of accepting views proffered to him to a more discretionary attitude in which he exercises his autonomy, rejecting those assertions that experience proves fallacious. Toward the end of the third volume we see, by means of the protagonist's maturing psyche, successive, almost systematic refutations of those biased notions and exaggerated conditions that would have crippled Martín's development toward psychic well-being.

Landscape, as an integral component in the complex of Martín's development, initially posits conditions that legitimize Roque Galda's philosophy. Life, seen as subject to natural calamities, is unrelentingly harsh and self-preservation depends on vigilance and caution. In turn, the meanness of human nature is implied as attendant upon the inhospitable conditions of Nature: hence Martín must always "pensar que todos son lobos." In other words, in the world of Caretas, men are subject to determinism. The influence of existentialism is

evident in the portrayal of the protagonist's disillusionment regarding the bond between Nature and man's character. One of the basic tenets of existentialism is that an individual can, and must assume full responsibility for his existence and seek no excuses for failure in events beyond the influence of his own powers. The Sartrian axiom that "existence precedes essence" further insists that man's cowardice and evasion of responsibility, rather than any extraneous happenings, are the architect of what we call the "frailties of human nature." Presupposing that human beings have no a priori essence or nature, Sartre flatly states that "there is no determinism."⁶

It has been suggested that existentialism is the logical antithesis of Naturalism, since the latter supposes man's helplessness before Nature as it personifies the unforeseeable aggressions of fortune. Given Arbó's acknowledged conversance with the literary realism of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that he should avail himself of this concept as a foil for Martín's gradual conversion. While we see the effects of the boy's disillusioning experiences and we suppose that he no longer adheres to any notion of determinism, the narrator makes it explicit in the trilogy's final pages: ". . . despidámonos de Martín . . . al que dejamos en Barcelona . . . soñando tal vez, a su pesar, con los campos de Caretas, porque los campos no tienen la culpa de lo que hacen los hombres que viven el ellos."⁷ It is a gradually acquired perspective that allows Martín this kind of nostalgia. Before his exposure to the "other" world, the existence posited by Roque Galda and

verified by the boy's early experience of asperity -- in which determinism was given -- seemed utterly plausible.

What sets Martín apart from his fellows in Caretas is his resolve to seek a better medium. The brutish denizens of his home town can be seen as cowards in the existential sense: their habitual fatalism, hostility and resignation to oppressive conventions are evidence of their cowardice. Existentialism espouses self-defining choices as a means of assuming responsibility for one's existence. Martín's first step on the path to self-determination is his flight from Caretas. What follows, as we have seen, is progress along that same path as the protagonist learns to heed the lessons of experience, reject or modify erroneous notions urged on him by mentors, and give consideration to reasoned, balanced observations from the likes of Señor Torío.

In literary expressions of existential thought, we are often confronted with a protagonist engaged in a grim struggle to make sense of his absurd existence. Martín follows the existentialist's prescription, which serves not so much to render his existence sensible, but rather allows him to make peace with it, to coexist, as it were. Experiences of altruism, which open a breach in Martín's learned prejudice, are the foundation of this acceptance of the terms of reality: prior to tempering his stern outlook, the boy's struggle with life's apparent senselessness resembled the futile, obsessive labor condemned by Qoheleth. When at last the protagonist comprehends the sincerity of Señor Torío's selflessness, for example, or any

of several other acts of goodness, he concludes that "había descubierto la bondad donde menos lo esperaba." His experience of Jaime's goodwill elicits a similar judgement: "las soluciones en la vida, vienen así: cuando uno las espera menos y, a veces, de quien menos se habría esperado." As the converse of a phrase used often to describe Martín's situation in Caretas, this is indicative of the extent of his spiritual growth. Qoheleth's repeated warnings to the effect that misfortune calls without notice or discrimination resound throughout Martín de Caretas en el pueblo. R.B.Y. Scott observes that "As life is cancelled by death, so all values are negated by their opposites" to summarize the nature of Qoheleth's world. To characterize Martín's attitude at the conclusion of Martín de Caretas en la ciudad, we could assert that, while life is indeed cancelled by death, all its negative features are negated or alleviated by their opposites. Whereas Pío Baroja concludes that la golfería, a grave social malady, exists in all classes, Martín learns that "en un golfo cualquiera, en un Juanillo, en un Panda, despreciados, se oculta a veces un alma más hermosa que en el señor médico de Caretas, con todos sus títulos, todas sus amistades, rodeado de reverencias." Martín's conversion involves his passage from the absurd netherworld of Caretas, marked by terror and alienation, to the obverse realm of clemency and fellowship where it is proven that "los campos no tienen la culpa de lo que hacen los hombres que viven en ellos."

Mortality, a consistent motif throughout the trilogy, is a key factor in Martín's conversion. While the protagonist fails

to adopt the casual attitude of his grandfather or Antonio Cardén, the death of Juanillo affords Martín a new perspective. As we have seen, "aparte de la pena que le causaba la pérdida de Juanillo, continuaba con su miedo a la muerte. No; con la muerte, nada. La vida era estupenda . . . a pesar de los majaderos, de los granujas" Shortly after Juanillo's death, the narrator gives us this insight:

. . . volvió a encontrar gusto a la vida, a distraerse con lo que veía a su paso. Tenía razón el abuelo . . . La vida, a veces, estaba muy bien. Hay que huir de los malos momentos; hay que salir de estos negros túneles. (p. 264)

Arbó's use of the phrase "volvió a encontrar gusto a la vida" is key in this passage. While Martín has gradually acquired a sense of life's positive aspects, Juanillo's death demonstrates to him that mortality, no less fearsome than before, has its inevitable place in the entirety of man's existence: the protagonist finally comprehends an abstract distinction between life and death.

In realizing an appreciation for life, Martín does not so much make sense of an absurd existence, for which the existential protagonist often struggles in vain. Rather, he makes peace with life, much in the way that Qoheleth recommends. The absurd conundrum of his existence in Caretas has been virtually superseded: with the passing of the little golfo manifesting the real sorrow of human mortality, and with a glimpse of life's potential for contentment, Martín's existence ceases to be absurd. The two alternatives are no longer

different sides of the same coin. The protagonist has a clearly desirable option with which he can live tranquilly and happily. His choice to lead a stable and contented life is manifested outwardly by his resolution to continue selling lighters, at least temporarily. Martín's acceptance of, or inurement to a "bourgeois" lifestyle has been misunderstood in particular by Christopher Eustis. Eustis, whose article on Martín de Caretas clearly shows the trilogy's marginal kinship to the picaresque, seems to betray a modicum of hostility when he concludes that

Arbó reveals himself to be a "realista convencional" not merely because he reverted to a traditional literary convention, but because he renounced the very essence of the picaresque novel -- its capacity for serving as a sweeping testimonial and an unrelenting indictment of contemporary society.⁸

It would seem, by virtue of Eustis' own conclusions, that Martín de Caretas bears so little resemblance to the true picaresque that to judge it rigorously by those standards would be unfair. The present study suggests that such criticism would seem less than fully relevant. Of Martín's conversion to a lifestyle of stability and responsibility, Eustis observes:

Arbó does acknowledge social and economic injustice . . . but the critical dimension lacks conviction. It is virtually eclipsed by the prevailing message of acceptance of the established order. Martín is employed, albeit superficially, as an agent for registering the callous impersonality, the hypocrisy and the shocking disparity between the rich and the poor of Barcelona, but he remains detached and immune to these problems. In no way do they interfere with his privileged assimilation into the dominant pattern of social and economic stability. The primary purpose of Martín's exposure to the morally and materially deficient aspects of life in

Barcelona is to impel him toward safe, wholesome mediocrity.⁹

Many of the assertions in the preceeding quotation are founded on an oddly literal approach to Arbó and his work. In short, Eustis interprets Martín de Caretas as an endorsement of free enterprise and bourgeois values. Had he taken into account the philosophical elements examined in this study, he might have concluded as we do in this case: that Arbó's trilogy avails itself of ideological factors of a timeless, universal, abstract nature, adapted to a social medium familiar to his readership. While Arbó's purpose for doing so is not clear, it is not unreasonable to think that it is the same that motivated Jean Paul Sartre in the fifties to exhort men to take responsibility for their own existence, to act within the means of their will.

Eustis does Arbó a disservice with such a prosaic interpretation of the trilogy. In the passage quoted above, there are several examples of indistinct exegesis. To say that the protagonist is "detached and immune" to urgent social problems in the city, particularly the "shocking disparity between the rich and the poor" is to efface the impact of Martín's entire experience of Juanillo and his society of golfos, in some of whom he discovered the noblest of souls. Eustis accuses Martín -- and Roque Galda, who also takes up the sale of lighters -- of having "the enterprising attitude characteristic of the familiar bourgeois success story."¹⁰ By this statement, in addition to his assertion that the reason for the boy's "exposure to the morally and materially deficient

aspects of life in Barcelona is to impel him toward safe, wholesome mediocrity," the critic reveals his failure to see that, insofar as the trilogy is concerned, the material aspects of life are, as it were, immaterial. The very word bourgeois implies materialism, a notion that Martín explicitly renounces. In spite of his "esperanza de mejoramiento" (p. 294), his attitude toward his employment is modest and betrays no affinity to the classical notion of bourgeois values:

Sin embargo, no abusó. Martín no salió del justo medio. No era ambicioso, solo quería lo necesario. Vivir sin necesidad Con esto le bastaba. Ganaba menos dinero, pero vivía más tranquilo
 . (p. 148).

This is scarcely the attitude of a devoted capitalist. One might infer Martín's tacit approval of free enterprise were it not for the presence throughout the trilogy of ideological elements, culled from thousands of years of literary and philosophical tradition, which have universal relevance to the condition of man on earth. Whereas Eustis attempts to show Arbó's retrograde characteristics as a novelist, it is more likely in view of the evidence at hand that he proposes a daring formula for social betterment through individual responsibility. Sartre refutes charges that existentialism is anti-social introversion by citing the example we set for mankind by our actions:

. . . . when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men Subjectivism means, on the one

hand, the freedom of the individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity. It is the latter which is the deeper meaning of existentialism. When we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that every one of us must choose himself; but by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men. For in effect, of all the actions a man may take in order to create himself as he wills to be, there is not one which is not creative, at the same time, of an image of man such as he believes he ought to be.¹¹

The ideology espoused by Arbó, while detached from specific social circumstances, supposes consequences of a more universal, but nonetheless concrete nature. Arbó's intention is to address the question of the very nature of our existence, and in doing so the author tenders an adaptation of ideological approaches designed to equip man for potentially rigorous encounters with his own existence. While both Sartre and Qoheleth use examples from their respective times and cultures, their didactic message is universal: there are no national, political, temporal, or social bounds to its applicability. Such is Arbó's intention with regard to Martín de Caretas: his borrowings from literary tradition, for example, all have specific, identifiable functions. His thematic allusions to the likes of Cervantes, Calderón, Baroja and the picaresque are not capricious, nor are they intended as limits to or criteria for a literal judgement of the narrative; rather, they serve the author's ideological intention. The result is, in fact, just the kind of universal didactic statement made by Sartre and Qoheleth -- to name only two examples -- couched in a framework of literary and social media comprehensible to and known by all manner of Spaniards.

The philosophical path espoused by Arbó is not one of political activism. It is, on the contrary, one of an intimate, personal evolution, the protagonist's only reliable basis for serving the betterment of his fellows. From the perspective of Martín's final condition, Roque Galda and Antonio Cardén stand as examples of the socially impotent victims of those characteristics condemned by Sartre and Qoheleth. Martín's grandfather is duped by the illusion of a human nature. Antonio Cardén fits Sartre's description of a self-deceiver: "Since we have defined the situation of man as one of free choice, without excuse and without help, any man who takes refuge behind the excuse of his passions, or by inventing some deterministic doctrine, is a self-deceiver."¹² The truck driver, by means of his observation that "La vida es una mierda" excuses himself from the conventions and responsibilities attendant upon his participation in his society. Martín, on the other hand, shows himself to be something of an existential protagonist in the sense that he must choose, along his vital trajectory, from a confusing array of definitions and experiences of life. This is made all the more significant by virtue of his exposure, at a most formative age, to the brutal world constituted by Caretas, in addition to the imperious pedagogy of Roque Galda, his major authority figure. As we have seen, through all Martín's vital course, the harsh lessons of his youth in Caretas are resilient ones.

His final condition, while it does not comprise an original ideology, is the fruit of a process of rational self-

determination: his condition on his arrival in Barcelona could have impelled Martín toward the lifestyle of a complacent, anti-social delinquent. The function of his deciding and choosing conduces Martín to a modest, reasonable livelihood. This is not necessarily an endorsement of capitalism, free enterprise, or the status quo of Spanish society, nor is it a question of the protagonist's opting for "social and economic stability" to the exclusion of his social consciousness. Rather, this stability -- which admittedly signals Martín's privileged social status, compared to his poor fellows -- is a symptom of his modest, moderate and responsible ideology. This ideology, which in fact eschews many essential characteristics of bourgeois thought, is a sort of formula for personal contentment with social ramifications after the fashion of Sartrian existentialism.

At the conclusion of this study, certain of Arbó's ideological preoccupations are in clear resolution. His affinity for landscape as a determinant of human behavior, the picaresque view of the world and Old Testament wisdom is clearly demonstrable. As to whether or not Arbó read and emulated existentialists such as Sartre or Albert Camus, there is no explicit evidence to suggest so. However, recalling Sergi Beser's comparison of Arbó's early fiction to the work of the aforementioned French existentialists, we can further see his kindred spirit manifested through those same preoccupations that are more distinctly tangible. For example, the author establishes a deterministic world later to prove that the determinism resides only in the pusillanimous spirit of Caretas'

fatalistic inhabitants. Existential characteristics of Ecclesiastes and the picaresque convention also serve the portrayal of this absurd, impossible environment. Those aspects of Qoheleth's wisdom that seem to resonate through Sartre's address, "Existentialism is a Humanism," in turn help to effect the amelioration of the protagonist's view of his existence.

The result is a pragmatic attitude toward life that confronts the possibility of calamity, yet allows for contentment and enjoyment, as per Qoheleth's prescription. Roque Galda, who in the end learns from the example of his grandson, gives an enlightening, personal interpretation of this vital attitude:

Y ya que no sabemos por dónde andamos, ni si por la derecha vamos bien, o por la izquierda tropezamos, hagamos como él; vayamos sin cuidado ni preocupaciones, a ver qué sale. Que cada cual se arregle y baile como sepa; que coma y beba, y duerma poco, que es saludable. (p. 291)

Thus the message is expressed in terms of the individual while it retains universal relevance. In fact, the range of these ideological implications far exceeds Eustis' urge to social criticism. Arbó not only manages a myriad of profound philosophical and folkloric traditions in his ideological synthesis, but does so with an eye toward optimism and clemency. Furthermore, the author displays a restrained but piquant wit throughout the trilogy, commensurate with the character of the folkloric forms that gave rise to Bertoldo, Bertoldino y Cacaseno.

In his epilogue, Arbó again assumes full command of the narration, addresses the reader directly, undertakes a defense of literary realism, directs harsh words toward the experimentalists and avant-guardists of literary endeavor and gives an overview of his characters' circumstances to draw the story to a close. In this address to the reader, the narrator makes a droll reference to the ideology he espouses through the example of Martín, and at the same time acknowledges a spiritual father:

Sueños por sueños los de Salomón . . . que decía que la vida era un asco -- "todo vanidad de vanidades" --, pero que hacía lo que podía; no dejaba fruta por verde, sobre todo en cuestión de mujeres; sueños por sueños, sí, los de Salomón, al lado del cual los don Juanes y Casanovas de la historia fueron niños de coro; él las tuvo rubias y morenas, gruesas y delgadas, altas y bajas; las tuvo nacionales y extranjeras, que en esto no reparaba en patriotismos, y aun en su vejez corría en pos de ellas con el mismo entusiasmo, mientras aseguraba que estaba cansado de la vida -- y tal vez fuera verdad --, que la vida era un asco, "todo vanidad de vanidades."

Y basta de Salomón; volvamos a Martín, ya que se trata, sobre todo, de Martín. (pp. 297-298)

Arbó returns to the subject of the protagonist by means of a device similar to that used when the omniscient narrator described the amelioration of Martín's vital attitude. With that, however, the author makes no more mention of the protagonist's condition of stability and contentment. Instead he proffers for the reader the virtues of his narrative, that is, its realism:

Si eres sincero, lector querido, confesarás que has visto a Martín de Caretas

Confesarás que has visto al abuelo, sentado ante la puerta, con la cayada entre las manos Y a Juanillo, lector, ¿no has visto a Juanillo acaso, vagando por el puerto . . . , fumando su colilla y parpadeando cuando veía acercarse a Martín como si le doliese la luz en los ojos? ¿No le has visto acaso después, con su traje de oro y azul, desplegando su capotillo, toreando a . . . aquellos toritos negros de las plazas celestiales . . . entre vítores y aplausos, en que el golfillo soñaba, se resarcía de las miserias de aquí abajo? Pues éste es el mérito de la obra y de nuestro autor. Fuera de esto no busques, que no hay más. (p. 300)

In spite of Arbó's admonition, there is indeed much more. It is true that the author presents a seemingly innocuous story with a happy ending, but its implications are by no means purely escapist. Martín achieves a vital attitude that allows him to make the best of his tenuous stability and social position, just as Solomon under his own, more abstractly worrisome circumstances "hacía lo que podía." If we consider Arbó's readership at the time Martín de Caretas was published, we must take into account the freshness of the memory of a hideously fratricidal Civil War. With the major political forces behind that conflict having run amok and, if anything, having had a retrograde effect on the nation's social progress, it is not surprising that the author should propose an inward-looking, almost Taoist response to such a political failure. An effectual, social revolution would be too much to expect from any one person, particularly a humble lad of sixteen years. Thus the narrator exhorts us "volvamos a lo nuestro y no

queramos arreglar el mundo y menos esta parte tan dañada del mundo" (p. 300). By this Arbó does not mean to endorse a posture of quietism. Rather, he wishes to underscore the futility of man's mania for forcibly deciding the existence of others: his call to personal responsibility and humility has bolder social implication than any political doctrine.

A. NOTES TO CONCLUSION

¹ Sebastián Juan Arbó, Oscar Wilde (Madrid: Ediciones Cid, 1960), p. 11.

² Alborg, p. 273.

³ Alborg, p. 270.

⁴ Antonio Iglesias Laguna, Treinta años de novela española (Madrid: Prensa Española, 1969), I, p. 105.

⁵ Alborg, p. 284.

⁶ Sartre, p. 295.

⁷ Sebastián Juan Arbó, Martín de Caretas en la ciudad (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1972), p. 300. Subsequent references appear in the text.

⁸ Eustis, p. 32.

⁹ Eustis, p. 31.

¹⁰ Eustis, p. 31.

¹¹ Sarte, p. 291.

¹² Sarte, p. 311.

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