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Jose Cela*

David Francis Henn

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SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN THREE  
NOVELS OF CAMILO JOSÉ CELA

D. F. Henn

The three novels studied in this thesis are La familia de Pascual Duarte, Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes and La colmena. Although they are basically different in content and structure, each does, however, manifest a preoccupation with the reactions of the individual to his fellow man. In general, intimate human relationships are not seen but rather the opposite with violence, hostility, selfishness and apathy playing a dominant role in varying degrees in each of these novels. Thus, for a variety of reasons, some beyond their control, Pascual Duarte, Lázaro and Martín Marco come to represent the 'lower' or 'outsider' figures within their respective societies.

The factor that is largely beyond the control of each of these men is the attitude of their fellows; the hostility, suspicion and lack of compassion that, apart from brief interludes, pervade the three novels in question. Duarte and Lázaro increasingly come to profess a belief in an inclement destiny, although the former may well have an ulterior motive for this. The 'Final' of La colmena may, however, permit a feeling of cautious optimism as various individuals share a common goal in an attempt to help Martín Marco. Whatever fate awaits him it is ironical that he, too, may be frustrated by circumstances or destiny when he at last appears to have decided to conduct his life in a more positive and possibly fruitful manner. Yet at least some people are showing a genuine concern for an individual's plight, acting upon this and thereby showing a responsive and compassionate attitude rarely seen in La colmena or for that matter, in either of the other two novels.

Also discussed at length, and with particular reference to thematic exigencies, is the structure of each of the novels under consideration.

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SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN  
THREE NOVELS OF CAMILO JOSÉ CELA

A Thesis presented

by

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CONTENTS.

1. - Introduction.....	page 3
2. - <u>La familia de Pascual Duarte</u> .....	13
Internal structure.....	18
Spain of 1942 and the appearance of the novel.....	21
Interpretations of the protagonist.....	22
Duarte introduces himself.....	28
Duarte and the expression of violence...	34
The social environment.....	45
Conclusion.....	56
3. - <u>Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de     Lazarillo de Tormes</u> .....	62
Lazarillo of 1554.....	64
Cela's Lazarillo.....	66
4. - <u>La colmena</u> .....	91
Time in 'La colmena'.....	94
Society in 1942 Madrid.....	115
Martín Marco.....	129
5. - Conclusion.....	142
6. - References.....	148

### Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the individual and the society within which the individual finds himself in three novels of Camilo José Cela, La familia de Pascual Duarte (1942); Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes (1944) and La colmena (1951). The reason for choosing these three novels to the exclusion of other works by the author is that principally these are novels of action and social content and, unlike another of Cela's finest literary achievements, La Catira (1955), are set in Spain. Obviously, it would be difficult to preclude La familia de Pascual Duarte and La colmena from any study of the novels of Cela, as both, it is generally agreed, are major achievements of the author. The 'Nuevo Lazarillo', although not of the same stature of these two novels, is a work that is too often neglected by critics, briefly mentioned, or, dismissed as a mere literary exercise or an interesting failure on the part of Cela. The writer hopes to show that this novel is an important part of Cela's literary evolution between the years 1942 and 1955.

Pabellón de reposo (1943) and Mrs. Caldwell habla con su hijo (1953) have also been excluded from this study since they are of such a subjective tone and content as not to come

under the title of this study. Both are novels of a lyrical nature and are basically restricted in scope and inward looking (although this, of course, by no means detracts from their merit) and come under a different category to the more objective novels of social communication and reaction that will be discussed in the following pages. As has been mentioned, La Catira too has been excluded from this study as the action of this novel takes place not in Spain but in Venezuela, although the passions and ideals of Pipía Sánchez are by no means unique to the South American character and have the universality of certain sentiments possessed by many of the characters of 1942 Madrid as described in La colmena.

Cela's prose output has been prolific; novels, short stories, travel books and other descriptive accounts as well as his work as a literary critic and editor of a literary and cultural review. At the present date, 1968, and in his fifty second year, it is well within the bounds of possibility that more is still to come from his pen. However, up to the present, this writer believes that Cela's most important work was that written between 1942 and 1955 and particularly the six novels previously mentioned. Should Cela write no more he will be remembered for these novels and also his excellent Viaje a la Alcarria (1948).

The three novels to be studied under the title of this thesis, at first sight all very different in structure and content, do have one important common factor; the picture that they present of the individual or individuals in their particular society: the way in which the individual is influenced or reacts within his social environment and also the nature of this environment. Pascual Duarte is the product of a primitive rural milieu and an even more grotesque and terrifying family. Cela's first novel is not just the study of the individual mentioned in the title of that novel; of course, Pascual narrates the story and is the hub around which the account revolves. However, the fact must not be lost sight of that the title of this novel is La familia de Pascual Duarte and not, for example, simply 'Pascual Duarte' or 'La vida de Pascual Duarte'. Duarte's social environment is in many ways as important as the actions of the narrator - protagonist, and, depending upon one's interpretation of this man and his deeds, may be even more important.

Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes like the Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes of 1554 and also like Cela's first novel, is written in autobiographical form. Cela's Lazarillo, in that part of his life of which he gives account, lives in a basically hostile society and suffers

accordingly. He finds little solace in life and little charity from most of those with whom he comes into contact. He acts as a sort of catalyst showing the reactions of those around him; he is deprived of the chance of happiness when this presents itself and like the girl Marie, is very much the innocent abroad in a hostile environment that requires a great degree of expediency and lack of consideration for others if one is to reduce personal hardship to a minimum. Irony and caricature are important elements in this novel and underline the tragic fact that, as far as the protagonist is concerned, life is cruel and monotonous and man too often unnecessarily hostile. Destiny is seen to frustrate and destroy; it steadily erodes the spirit of Lazaro until he eventually finds submission and resignation the only practicable course. The narrator's transition from childhood to adulthood is a process of physical and mental suffering accompanied, not unexpectedly, by a hardening of attitude as the shackles of existence become increasingly onerous and painful. Lazaro's early optimism and his subsequent occasional chances of happiness are frustrated with a frightening thoroughness that becomes more evident as the narrative unfolds. The Juggernaut eventually trundles over the exhausted hero and, we may assume, moves on. This is the tragedy of the 'Nuevo Lazarillo'.

La colmena is the study of a society, or rather of many individuals of a certain section of the people of 1942 Madrid, a city and its people who have yet to recover from the trauma and resultant material hardships that the Civil War has caused. As will be seen when this novel is studied, the social atmosphere is one of hostility, selfishness, exploitation, suffering and monotony. La colmena is a 'slice of life' in which, over a short period of several days, more than three hundred characters face the problems and hardships of their apparently fruitless existence. The author has put himself in the position of the camera, recording incidents as they occur and rarely intervening or passing comment. There is no central character, but if one person can be said to provide some sort of tenuous link between the people and parts of the city seen, then that person must be Martín Marco. As the action unfurls before the reader Marco gradually comes to the foreground until, at the end of the novel, he becomes the hub around which the action revolves. He becomes a symbol of the sterile existence of most of those encountered and when, finally, he does decide to take positive steps to organise his life it seems as if he, too, is about to be frustrated in the way that so many of his fellow citizens in La colmena are continually being frustrated.

A considerable amount of attention will be paid in this study to the structure of the novels under analysis and particularly to La familia de Pascual Duarte and La colmena. In the case of the former it must be remembered that Cela has gone to great pains to present this novel in a seemingly authentic autobiographical form. The author's intervention is precluded and the reader must rely totally on the version of events that the narrator presents. This fact is of paramount importance when one comes to attempt an interpretation of the narrator's actions and motives and decide whether or not Duarte is basically the "manso cordero acorralado y asustado por la vida" or, on the other hand, an irresponsible brute, conditioned by his society to respond with violence to a given situation and then, when he comes to write his 'pública confesión', rejecting the moral responsibility for his actions. The crimes that Duarte commits will be discussed and analysed, his social environment will be studied as will his general attitude to those around him. In this way the writer hopes to come to a firm conclusion concerning a character who has been the subject of extremes of interpretation by the critics. Even then, of course, the nature of this novel is such that there is more than one possible interpretation depending on the critic's reading of a novel that, upon reflection, is not as straightforward as it might appear to

have been at first sight. Arturo Torres-Río seco states, for example:

Pascual Duarte es una novela que no debería ser analizada. Hay que aceptarla como es. Puede leerse por su rapidísima acción y por su desfachatez, como una novela detectivesca; o puede considerársela como la novela trágica del destino humano, o aún puede ser vista como una parodia de novela en la cual todo o cualquier cosa puede suceder.

Ps. 66 - 67.

This may well have been the intention of Cela when he wrote his first novel. However, this writer hopes to show by analysis of Duarte himself and his crimes and a study of his social environment that Cela was rather more restrictive in intention, although by no means obvious or lacking in irony, when he wrote La familia de Pascual Duarte.

With La colmena, too, structure is of paramount importance, although not for the reasons mentioned above. Apart from studying the society of 1942 Madrid as reflected in this novel, the use of cinematographic technique and the allied phenomena of simultaneity of action and the 'flash-back' will also be discussed at length. The technique that Cela has adopted in La colmena is eminently suited to the nature of the work; with more than three hundred characters in view the camera technique is the only one that would keep the novel to a manageable size. On this point the writer

is in complete agreement with the opinion of Torres-Rioseco:

Los personajes aparecen como si fueran formas mecánicas, objetivamente, en acciones rápidas. Permanecen así, fríamente incompletos, como personajes de una película. Yo diría que la técnica de Cela en esta novela es afortunada - ¡ y también el lector! -, ya que si desarrollara cada personaje la obra tendría en vez de trescientas cincuenta páginas, cien mil.

P. 68.

Time will be shown to manifest itself in two distinct ways in La colmena; firstly in connection with the cinematographic technique and secondly, and just as important, in the way it marches inexorably on and emphasises the futility of the existences of most of the characters who seem blissfully unaware of this and continue their quest for the basic necessities of life and also take refuge in a variety of monotonous pursuits, often erotic, in order to minimise this very monotony which they suffer but to which they often seem unconscious.

Less attention has been paid to the structure of Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes; the autobiographical nature of this work and the use of the 'Tratado' make comparisons with the Lazarillo of 1554 inevitable. However the emphasis will be on thematic similarities or dissimilarities between the two works, to see whether in his 20<sup>th</sup> Century version of the 'Lazarillo' Cela has

retained the themes of the novel that appeared nearly four hundred years before his own. The writer hopes to show that in the Cela version the theme of hunger has been replaced by one of the general hostility of the society in which the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Lazarillo finds himself and the protagonist's resultant sufferings.

In each of the three novels under consideration Cela has used a different novelistic technique, in each case to suit the subject matter of the particular novel. For this reason a fairly detailed study of the structure of each is essential and particularly so as Cela is a novelist concerned very much with structure and form. However, it cannot be said that Cela is obsessed with formal considerations to the exclusion or neglect of all else, nor that his use of different forms are merely interesting and frolicsome experiments on the part of the author as Olga Prjevalinsky suggests:

La tarea de escribir - aventura intelectual para Cela - es incitación que le lleva a proyectar en diversos géneros de novela su arte riguroso y versátil, geométrico y huidizo. Con espíritu genuinamente deportivo emprende la creación de obras de estilo diferente.

The structure is made to suit the theme and not the reverse. The structure of each of Cela's novels, and particularly of the three to be studied here, is subordinated to the exigencies of the theme and tone of each work. Subsequently Cela succeeds in maintaining a skilful balance and blend of theme and form in novels which are, at first sight at any rate, so very different in character. One of the aims of this thesis will be to try to show this successful marriage of structural and thematic considerations in La familia de Pascual Duarte, Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes and La colmena.

La familia de Pascual Duarte

Camilo José Cela's first novel, La familia de Pascual Duarte (1942), is the personal narrative of an Extremaduran peasant, Pascual Duarte, written as he awaits execution for a crime committed at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Duarte's account spans that part of his life from childhood to the murder of his mother, the date for this crime being given as February 12th 1922. Thus, there remain fourteen years of his life of which there is no record, save reference to the fact that Duarte returned to gaol some time between 1922 and 1936, presumably for his act of matricide:

¡Pobre don Conrado, qué bueno era! ¡Si él supiera que lo mejor que podría pasarme era no salir de allí! Cuando volví a Chinchilla, a aquella casa, me lo confesó con lágrimas en los ojos.....

Ch.17. P. 173<sup>1</sup>

Duarte dedicates his memoirs to the victim of the crime for which he is finally convicted, that is, don Jesús González de la Riva, 'patricio' of the narrator's village. However, there is no reference to the circumstances of this crime, apart from the dedication's ".....al irlo a rematar el autor

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<sup>1</sup>Camilo José Cela. Obra completa - Tomo I. Las tres primeras novelas. Ediciones Destino. Barcelona, 1962.

de este escrito, le llamé Pascualillo y sonreía." (P.55).

The narrator cannot, of course, describe his own end. It is here that Cela introduces an editor who is able to confirm that sentence has indeed been carried out and also obtain eye witness reports of the event. At this point it will be interesting to compare, from a structural point of view, Cela's novel with another literary product of the condemned cell, Albert Camus' L'Etranger. This novel was also written in 1942 and bears certain, although not fundamental, similarities to La familia de Pascual Duarte. The most interesting point of comparison is to observe how the two authors have approached the problem of the author - narrator - reader relationship in their respective works. In L'Etranger, the reader is projected directly into the mind of the narrator, Meursault. There is no attempt to present Meursault's story in the form of written memoirs or a diary; no attempt to explain the translation of his story from the condemned cell, and, finally, no pre-occupation with the end of Meursault's life. We assume that he will die, but do not know for certain. The reader is, then, continually aware that the story is indeed fiction. Camus has seen no reason to give his novel the undisputed stamp of authenticity. Cela, on the

other hand, has gone to great lengths to present Duarte's story as feasible and therefore possibly factual.

The history of Pascual Duarte's manuscript, how and why it eventually came to light, and also an account of the death of the narrator, are presented by means of the intervention of an anonymous editor. In his 'Nota del transcriptor' the editor states that he found the manuscript in 1939, put the sheets into their correct order and also made certain alterations when he came to transcribe the story:

..no he corregido ni añadido ni una tilde,  
 porque he querido respetar el relato hasta  
 en su estilo. He preferido, en algunos  
 pasajes demasiado crudos de la obra, usar de  
 la tijera y cortar por lo sano.

Ps. 49-50.

Concerning the extent of these excisions, we are informed that they relate to "algunos pequeños detalles" (P.50). The editor has thus taken upon himself the role of censor and also gives a moral justification for the publication of the work:

El personaje.....es un modelo de  
 conductas; un modelo no para imitarlo, sino  
 para huirlo.

P.50.

Thus far, the editor has explained the appearance of the memoirs; but it would seem that authenticity is at a premium with Cela, for other documents relating to Pascual Duarte and his story are also included. In the 'Carta

anunciando el envío del original' Duarte sees his story as a "pública confesión" (P.51) and also considers his impending death. He realises that his story cannot be completed; narrator thus far of his own life, he must leave the account of his last days to the imagination of the reader, or, as it transpires, to the efforts of another.

Al empezar a escribir esta especie de memorias me daba buena cuenta de que algo habría en mi vida - mi muerte, que Dios quiera abreviar - que en modo alguno podría yo contar.....  
 ....hoy, que parece que ya estoy aburrido de todos los cientos de hojas que llené con mi palabrería, suspendo definitivamente el seguir escribiendo para dejar a su imaginación la reconstrucción de lo que me quede todavía de vida.....

P.52.

After Duarte's story has been presented, the editor mentions, in "Otra nota del transcriptor" (P.195), his fruitless search for material concerning the narrator's whereabouts and actions between 1922 and the insurrection in the summer of 1936. He succeeds only in obtaining an account of Duarte's last moments and is, therefore, at least able to confirm that sentence has been carried out on the condemned man. This information is obtained as a result of correspondence with two witnesses of the execution; a member of the Guardia Civil

and the prison chaplain. Through the inclusion of these two letters Duarte's story is given a finality which, although contrived, would have otherwise proved impossible due to the obvious limitations of the autobiographical form.

So it appears that Cela has taken quite elaborate steps to ensure the credibility of this work. But to return to L'Etranger for a moment; in the case of Meursault, the reader is given complete access to the mind of the narrator, or, is in a position to listen to his story related as each incident happens - although occasional remarks suggest that Meursault is writing a retrospective account. Either way, the reader is in a completely artificial position. Pascual Duarte, on the other hand, is recording his story from a fixed point in time, the year 1936, looking back over the life that he has led and which has eventually brought him to the condemned cell. The transfer of Duarte's manuscript is accounted for; its subsequent discovery is described, as is the death of the writer. Thus, by using these devices (which account for about one tenth of the length of the whole work), Cela precludes his own intervention in the story and allows the reader access in a plausible manner. Even the vagueness concerning the last fourteen years of Duarte's life and the ignorance surrounding the circumstances of his last (alleged) crime may possibly contribute to the

credibility of the work as a whole, for only an omniscient author would have total access to a character's thoughts and actions.

### Internal Structure.

Having so far mentioned the general form of La familia de Pascual Duarte with particular reference to the author-narrator-reader relationship, it is now necessary to study the internal structure of the work before embarking on a discussion of the narrator himself and his social environment.

Pascual Duarte's story may be considered to consist of basically three sections, these being the result of the inclusion in the narrative of two chapters describing his thoughts and feelings as he writes from the condemned cell. Both of these intervals of reflection appear after the narration of critical moments in Duarte's story. The first, Chapter 6, follows the death of Mario and the possession of Lola at his graveside. Duarte's reason for the lull in his story is given as business concerning his case - interrogation and visits from his defence counsel, and also his transfer, either from another gaol to Badajoz or simply to a different part of that prison. The second pause in the descriptive narrative, Chapter 13, follows the account of a period of intense mental cruelty to which Duarte is subjected by Lola and also his mother. As a

result of this hostility he decides to flee from home.

In these intervals of personal reflection, the narrator presents his innermost thoughts; the course that his life has taken, his inability to combat what he believes to be the overwhelming force of destiny, and his impending death. These are moments of relative calm providing a pause between the passages of physical and mental cruelty that otherwise provide the dominating note of the memoirs. There are other, briefer, moments of reflection appearing throughout the story, but these are largely overshadowed by the account of action and social environment.

On the whole, Cela's novel is symmetrical in structure. The nineteen chapters being roughly divided into three sections; Chapters 1-6, 7-13 and 14-19 whilst the narrative itself is preceded by the 'Nota del transcriptor' and two documents and followed by 'Otra nota del transcriptor' and a further two documents. Each section contains its elements of reflection, description and violence. In the first, we have the shooting of the bitch Chispa, the deaths of Esteban Duarte and the child Mario, and Pascual's possession of Lola. Section 'two' includes the assault on Zacarías, Lola's miscarriage, the killing of the mare and the death of the baby Pascual. The final section sees the

death of Lola, the murder of Estirao and, finally, the act of matricide. Therefore, death and violence are fairly evenly dispersed throughout the narrative. However, it must be remembered that the shooting of Chispa, described in Chapter 1, is out of chronological order, for the bitch is still alive during Pascual's marriage, reference to it being made in Chapter 10 (Page 124), at the time of Lola's second pregnancy.

The memoirs commence with violence. The very nature of the dedication prepares the reader for this, whilst the killing of the bitch at the end of the opening Chapter emphasises this tone. The final Chapter of the story (19) sees Duarte's act of matricide, the apogee of violence. The shooting of Chispa seems largely unwarranted and immediately informs the reader of Duarte's temperament and suggests that he is in the power of some internal-external force. The last crime, in spite of its magnitude, is much more justifiable. Between the description of these two crimes we must look for some development in the narrator's attitude to those around him and a possible explanation for this recourse to violence. In this way it may be possible to understand a character who, superficially, may present no problems of comprehension but who, in the opinion of the writer, is more complex than may be suggested at first sight.

Spain of 1942 and the appearance of the novel.

The consternation that the publication of Cela's first novel caused is understandable when one considers the content of the work and the social and political atmosphere in Spain of 1942. If many were expecting the Civil War to produce a literature or at least a single work dealing with valour or glorious sacrifice, they must have been stunned and shocked by this short novel showing the brutal and squalid life and environment of an Extremaduran peasant. The war, "La cruzada" for those on the Nationalist side, the victory of Fascism and tyranny for the Republicans and the world democracies and Communist states alike, is only briefly alluded to in the novel. The opening days of the war mark the beginning of the last act in the life of the narrator. This apart, the Civil War might not have taken place as far as its influence on Cela's novel is concerned; it is not a study of the horrors or glory of war, but instead the story of an insignificant individual and the squalid and rustic environment in which he lives. On a more subjective plane it is the first stage in a literary evolution that would lead Cela to Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes (1944) and later to La colmena (1951). If the Madrid interlude (Chapter 15) in La familia de Pascual Duarte is reminiscent of Baroja's La busca it is also, perhaps, the embryo of La colmena.

Interpretations of the protagonist.

In general, critics have been cautiously sympathetic toward the figure of Pascual Duarte and the majority have adopted the attitude of don Santiago Lureña in his letter to the editor of Duarte's manuscript, describing the condemned man as:

.....el hombre que quizás a la mayoría se les figure una hiena (como a mí se me figuro también cuando fui llamado a su celda), aunque al llegar al fondo de su alma se pudiese conocer que no otra cosa que un manso cordero, acorralado y asustado por la vida, pasara de ser.

P.198.

He therefore sees Pascual as a victim of the society into which he was unfortunate enough to be born. In his 'Prólogo' to some editions of the novel Gregorio Marañón also sees Pascual as an unfortunate who is forced to seek justice by his own hand:

es una buena persona y que su tragedia es.....  
la de un infeliz que casi no tiene más  
remedio que ser, una vez y otra, criminal.....

P.26.

sus arrebatos criminosos representan una  
suerte de abstracta y bárbara pero innegable  
justicia.

P.27.

For Paul Ilie, Pascual is a primitive in attitude and action and this critic regards the work as "una tan vibrante representación de la realidad" (P.36). On the other hand, Eugenio de Nora rejects the primitive label applied to Pascual and states that, "entre bromas y veras" the author has given his protagonist "una compleja y honda sensibilidad, e incluso una penetrante y reflexiva inteligencia" (P.115). José María Castellet, like don Santiago and Gregorio Marañón, considers Duarte to be a victim of his circumstances and society who is forced to seek justice or satisfaction by his own hand:

El hombre acosado, Pascual Duarte, actúa desesperadamente y no mide enemigo: desamparado de Dios y de los hombres se convierte en el hombre que se toma la justicia por su mano.

P.28.

Finally, Alonso Zamora Vicente concurs with Ilie in respect to the reality of the work and sees it as representing "la realidad española" (P.49), in the tradition of the 'Guzmán', the 19<sup>th</sup> Century realists and particularly Baroja.

Thus far, Pascual Duarte has been regarded as a victim of hostile circumstances who is forced to react in a primitive and, considering his environment, expected manner. The reality of the novel has been mentioned and it is

concerning this aspect that Torrente Ballester suggests the humorous intention of Cela in creating a protagonist "en cuyas manos inocentes la caricia se hace agresión, mordisco el beso y crimen la respuesta" (P.448). This statement would associate the Duarte type with, for example, Lenny in John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men - that is, a good natured simpleton unaware of his physical strength and latent aggression, with this ignorance leading along a humorous and grotesque route to tragedy. This same critic adds that Cela's intention "era visiblemente humorística, y la materia tan fantástica como la de Peter Pan, aunque pintada - o mejor, estilizada - según las normas de un realismo grueso de cartel de feria" (Ps. 448-449). This interpretation is a far cry from the reality that Zamora Vicente and Ilie perceive in the novel and illustrates the wide range of opinion of the various critics.

Mary Ann Beck believes that irony is the fundamental subtlety of the novel (P.282 f.) and that Pascual is a brute and not as simple and unfortunate as many would believe. He tells his own story direct to the reader and lays full blame for his actions by implication on those around him, and, specifically on his own destiny. He sees his acts as inevitable - "el mundo es como es y el querer avanzar contra corriente no es sino vano intento" (P.158).

In this way Duarte shifts the moral responsibility from his own shoulders. Finally, to conclude this appraisal of some of the critics' opinions, it is worth while mentioning the most scathing attack on La familia de Pascual Duarte - the judgement of J.L. Alborg. He describes Pascual as a "bárbaro vulgar" (P.87) and believes the work to be completely irresponsible and "uno de los engaños más notorios de nuestra moderna literatura...." (P.88). Obviously, Alborg's interpretation may well be too emotional to be objective, but at least it illustrates the controversial nature of the novel under consideration.

The judgements of these critics have been cited to show that there can be no universally accepted appraisal of the character of Pascual Duarte and by no means a clear-cut interpretation of the novel as a whole. In any work of literature or art much must inevitably be left to personal interpretation, and in the particular case of this novel one must be continually aware of certain elements. One of these is the possible irony in the work - whether indeed this exists, and if it does, whether it is incidental or, as Beck thinks, fundamental. Also, there is the complete reliability on the narrator's account and interpretation of events. By use of the autobiographical form and the intervention of an editor, Cela has precluded himself as far as possible from the novel.

Therefore, does Duarte himself speak for the author, or does the editor, or the priest, Lurueña, or the Guardia Civil, Martín? The probable answer is that none of these men individually represents the author's point of view; they give their own opinions and interpretations and the reader can obviously accept or reject, wholly or partially, any or none.

One thing, however, is patently obvious; that the reader must rely almost totally on the narrator's account and, at times, interpretation of events. This raises the fundamental problem of the work: is Duarte making a genuine confession or is he cunningly shifting moral responsibility for his actions by blaming destiny, a hostile social environment or inherited character defects - or all three? Or is the "pública confesión" unavoidably less objective than it should be, with Duarte unwilling or unable to accept total responsibility? Is his philosophy of impotent man at the mercy of Destiny adopted in order to disclaim human (i.e. personal) responsibility whilst his portrait of a hostile social environment acts as another line of defence - a plea of extenuating circumstances?

One must try to ascertain whether or not Duarte is to be taken at the extremes of his face value as either the "manso cordero" or the "loco" or whether he is indeed

rather more complex a character than many might suppose. If we accept the fact that this Extremaduran peasant is capable of composing a coherent and vivid account of his actions is he not capable, too, of presenting his story with enough subtlety to ensure that any perceptive reader will not rush to a hasty and possibly superficial judgement. The editor may have seen beneath this ploy and Lurueña not; conversely the editor's reading may have been superficial whilst that of Lurueña was perceptive. Any interpretation of La familia de Pascual Duarte will, therefore, depend upon the level, if any, of subtlety with which the reader credits the narrator and, allied to this, a personal conclusion which must be reached regarding Duarte's ultimate aim in writing his memoirs.

With regard to Pascual Duarte's account of his life and the critic's interpretation of this account, three aspects of the narrative must be carefully considered. The first of these is the effect of family and social environment on the narrator's actions; secondly there is his frequently stated belief in the power of destiny, possibly a way of rejecting responsibility for the crimes, and, finally, connected with these previous two aspects, the circumstances of the crimes and their possible justification or otherwise. These aspects are all closely

interwoven, and their separation for analysis, although artificial, will, it is hoped, serve either to expose discrepancies in Duarte's attitude and interpretations or, on the other hand, possibly show a consistency on the part of the narrator. However, before embarking on a close study of these various aspects of the narration, the first two chapters will be studied comprehensively, for here will be found the major elements of the story that will be subsequently developed by the narrator.

Duarte introduces himself.

The opening chapter has no special chronological order in the story and serves as an introduction to the narrator and his environment; his village in Extremadura, his home and rural way of life. At first sight, the tone here is generally one of serenity. However, gradually one begins to feel an atmosphere of asphyxiation and oppression. References to the sun and heat give the impression that beneath the surface calm something may well be simmering and on the point of eruption. The very substance of the dedication serves to cause the reader apprehension and this feeling is seen to be justified with the violence that ends the chapter.

Considering the nature of the dedication, the very first sentence of the narrative comes as a surprise; "Yo, señor, no soy malo, aunque no me faltarían motivos para

serlo" (P.57). And then, Duarte immediately proceeds to disclaim responsibility for his actions, suggesting that destiny is the controlling factor in human life:

Los mismos cueros tenemos todos los mortales al nacer y sin embargo, cuando vamos creciendo, el destino se complace en variarnos como si fuésemos de cera y en destinarnos por sendas diferentes al mismo fin: la muerte. Hay hombres a quienes se les ordena marchar por el camino de las flores, y hombres a quienes se les manda tirar por el camino de los cardos y de las chumberas.

Ch.1 P.57.

Of these latter, Duarte continues:

.....suffren del sol violento de la llanura y arrugan el ceño como las alimañas para defenderse.

Ibid.

Thus from the very beginning of his account, Duarte is asking the reader to see him as a passive object governed by a force over which he has no control.

The house of don Jesús is then described and contrasted with that of the Duarte family and subsequently Duarte informs us of his own, not unexpected pastimes hunting and fishing. However of the latter he states contemptuously: "siempre me pareció pasatiempo poco de hombres" (P.63).

This theme of masculinity is an important facet of Duarte's

character and reappears several times in the course of his story.

Finally, Duarte comes to the event that closes the opening chapter on a note of unwarranted brutality and which, at first sight, sets the tone of the subsequent narrative. This is the killing of the bitch 'Chispa', an act generated, so the writer implies, by some power acting upon him and manipulating him as if he were a puppet:

.....un temblor recorrió todo mi cuerpo;  
parecía como una corriente que forzaba por <sup>salirme por</sup>  
los brazos.....su mirada me calentaba la  
sangre de las venas de tal manera que se  
veía llegar el momento en que tuviese que  
entregarme;.....

Cogí la escopeta y disparé; volví a  
cargar y volví a disparar.

Ch. 1 Ps.64-65.

Duarte's reason for this killing, the event that precipitated the narrator's loss of self-control, was merely the facial expression of the bitch:

.....ahora me doy cuenta de que tenía la  
mirada de los ~~confesores~~, escrutadora y fría,  
como dicen que es la de los lince.....  
La perra seguía mirándome fija, como si no  
me hubiera visto nunca, como si fuese a  
culparme de algo de un momento a otro.....

Ch.1 P.64.

This is an act of violence that owes its origin to the protagonist's interpretation of an event and for this reason may be compared with the assault on Zacarías (Ch.8). The other acts of violence can be justified to a far greater extent (excluding, of course, the killing of don Jesús through lack of evidence) - however, they also involve a far more obvious degree of calculation or premeditation.

This episode, then, shows the narrator's apparent submission to an internal-external governing force. We see Duarte reduced from a human being to a puppet, whereas the subsequent narrative will show him to be certainly human (even if of a primitive disposition) and very much prone to human sensitivity. Yet whatever the disposition of Duarte he has certainly suggested diminished responsibility in his description of this particular act of violence.

Chapter 2, an account of Duarte's childhood and home background, seems to suggest another reason for his actions. This is the hostile environment in which he has grown up and particularly the attitude and conduct of his parents which, he believes, he has himself inherited. The account of the narrator's childhood is presented against the turbulent background of his home life and cryptically summed up: "De mi niñez no son precisamente buenos recuerdos los que guardo" (Ch.2. P.66).

Duarte's parents are basically primitive in outlook and conduct, and the young Pascual is constantly evading the fury that the mother and father direct at each other and often at the boy himself. Pascual takes the only practical course open to him, apart from leaving home and that course is resignation. The domestic atmosphere is one of almost constant brutality, but with occasional flashes of a seemingly incongruous tenderness. As an example, the birth of Rosario is immediately followed by the mother receiving a beating from her husband and then, incredibly, this grotesque scene is followed shortly afterwards by an overwhelming, albeit short-lived, display of tenderness on the part of the father.

Duarte spares no effort to acquaint the reader with the character of his parents, remarking of his father:

Cuando se enfurecía, cosa que le ocurría con mayor frecuencia de lo que se necesitaba, nos pegaba a mi madre y a mí las grandes palizas por cualquiera la cosa.....

Ch.2 P.66.

and also:

.....tenía un carácter violento y autoritario para algunas cosas, era débil y pusilánime para otras.....

Ch.2 P.70.

The narrator's mother is described in similar terms:

.....era también desabrida y violenta, tenía un humor que se daba a todos los diablos y un lenguaje en la boca que Dios le haya perdonado, porque blasfemaba las peores cosas a cada momento y por los más débiles motivos.

Ch.2 P.67.

Thus Duarte's parents possess a violent and primitive nature and the writer believes that he has inherited these traits from them; another possible reason for his life of violence:

Se llevaban mal mis padres; a su poca educación se unía su escasez de virtudes y su falta de conformidad con lo que Dios les mandaba - defectos todos ellos que para mi desgracia hube de heredar - y esto hacía que se cuidaron bien poco de pensar los principios y de refrenar los instintos, lo que daba lugar a que cualquier motivo, por pequeño que fuese, bastara para desencadenar la tormenta.....

Ch.2 P.68.

In these first two chapters, then, Duarte has presented himself as a person from whom violent actions can be expected, but at the same time implying that responsibility for his actions lies basically with either hostile destiny, or, a force that affects him physiologically and drives him to violence or, with character defects inherited from his parents and possibly aggravated by his social environment. All of these things are inter-related and the problem is not to refute or accept all explanations but rather to try to ascertain

from the evidence of the narrator whether or not he does have any choice in a given situation and whether or not he is capable of thinking like a human being and reacting accordingly. For an answer to this question a detailed study of the crimes committed, the circumstances and actual perpetration, is necessary.

Duarte and the expression of violence.

The happiness and security that had eluded the narrator during his childhood and youth seem to be at last within his grasp when he marries Lola. The honeymoon in Merida is described as "quizás los tres días más felices de mi vida" (Ch.8. P.109), and this in spite of the unfortunate presentiments resulting from the old woman being struck by the couple's mare as they enter the town. During this short interval away from his home and domestic environment Duarte finds a contentment previously unknown to him. Yet as soon as he returns to his native village he becomes trapped by hostile circumstances that bring an abrupt and bitter end to his days of respite.

A chain of events is set in motion by one apparently minor decision that Duarte makes upon arriving back in his village. Leaving Lola in order to join his friends, he unknowingly exposes himself to the beginning of a process that leads him from one personal disaster to another. It

might be said that had Pascual not left his wife alone on the mare, then the whole course of his life might have been different. This is feasible, but if we accept the narrator's view that destiny cannot be escaped, then the tragedy of Duarte is that whatever course he takes in any set of circumstances he merely moves inexorably towards disaster.

An important aspect of the events surrounding Lola's miscarriage after she had been thrown by the animal is that Duarte knew only too well of her physical condition and also of the temperament of the mare. This last had been shown when it shied and struck the old woman in Mérida. But only with hindsight does he see this:

Cuando entrábamos, con un trotillo  
acompañado y regular, en la ciudad, por el  
puente romano, tuvimos la negra sombra de  
que a la yegua le diera por espantarse.

Ch.8 P.110.

And yet, after the miscarriage has occurred, there appears to be no self-recrimination on the part of the writer for his decision to leave Lola alone at that time. As will be seen, the animal must accept total responsibility for the loss of the unborn child.

Meanwhile, the events that take place in the tavern at this time are illuminating of Duarte's character and also significant if the narrator's recollections and descriptions

are accurate. Duarte's attack on Zacarías is, within the context of his social environment, an expected reaction. In this rural society, insults are answered with violence; very different from the scene witnessed in the Retiro, Madrid, with Ángel Estévez and his wife:

.....pero lo que mas extrañado me tiene todavía es cómo, con la sarta de insultos que se escupieron, no hicieron ni siquiera ademán de llegar a las manos.....

.....  
 !Así da gusto! Si los hombres del campo tuviéramos las tragaderas de los de las poblaciones, los presidios estarían deshabitados como islas.

Ch.14 Ps.151-152.

However in this particular case Duarte believes that he has been insulted - "cosas tan directas hay - o tan directas uno se las cree," (Ch.8 P.116) and so answers with violence. Yet here there is no rush of blood and no obvious submission to a controlling force as seen with the shooting of Chispa. Instead, Duarte acts in a composed and calculating manner:

Yo abrí la navaja con parsimonia; en esos momentos una precipitación, un fallo, puede sernos de unas consecuencias funestas.

Ch.8 P.117.

He then acts swiftly and decisively:

.....antes de darle tiempo a ponerse en  
facha, le arreé tres navajazos que lo  
dejé como temblando.

Ch.8 P.117.

Whether or not Duarte did misinterpret Zacarías' remark is largely irrelevant; what is important is the mode of this attack and the fact that in this case he does not act like a man possessed. It is true that chronologically this incident comes before the shooting of Chispa, yet here Duarte is rational and certainly not the puppet-like figure seen at the end of the first chapter. On the other hand, the possession of Lola at the graveside of Mario (Ch.5) had shown the narrator undergoing a similar physiological process to that experienced when he shot Chispa. With the former there are references to the heat, and to the ferment within:

.....la sangre me golpeaba por la frente y el  
corazón parecía como querer salirse del pecho.

Ch.5 P.94.

Hacía calor; unos tiemblos me recorrieron  
todo el cuerpo...

Ch.5 P.94.

The eruption finally occurs when Lola mocks his masculinity  
"!Eres como tu hermano!" (P.95) Duarte's response to this is  
swift and animal-like:

Yo la agarré del pelo y la tenía bien sujeta a la tierra. Ella forcejeaba, se escurría.....

La mordí hasta la sangre, hasta que estuvo rendida y dócil como una yegua joven...

Ch.5 P.95.

This act is, then, similar in tone to the killing of the bitch, but in marked contrast to the assault on Zacarías and also to the killing of the mare that threw the pregnant Lola.

With this last mentioned act of violence, the coolness and calculation seen in the tavern is repeated and one passage is almost an exact repetition of that cited in connection with the Zacarías incident:

.....yo abrí la navaja con cuidado; en esos momentos, el poner un pie en falso puede sernos de unas consecuencias funestas.

Ch.9 P.121

(cf.Ch.8 P.117)

Such coolness is also surprising considering Duarte's initial reaction to the news of the miscarriage:

La rabia que llevaba dentro no me dejo ver claro; tan obcecado estaba que ni me percaté de lo que oía.

Ch.9 P.121.

From this it would appear that in spite of the shock that he has just suffered, Duarte is able to gain control of himself quickly and then think calmly and precisely. As for the actual killing, it is the primitive reaction that

we might expect from him, particularly considering the way in which he dealt with Zacarias. Duarte has lost his unborn son and, in his mind, the mare is completely responsible and must therefore suffer retribution. Not for the first or last time does Duarte see his role as both judge and executioner.

The cause of the death of Lola, who Duarte finds pregnant on returning from his flight to Madrid and La Coruña, is a matter for conjecture. She may have been killed by her husband or died as the result of shock or heart failure induced through fear of the consequences when Duarte discovers the identity of her lover. However, the most interesting aspect of Lola's infidelity is the reaction of the protagonist to this situation that confronts him after an absence from home of some two years.

On first hearing of Lola's pregnancy (Ch.15), Duarte controls his emotions and does not, as might be expected, resort to violence. He believes at first that his wife will agree to terminate the pregnancy and when this is rejected by her he still thinks that eventually she will comply with his wish. However the problem does not, as it transpires, materialise. Upon disclosure of the name of the father of the child Lola dies:

- ¿Quién fue?

-¡El Estirao!

-¿El Estirao?

Lola no contestó.

Estaba muerta, con la cabeza caída sobre el pecho y el pelo sobre la cara... Quedó un momento en equilibrio, sentada donde estaba, para caer al pronto contra el suelo de la cocina, todo de guijarrillos muy pisados...

Ch.15 P.161.

Thus, in a scene of silent and graphic horror, the death is described in an emotionless and detached way.

The ensuing murder of El Estirao was not, according to the narrator, intended. Estirao taunts Pascual and in this way brings about his own demise. On a previous occasion the two men had come near to violence, but Duarte was, at that time, able to control his feelings:

A mí me ganaba por la palabra, pero si hubieramos acabado por llegar a las manos le juro a usted por mis muertos que lo mataba antes de que me tocase el pelo. Yo me quise enfriar porque me conocía la carácter y porque de hombre a hombre no está bien reñir con una escopeta en la mano cuando el otro no la tiene.

Ch.3 Ps.79-80.

However, eventually, the arrogance of Estirao costs him his life. When he is hurt and at Duarte's mercy, and when the latter still apparently does not wish to kill him, López makes a flippant and cutting remark that precipitates a violent response from Duarte. Once again, the scene is

described in a graphic and emotionless way, and the narrator acts swiftly and almost mechanically:

-No te mato porque se lo prometí...

-¿A quién?

-A Lola.

-¿Entonces, me quería?

Era demasiada chulería. Pisé un poco más fuerte...La carne del pecho hacía el mismo ruido que si estuviera en el asador... Empezó a arrojar sangre por la boca. Cuando me levanté, se le fue la cabeza - sin fuerza - para un lado...

Ch.16 Ps.167-68.

The final and most horrifying crime that the narrator describes is the murder of his mother. The brutal scene in which the deed is described brings the memoirs to a close. This act of matricide is seen as the culmination of a process, the continual conflict between the mother and her son. Duarte leaves the reader in little doubt as to whether or not his mother merits this end; throughout the narrative she is shown as brutal and vindictive and a major cause of Duarte's own wretchedness. However, for the moment an analysis of this crime will serve to compare it with the others committed. The process that culminates in the crime will be discussed when the narrator's domestic environment is studied.

Pascual's second marriage, to Esperanza, appears to be his final chance of attaining any sort of contentment, yet, after a short time, his mother once more adopts her former attitude of hostility towards him and apparently places his marriage in jeopardy. Duarte sees that the problem that she presents must be resolved finally and decisively. He considers flight, but previously this had only lead to further personal disaster. Therefore the idea of murdering his mother, an idea incubating within him for many years, gradually develops until it becomes a necessity and at the same time inevitable:

Era algo fatal que había de venir y que venía,  
que yo había de causar y que <sup>no</sup> podía evitar  
aunque quisiera porque me parecía imposible  
cambiar de opinión....

Ch.19 P.189.

This crime is premeditated more than any before. Even the vacillation caused by the thought of the enormity of the crime is overcome and the act is justified:

La conciencia no me remordería; no habría motivo. La conciencia solo remuerde de las injusticias cometidas: de apalear un niño, de derribar una golondrina...Pero de aquellos actos a los que nos conduce el odio, a los que vamos como adormecidos por una idea que nos obsesiona, no tenemos que arrepentirnos jamás, jamás nos remuerde la conciencia.

Ch.19 P.190.

The appointed day arrives but still a great deal of determination is needed:

Había llegado la ocasión, la ocasión que tanto había estado esperando. Había que hacer de tripas corazón, acabar pronto, lo más pronto posible.

Ch.19 P.191

When the moment arrives, Duarte is once more beset by doubt and indecision and he fights a desperate battle within himself:

...El tiempo pasaba y seguía allí, parado, inmóvil como una estatua, sin decidirme a acabar. No me atrevía; después de todo era mi madre, la mujer que me había parido, y a quien sólo por eso había que perdonar...No; no podía perdonarla porque me hubiera parido. Con echarme al mundo no me hizo ningún favor, absolutamente ninguno...

Ch.19 P.192.

Yet Duarte still cannot bring himself to act and even describes a power that seems to hinder action rather than precipitate it:

No podía; era algo superior a mis fuerzas, algo que me revolvía la sangre.

Ch.19 P.192.

The pendulum of the narrator's indecision swings from one extreme to the other until finally he appears to abandon his plan. Flight is the only solution, and then, with fitting irony, the mother herself makes this course impossible. Her "¿Quién anda ahí?" (P.193) jolts Duarte from his state

of physical paralysis - "Entonces sí que ya no había solución" (P.193). The hatred that has been nurtured within the narrator over a period of years is finally expressed in the animal-like struggle that follows.

Duarte's acts of violence, as will have been seen, vary in degree and also in justification and mode of execution. With regard to this last point, the narrator shows in some of these acts, and in particular the last, that he does have a certain amount of control over his actions. The force that seemed to control him when he shot Chispa is never again experienced with the same horror and intensity. All that can really be ascertained is that Duarte is a man prone to violent action when circumstances seem sufficiently hostile or difficult. He does have a certain control over his actions, but to what extent has the society in which he lives forced upon him the exercise of this violence? Has the attitude of those closest to him served only to expose the latent aggression within the narrator and set him on the path to destruction of those around him and eventually to that of himself? An examination of the domestic environment of Pascual Duarte should serve to resolve some of these questions, for Cela, although he precludes himself from intervention in the story, has given his novel the title of La familia de Pascual Duarte and not simply 'Pascual Duarte'. Perhaps this is the

novelist's view of his protagonist. He may regard him not as a lone brute, but possibly the product of a family, or, in wider terms, the product of a particular society.

The social environment.

Duarte's turbulent home environment, described in the first two chapters of the narrative, is further disturbed when his younger sister, Rosario, grows into a young delinquent - "servía para todo y para nada bueno" (P.75) comments the writer. She leaves home twice, and on the second occasion forms a liaison with Paco López - "El Estirao"- who is to play such a crucial part in Duarte's life. The narrator's encounter with López (Ch.3) and already mentioned, has a profound and lasting effect on him: "Aquél día se me clavó una espina en un costado que todavía la tengo clavada" (Ch.3 P.80). The portrait painted of López is consistently unfavourable and, when he does eventually die at the hands of Duarte, the reader is left with little doubt concerning the justification of the incident. Here, as with the killing of Señora Duarte, the final act is seen as the culmination of a process in which the narrator has eventually been forced to violence. Duarte has a genuine affection for his sister, and when first she, and then Lola, become involved with Estirao and when Estirao uses his liaison with these members of the Duarte family to taunt Pascual, he brings about his own violent end.

The early chapters of the narrative show Duarte's home environment as brutal and squalid, with occasional flashes of seemingly incongruous tenderness that serve only to emphasise the note of caricature. Even Esteban Duarte shows, at times, affection toward his wife and daughter. However, with the death of Esteban, its grotesque manner and circumstances, and the birth of the wretched Mario, the element of caricature becomes more pronounced. The whole episode of the father's death is, indeed, an apt finale to the colourful and violent life that he has led. His grotesque and melodramatic comportment in life remains part of him to the very end.

Mario's existence is tragic and grotesque and completely passive. He is more of a helpless animal than a child and is treated by others, with the notable exception of Pascual, as such. Even the pigs would seem to begrudge him his existence and manage to disfigure his already wretched countenance:

.....un día - teniendo la criatura cuatro años - la suerte se volvió tan de su contra que, sin haberlo buscado, ni deseado, sin a nadie haber molestado y sin haber tentado a Dios, un guarro (con perdón) le comió las dos orejas.

Ch.4 P.86.

However, the child's life is soon mercifully curtailed, although

even in death (like Esteban Duarte) he is unable to attain the dignity that so eluded him in life:

Estaba en la misma postura que una lechuza ladrona a quien hubiera cogido un viento; volcado sobre el borde de la tinaja, con la nariz apoyada sobre el barro del fondo....

Ch.5 P.89.

The death of Mario is a critical point in the life of Pascual. He had shown the child pity and tenderness, and the callous reaction of his mother, her lack of any demonstration of grief, brings forth his first direct affirmation of hatred toward her. From this moment on the narrator's relationship with his mother will gradually be seen to deteriorate until he finally kills her:

Mucho me dio que pensar, en muchas veces, y aún ahora mismo si he de decir la verdad, el motivo de que a mi madre llegase a perderle la respeto, primero, y el cariño y las formas al andar de los años; mucho me dio que pensar, porque quería hacer un claro en la memoria que me dejase ver hacia qué tiempo dejó de ser una madre en mi corazón y hacia qué tiempo llegó después a convertírseme en un enemigo. En un enemigo rabioso, que no hay peor odio que el de la misma sangre; en un enemigo que me gastó toda la bilis, porque a nada se odia con más intensos bríos que a aquello a que uno se parece y uno llevo a aborrecer el parecido. Después de mucho pensar, y de nada esclarecer del todo, sólo me es dado el afirmar que la respeto habíasela ya

perdido tiempo atrás, cuando en ella no encontraba virtud alguna que imitar, ni don de Dios que copiar, y que de mi corazón hubo de marcharse cuando tanto mal vi en ella que junto no cupiera dentro de mi pecho. Odiarla, lo que se dice llegar a odiarla, tardé algún tiempo - que ni el amor ni el odio fueran cosa de un día - y si apuntara hacia los días de la muerte de Mario pudiera ser que no errara en muchas fechas sobre su aparición.

Ch.5 P.90.

From this it appears that Duarte not only hates his mother for what she is, but also because he believes that her nature is similar to his own. Therefore, the son's hatred is directed at what he sees himself to be a projection of, and his eventual murder of his mother may be seen as a symbol of self-destruction. Concerning Duarte's opinion that he has a similar nature to his mother, it must be realised that although he is capable of terrifying acts of violence, he is also capable of, and often demonstrates, feelings of warmth and compassion. His mother, on the other hand, is consistently hostile toward those around her. Another, and even more disturbing aspect of señora Duarte, is the influence that she has on Lola and how, finally, she seems intent on destroying her son's second marriage to Esperanza.

The accidental loss of the unborn child of Lola and

Pascual marks the end of a short period of stability and happiness in Duarte's life and the beginning of a tense and oppressive atmosphere within the Duarte household which culminates in the narrator's flight to Madrid. Lola's second pregnancy does nothing to alleviate the situation and instead causes Duarte further anguish. He fears another miscarriage and withdraws increasingly within himself during the pregnancy. His mother and Lola contribute to the tension, and according to Duarte, the two women and himself seem to enjoy the friction that they create and seem bent on the destruction of the relationship between mother, son and wife:

Me torné huraño y montaraz, aprensivo y hosco, y como ni mi mujer ni mi madre entendieron gran cosa de caracteres, estábamos todos en un constante vilo por ver por donde saltaba la bronca. Era una tensión que nos destrozaba, pero que parecía como si la cultivásemos gozosos...

Ch.10. P.123.

After the birth of the child, the concern which both parents show for its well-being, gradually becomes an obsession. Pascual's fears for the vulnerability of the child are a mixture of presentiment and fatality and also resentment toward the baby should it fail them by dying:

Y aquel hablar y más hablar de la criatura hacía que poco a poco se me fuera volviendo odiosa;

nos iba a abandonar.....  
 .....estaba seguro de ello, sugestionado  
 de su fatalidad, cierto de que más tarde o  
 más temprano tenía que suceder...

Ch.10 P.127.

When the child does die as a result of "algún mal aire", Duarte's presentiment has been realised as yet another event in the inevitable process that seemingly governs his life. He now becomes the victim of a vicious persecution perpetrated by the three women closest to him; his mother, Lola and Rosario. However, Rosario would appear to play the minor part in this, for, according to the narrative, there is no precise mention or example given of her participation:

.....de esas tres mujeres, ninguna, créame usted, ninguna, supo con su cariño o con sus modales hacerme mas llevadera la pena de la muerte del hijo; al contrario, parecía como si se hubiera puesto de acuerdo para amargarme la vida.

Ch.11 Ps.131-132.

Duarte attempts firstly to excuse their attitude, and when this fails, to ignore them. He is surrounded by a Lorquian type of chorus whose incessant chant is a constant reminder of the dead child and aggravates the wound that the death has left in Duarte:

-¿Dónde andará aquel aire?

.....

-¡Aquél mal aire traidor!.....

Lola tardó algún tiempo en contestar.

-No sé...

-¡Habrá llegado al mar!

-Atravesando criaturas....

Ch.11 Ps.134-135.

The attack on Pascual becomes more personal and vicious; his children, it is suggested, died as a result of physical deficiency inherited from their father and Lola proceeds to attack Duarte's masculinity just as she had done at the graveside of Mario with her "¡Eres como tu hermano!" (Ch.5 P.95):

-¡Estoy hasta los huesos de tu cuerpo!

.....

-¡De tu carne de hombre que no aguanta los tiempos!

.....

.....

-¡Para esto te di yo dos hijos, que ni el andar de la caballería ni el mal aire en la noche supieron aguantar!

Ch.12 P.136.

And then comes the final insult:

-¡Eres como tu hermano!

...la puñalada a traición que mi mujer gozaba en asestarme...

Ch.12 P.137.

Lola has, by this time, developed the same hostility toward and contempt for Pascual as that to which his mother had subjected Esteban Duarte and which she is now concentrating on her son. Esteban Duarte found some solace in drink, but

Pascual does not, apparently, have this outlet. Instead he maintains a superficially passive attitude toward both these women, whilst inwardly his hatred is gradually intensified until he decides to flee this hostile environment. Violence is considered, but then rejected in favour of flight. Duarte has not yet reached the stage where he realises that the only way that he can successfully free himself from his oppressive environment, from the incubus that his mother represents in his life, is by killing her.

The two years that Duarte spends away from home, in Madrid and then La Coruña, show him as almost the innocent rustic confronted by a society completely new to him. In general, though, his treatment at the hands of the different people with whom he comes into contact, is good. At least those around him are not actively hostile as are his mother and wife and his two year absence from home is a period of relative calm in his troubled existence. He even gains a certain confidence in himself and in others, and, as a result, when he does decide to return home he is optimistic of the reception that he will receive:

Pensaba que había de ser bien recibido por  
mi familia - el tiempo todo lo cura.

Ch.14 P.154-155.

However, upon return, he is confronted with Lola's infidelity and resultant pregnancy. On reflection he sees this as divine punishment for his desertion of the family; at the time it is merely the frustration of another attempt to make a new start. Lola's infidelity is significant not only for the effect that it is subsequently to have (the deaths of Lola and Estirao), but also in that it may be seen as a repetition of señora Duarte's liaison with Rafael - the union that produced Mario - and finally the completion of the influence of Duarte's mother over his wife. The former has gradually cultivated Lola's feelings of disappointment and bitterness over the loss of the two children into a torrent of hatred directed at Pascual.

Duarte, as has been mentioned, sees Lola's infidelity as divine punishment:

.....mi huida, mi mayor pecado, el que nunca debí cometer y el que Dios quiso castigar quién sabe hasta con crueldad...

Ch.14 P.155.

However, he has little doubt as to the original terrestrial instrument of the event:

Mi madre, que la muy desgraciada debió ser la alcahueta de todo lo pasado, andaba como huida y no se presentaba ante mi vista.

Ch.15 P.159.

His mother's timidity and lack of characteristic vitriol is probably due (particularly as she knows the identity of the

father of the unborn child) to a realisation that Pascual now faces his severest test, and should he discover that Estirao is responsible his reaction may be characteristically terrifying.

The unborn child represents for Lola another chance of motherhood, a desire so far frustrated, and therefore, understandably, she rejects her husband's suggestion that the pregnancy should be terminated:

.....¿Otro aborto? ¿Estar siempre pariendo  
por parir, criando estiércol?  
.....  
.....  
..... ¡Te doy lo que tú quieras; pero  
no me lo quites, que es por lo que estoy viva!

Ch.15 Ps.158-159.

For Pascual, and once again, understandably, the child would merely be an advertisement to society of his own dishonour:

Si mi condición de hombre me hubiera  
permitido perdonar, hubiera perdonado, pero  
el mundo es como es y el querer avanzar  
contra corriente no es sino vano intento.

Ch.15 P.158.

This almost Calderonian statement suggests that once more, Duarte is resigning himself to his fate, thus shifting the responsibility for whatever course he may take. The outcome, as we have seen, is the death of Lola, Estirao and, of

course, the unborn child. The three children that Lola has conceived are all ill-fated, whilst Mario's brief existence was completely wretched. Thus, there appears to be a miserable fate awaiting any child conceived by the Duarte family, and this includes Pascual himself; in his case, however, he survives longer than his kin and suffers more as a result.

The optimism with which Duarte had returned home from La Coruña is again seen when he is released from prison - sentence being received for the killing of Estirao and, possibly, Lola. His journey from the prison is marked by a series of disillusionments until he finally reaches home and is received by the cold "¿Qué quieres?" (P.179) of his mother. The final, bitter blow comes when Duarte discovers that Rosario, whom he had always regarded with a certain affection, is now the mistress of Sebastián, best man at his wedding. Once again, the people closest to Duarte have failed him:

Creí morir. Hubiera dado dinero por  
haberme visto todavía en el penal.

Ch.17 P.180.

Yet, from the depths of despair, Duarte is once more able to attain a brief happiness with his marriage to Esperanza; brief because, so the narrator informs the reader, his mother soon sets about sabotaging her son's marriage:

Llevábamos ya dos meses casados cuando me fue dado el observar que mi madre seguía usando de las mismas mañas y de iguales malas artes que antes de que me tuvieran encerrado.

Ch.19 P.186.

Señora Duarte's persecution of her son has recommenced and, as has been described, her own destruction ensues. The narrator, after killing his mother, flees into the night. He has now broken the shackles that had previously caused him so much misery; he has at last made the decisive break with his environment and has therefore cast off the burden that this had been to him. Throughout his narrative Duarte has shown the oppression that his domestic environment had generated, his attempts to free himself from this asphyxiation of the individual, and now, he has finally escaped. He can breath freely; but although he may have finally removed the shadow that his family, and particularly his mother, has cast over his life, he is still very much, as he will later come to believe, when he writes his story, controlled by a hostile destiny.

#### Conclusion.

Duarte has written his story as a "pública confesión", and yet, in this confession, he has both by insinuation and by direct affirmation rejected the responsibility for certain inconsistencies in his account and interpretation. As he writes his memoirs he may well be a reformed man; however,

he still suggests that he lacks free will and shows that in a hostile social environment in which he has suffered at the hands of those around him he has reacted violently, not out of choice, but due to the inability to control his own actions. However, a study of the crimes committed shows that the narrator did have a certain choice in the case of some of them.

The killing of Chispa is the most obvious example of a man controlled by some force and therefore not responsible for his actions. But can the same be said with regard to the killing of his mother or Estirao, or the assault on Zacarías? In the case of these specific acts of violence Duarte is not so much subject to the force of destiny as to the force of his own temperament, nurtured, it cannot be denied, in an atmosphere of brutality and general hostility - the atmosphere of his own home and society. It is also ironic that this man, capable of terrifying acts of brutality is quick to see that side of another's nature. He paints a lurid picture of his parents and blames them for his own tendency toward violence. At times he is capable of moralising concerning the inclemencies of others and their treatment of their fellows, but is content to lay the blame for his own anti-social acts on either a hostile social environment, a hostile destiny relentlessly in pursuit or, finally, inherited character defects.

Duarte is capable of tenderness, particularly toward his sister Rosario and also the idiot Mario, although in the case of the former, it is of a selfish nature; he is affectionate toward her usually when she shows affection toward him. But, in general, Duarte is merely a product of the society that has surrounded him. He is primitive in outlook and action and finds it almost impossible to distinguish between justice and vengeance; he sees himself as judge and executioner and his excuse for acting as such is twofold: firstly, he has no freewill, and, secondly, he has inherited his temperament, his proneness to violence from his parents, or, on a wider scale, the primitive society of which he is a product. He cannot, apparently, escape from his environment, or from his own temperament. He cannot think nor act in a rational way except on rare occasions and will resort to violence to solve the problems that present themselves. There is no doubt that Duarte's character also incorporates a certain element of timidity and it is when this timidity is overcome by blind fury that he is at his most potent and dangerous.

In his actions, the narrator has not, generally, been possessed of a rational mind. However, as he writes his account from the condemned cell Duarte is probably able to think in a fairly rational, though at times inconsistent way, and herein lies the fundamental irony of the account.

Duarte has repented, so we are informed, but only to a certain extent. Perhaps in this confession he has only repented insofar as his own nature will allow him. In reality, he is only confessing that he is not, in fact, responsible for his actions; he would like the reader of his story to believe that he has been the unwitting tool of destiny, and that man in general is controlled by this force. The fundamental point for consideration is whether or not Duarte's motive in disclaiming responsibility for his actions is sincere or an elaborate device to mislead and then gain the sympathy of his reader. Luruema, the prison chaplain, certainly feels compassion for Duarte and goes so far as to reject the narrator's ultimate responsibility for his actions - "un manso cordero, acorralado y asustado por la vida", (P.198). The Guardia Civil, Martín, regards Duarte as mentally unstable, "de la salud de su cabeza no daría yo fe aunque me ofreciesen Eldorado", (P.200). Both of these reactions, from men of vastly different callings in life, are interesting in that they absolve Duarte, each to a varying degree, of responsibility for his criminal actions, whilst the two accounts of his death revert to the sort of very different, but typical, reactions that a priest and law officer might be expected to experience.

The only summary condemnation of Duarte comes from the editor of his memoirs, who, we must assume, was too pre-

occupied with his role as editor and censor to make anything more than a superficial appraisal of the possible reasons for Duarte's life of violence. It is, of course, possible that the editor has seen through and dismissed the narrator's plea of at least diminished responsibility. But if this is the case he has not considered it to be worthy of mention.

In La familia de Pascual Duarte Cela has shown a man and a society at their most primitive and frightening. The principal characters are strongly caricatured in their vices and general conduct whilst the narrator shows himself to be an agent of destruction. However, if we accept that the portrayal of Duarte's social environment has at least a bare factual basis then it is hardly surprising that the narrator has developed an instability that, with increasing pressures upon the individual concerned, leads to a violent response, whether this response is justified in any particular instance or not. Duarte is the product of a family and a backward and crude section of society. The real tragedy for him is that he was born into this society and through a combination of mundane rather than supernatural factors lived and died with violence.

In view of the element of distortion in La familia de Pascual Duarte, it is, from a social point of view, as real or unreal as an 'esperpento' of Valle-Indán. The society

protrayed can represent 'la realidad' if, in fact, the only way of showing or emphasising this reality is by means of distortion or caricature. It now remains to be seen how Cela's treatment of man and society, thematically and stylistically, develops or is modified with Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes and La colmena, always bearing in mind that this last novel appeared almost a decade after Pascual Duarte's controversial memoirs were first published.

Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo  
de Tormes.

After the squalor and violence of La familia de Pascual Duarte, (1942), and then the quiet anguish of Pabellón de reposo, (1943), Cela's next novel, Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes, (1944), provides a somewhat lighter tone. However, the distortion seen in the author's first novel is present once more, as is the preoccupation with man in his social environment. The historical setting of Cela's 'Lazarillo' is not precise; all that one can glean from the text is that the work is set during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, an era of general turbulence in Spain. Specific reference is made only to two contemporary events. Señor David mentions the loss of Cuba in 1898:

- Este mozo que aquí ven es mi ahijado, hijo de una hermana mía. La pobre era tan patriota que murió de pena cuando se enteró de lo de Cuba. Su padre también allí fue muerto... y nadie se lo agradeció.

Tratado 3 P.397.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst in the 'Nota del editor', there is a short reference to the civil war, (1936-1939):

Cuando le visitamos, poco antes de nuestra

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<sup>2</sup>Camilo José Cela. Obra Completa - Tomo I. Las tres primeras novelas. Ediciones Destino. Barcelona, 1962.

guerra, en el hospital de San Juan de Dios,  
de Madrid.....

Nota del editor. P.519.

Thus, there is scant reference to the contemporary scene or to specific events in this novel of Cela. Rather, the emphasis is on the individual wandering aimlessly and without apparent purpose through life. Cela's *Lazarillo* is much less preoccupied with the basic problem of hunger than his namesake of 1554. In spirit he is much more akin to that product of modern literature who seeks some meaning amidst the apparent futility and very real monotony of life. The work of 1554 saw the protagonist in contact with certain specific sections of the society of his era, and this contact enabled the author to mirror the vices and follies of those people. Cela's work is less an indictment of certain sections of contemporary society than a general study of the individual in an almost fairy-tale type of environment and the nature of man in general. As in La familia de Pascual Duarte, the reality that is perceived in the novel is to a certain extent distorted. However, as Cela has modelled this novel structurally on the work of 1554, it will be useful to make a brief comparison between the two novels, to consider their thematic similarities or, more important, as will be seen, divergencies.

Lazarillo of 1554.

With his La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, the anonymous author of 1554 rejected the tone and subject matter of previous, but still very much in vogue, prose works. These were the works of the chivalresque and sentimental genres, and far from being of a similar nature to these, the novel of 1554 was rather a descendant of El libro de buen amor or La Celestina. Also, the work shows an awareness of the religious climate and social problems of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The novel has blasphemous passages, bears traces of the influence of Erasmian thought, and is, at times, decidedly anti-clerical in outlook. A good example of this last is the portrayal of the clergyman in Tratado 2, whilst the episode of the 'buldero' is an example of fraud by a supposed servant of the Roman Church. However, the Church is not the only institution to suffer. The 'alguacil' is a representation of the corrupt petty official, whilst the blind beggar and the 'escudero' are portrayals of two other social maladies of the era, vagrancy and the 'hidalgo' class. Yet, on the whole, the work is fairly restricted in outlook, confined to a particular section of society and seen only from one point of view, that of the narrator. However the narrator is not a social critic and is concerned only with personal survival and his own improvement; the reader is left to judge the society described.

Therefore, the 'escudero', in spite of being a sympathetic figure, is a prime example of a vain and worthless section of society. This is the impression that the author gives and the reader accepts. But for Lazarillo, he merely represents potential starvation, until, eventually the boy has another mouth to feed as well as his own. Lazarillo is solely concerned with finding the next meal and not with social rapportage, for this latter is the concern of the author. Thus the author, using Lazarillo as a sort of catalyst in his social environment, as well as bestowing him with the gift of sarcasm and irony and an eye for the small but significant detail, is able to show the state, moral and physical, of those types encountered. The obvious comment is left to the protagonist: "toda la lazeria del mundo estava encerrada en éste", (P.110)<sup>3</sup> he tells us of the priest of Tratado 2. Yet so skilfully has the author done his job, that this form of direct comment is really unnecessary.

The element of caricature must always be borne in mind when considering the realism of the work. However, the realism lies not so much in the faithful portrayal of character and situation, but rather in the introduction and dominance of two themes; hunger and the monotony of everyday

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<sup>3</sup>La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes. Clásicos Castellanos. Espasa-Calpe, S.A. Madrid, 1962.

life. Of the first of these, Lazarillo is patently aware; of the second he seems oblivious. Of course, the first priority for the narrator is to keep himself alive. Bread comes first and not ideals or a philosophy. This is the essential difference between Lazarillo and the 'escudero'; the boy is practical and the man is not. The latter hopes for an improvement, but one can hardly envisage this, for he is too concerned with pretence and pride and is therefore the victim of an attitude. Lazarillo of 1554 is ultimately successful because he is not shackled by ideals. "La cumbre de toda buena fortuna" (P.243) that he finally attains has not for him the irony that the author probably intended and which the reader accepts. The narrator of the work of 1554 wanted material success and this he gained. Is Cela's Lazarillo as successful or content at the end of his wanderings as his predecessor of some four centuries before and, in fact, did he have similar material ambitions? To find an answer to these questions we must now consider the modern protagonist and the society into which he is thrust.

Cela's Lazarillo.

The narrator-protagonist of Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes informs the reader at the beginning of his story of how he found and read "un libro<sup>que</sup> hablaba de un Lázaro de Tormes" (Tratado 1, P.365). He is at first

struck by the fact that he bears the same name as the central character of this book and then postulates that the man concerned may even be his own grandfather. In this way, Cela shows the initial link between the two men of the same name and with his use of the 'tratado' prepares the reader for the modern version to be based structurally and, up to a point, thematically, on the original.

As with La familia de Pascual Duarte, the question of the author-narrator relationship arises. However, in the case of the 'Nuevo Lazarillo' it is more easily resolved. In writing this book, Cela has decided to utilize the autobiographical form of the work of 1554 which was also used in the later novels of the picaresque genre. Therefore, as soon as Cela's narrator has acknowledged his acquaintance with the original, structural similarities can be attributed to this narrator, thus precluding the author's responsibility.

Cela's Lazarillo, having read the story of his namesake's life, similar in many respects to his own, decides to recount his own story and in a similar fashion. He divides his tale into 'tratados' and immediately gives a reason for the appearance of the story:

Quiero que una vez compuesto este librito salga a la pública luz, porque pienso que los lances que hube de pasar a más de uno servirá de provecho el conocerlos si los entiende con

calma y tal como me sucedieron.....

Unas palabras. P. 363.

Lazarillo of 1554 was a little more extravagant with his "cosas tan señaladas" (P.59), although then adding rather more modestly, "pues podria ser que alguno, que las lea, halle algo que le agrade....." (P.60).

Our modern hero's background would seem to be as equally murky as that of his 'abuelo', although the latter at least was sure of the identity of his father. On this point, Cela's protagonist has more in common with the central characters of the later picaresque novels than with his prototype. He does not spare the irony when describing his mother's conduct and his own doubt concerning the identity of his father. Mentioning one possible candidate:

Del Chubasco ya me da más que pensar si no seré hijo, porque, además de ser hombre fornido y jayán, parece que se juntaba con mi madre en mitad de la vía, sitio que siempre tuve por muy fecundo, no se si por los aires del tren o por lo duro del lecho.

Tratado I. P.367.

By comparison, Antona Perez' liaison with the 'hombre moreno' (1554 version) is described in a fairly mild manner. Of course, in this case the origin of the narrator is not at stake, yet even so, there is no attempt to completely discredit the mother or portray her as nothing less than a

whore. Our modern Lazarillo's attitude is possibly the result of the maternal desertion that he suffers when only two weeks old, for it is of course at this point that he finds himself at the mercy of society. Like his predecessor, he is an innocent cast into the turmoil and hardship of life and his first basic problem is that of survival.

Lazarillo (1554) is older than his modern counterpart when he embarks on his adventures and soon has a rude introduction to the inclemencies of life and his fellow man. The incident on the bridge at Salamanca is sufficient to open his eyes and prepare him for the trials that will inevitably come:

Paresciome que en aquel instante desperté  
de la simpleza en que como niño dormido estaua.

Dixe entre mi:

"Verdad dize éste, que me cumple abiuar el  
ojo y auisar, pues solo soy, y pensar cómo me  
sepa valer".

1554: Tratado 1, Ps.77-78.

Henceforth, although there are many privations and hardships in store for him, Lazarillo will be alert and, above all, practical. He steals food from and deceives the beggar and finally extracts fitting revenge for the beatings that he has suffered at his hands. Just as the old man takes advantage of the boy's inexperience, so Lazarillo takes advantage of the beggar's blindness. He asks no quarter

and gives none, and this is the reason for his survival and ultimate success. The only time that he shows any sort of affection for a fellow human being is with the 'escudero'. They both share the common bond of hunger and, then, ironically, instead of the boy deserting this master as had happened previously, it is the other way round.

Unfortunately, Cela's Lazarillo is not quite made of the same stuff, although events appear to promise that the boy may quickly adopt the right attitude for survival. His very first act of charity earns him a beating. He allows a consumptive to help himself to a goat's udder - "pensé que hacía una obra de caridad" - (P.373) - and when circumstances suggested to the shepherds that he had done this to earn money, the boy is thrashed. After this the narrator decides to leave his first masters, although not immediately, for, a mere six years old at the time, he shows an astuteness far in advance of his age:

.....empezó a cobijar mi mente la idea de la fuga, que no quise intentar hasta tener unos ahorrillos en la bolsa con los que marchar más sobre seguro.

Tratado 1. P.374.

And later, when he finds the bag containing sixteen 'duros', Lazarillo acts in a practical and expedient way, suggesting that perhaps he is capable of looking after himself when the occasion demands:

El tal saquito fue pregonado con pelos y señales y hasta ofrecieron una recompensa a quien, habiéndolo encontrado, lo devolviera, pero me pareció que más cauto sería hacerse de extraño, ya que el premio, según pensé, nunca alcanzaría los dieciséis duros encerrados.

Tratado 1, P.375.

By this time, the narrator is about eight years old. At first sight, at any rate, he is showing the same sort of cynical and practical outlook that his forbear was to adopt after his painful initiation to life on the bridge at Salamanca. Yet, in spite of this promising start, Cela's hero is unable to maintain his expedient ways.

Up to this point, the beginning of their adventures, the lives of the two Lazarillos have been similar in many aspects; also, their basic attitudes have soon been hardened through bitter experience. But although the Lazarillo of 1554 learns more and profits by his experience as he continues his wanderings, his modern counterpart, after a promising start, finds himself time and again exploited and deceived and suffering physically. In the long run he is not as successful as his predecessor for the simple reason that he maintains for a far longer time his faith in his fellow man. However Cela's hero still retains, in the early stages, his confidence and wit. He is always ready with the sharp retort as can be seen when he first encounters the three musicians:

-¿De dónde has salido? - me preguntó el de la barba blanca, que después averigüé que era el más importante.

-Pues ya lo ve usted, mi amo - respondí con respeto-; dicen que va ya para los ocho años que salí del vientre de mi madre.

Tratado 3 P.382.

This early self-assurance, with words at any rate, may seem rather foolish in retrospect as subsequently he will show himself to be extremely gullible, an unfortunate characteristic for one in his position and one which time and experience never satisfactorily correct.

Lazarillo's early apprenticeship with the three musicians (Tratado 3), lasts for some four years. These men are far from the colourful and carefree artists that they appeared to be at first sight; instead, they are, as the narrator observes:- "hombres prácticos y sagaces y sobradamente acostumbrados a salir gananciosos en la empeñada y eterna lucha con los días", (Tr.3 P.388). In fact, they are models to be copied by someone in Lazarillo's position.

Sharing their way of life (and music plays a very minor part in this) and participating in their criminal activities, the boy soon becomes aware of the true character of these men. Also he learns to tolerate the beatings that the three mete out to him when they engage in personal disputes. Lazarillo accepts the violence directed at him in a stoical manner and

sees it as one of the hazards of the servile state:

.....por ello no les guardo rencor,  
 porque la cosa no dejaba de ser natural.  
 Al andar de los años, cuando llegué a tener  
 criado, hice lo mismo, y no creo que tampoco  
 a éste le haya parecido mal; de momento a  
 nadie gusta que le peguen un revés en el  
 pescuezo o un punterazo en el trasero, pero  
 a la larga, si uno es criado, acaba por  
 reconocer que para eso está, y se aguanta.

Tratado 3 Ps.388-389.

With this resignation then, life is generally tolerable:-

"En general, la vida que me daban era aperreada, pero se  
 podía soportar. No siempre se comía pero, eso sí, siempre  
 había emoción", (Tr. 3 P.389).

This last reference is one of the few in the work to  
 the problem of food and hunger. Indeed, here it is not  
 presented as a crucial concern, and by no means one of the  
 central ones as it is in the original 'Lazarillo'. To  
 illustrate this point, a comparison of statements of the two  
 protagonists concerning this subject is sufficient to show  
 the different emphasis on food and hunger in the two works.  
 Cela's Lazarillo mentions food in a very casual manner,  
 almost in the nature of an afterthought. The previous  
 quotation is an example of this and another will confirm the  
 narrator's attitude to the subject. This is selected from  
 his stay with don Roque (Tr. 7):

La vida en la botica era tan pobre como descansada, y así, aunque mucho no comía, como demasiado tampoco se me hacía trabajar, fui tirando sin mayores apuros hasta que me harté del señor licenciado y de sus parcas ahorradoras costumbres.

Tratado 7 P.480.

Cela's Lazarillo, we assume, is usually eating although by no means sumptuously and the above passage is radically different in tone from, for example, two representative extracts from Tratado 2 of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century work. Here, Lazarillo clearly sees the fatal consequences of lack of food:

Finalmente, yo me finaua de hambre.

1554: Tratado 2 P.113

and, a little later:

A cabo de tres semanas, que estuue con él, vine a tanta flaqueza, que no me podia tener en las piernas de pura hambre. Vime claramente yr a la sepultura, si Dios y mi saber no me remediaron.

1554: Tratado 2 P.117.

Here, too, is another interesting point of comparison; "Dios y mi saber" is the significant phrase. Already this Lazarillo is not counting on his fellow man to help him out of his predicament. Apart from God, he is completely on his own and therefore must be self-sufficient. Cela's hero takes a very long time to come to a similar conclusion. It is, in fact, not until his wanderings are all but over,

immediately prior to his arrival in Madrid, that he admits this sort of sentiment:

.....escamado como estaba de todos cuantos me habían rodeado, pensé que mejor sería la soledad a la mala compañía.....

Tratado 9 P. 511.

In many ways, the modern Lazarillo is more human and therefore more susceptible than his predecessor. The latter may go from bad to worse with his first three masters, but remains, apart from his encounter with the 'escudero', ever the supreme opportunist and practical man. Cela's Lazarillo is less dynamic and more human. He does not learn immediately from his mistakes and often repeats them. And certainly he does not possess the aggressive attitude which his forbear soon adopts and which is even more fully developed with the later heroes of the picaresque genre.

Lazarillo's encounter and brief association with the 'Penitente Felipe' (Tratado 4) marks a change of pace and tone in the narrative. Although the episode is by no means devoid of action, principally the turbulent scene between Felipe and his insane wife, the emphasis is rather on observation and discussion between the old man and the boy and the development of a close relationship. Felipe's extravagant turn of phrase and bizarre observations are, at first sight, somewhat reminiscent of the musicians and particularly señor David. For Felipe, however, this is all part of his harmless insanity.

The old man acts as a mentor to the boy, attempting to instruct him in such things as the delights of nature, personal hygiene, astronomy and even the question of transmigration of the soul. This is an education in complete contrast to that which Lazarillo gained with the musicians. Gradually a bond is forged between the two. This is similar to that between the 'escudero' and the original Lazarillo, although hunger is not what the modern pair have in common, but rather isolation within their society. Felipe regards the boy as a son, whilst Lazarillo has a great respect for the old man and also feelings of affection which are not based on pity but rather admiration. When Felipe chastises the boy for mocking him on one occasion he also expresses his view of their personal relationship:

Que tú para mí eres como un hijo y yo como un padre para ti.

Tratado 4 P.410.

Lazarillo continues:

Nunca fuera en mis días la terneza lo que más me distinguiera, pero en aquellas fechas, cuando tales cosas llegué a escuchar, a punto estuve de tornarme sentimental.

Tratado 4 P.410.

There is possibly a shade of irony in this statement, however there seems to be little doubt about the sincerity of his feelings at the time of the death of Felipe:

Nunca tuve padre a quien querer, ni amigo-  
fuera del penitente señor Felipe - por quien  
llorar en su desgracia, y entonces - Dios sabe  
si como presintiendo la soledad que para siempre  
ya mi espíritu no había de dejar - se volcó mi  
sentimiento como una torrentera, y mi pena tan  
doliente llegó a ser, que a poco me mata lo  
que tan malherida dejó mi voluntad: la muerte  
de mi amo, una de las dos únicas personas de  
bien con las que en mis días me tropecé.

Tratado 4 Ps.424-425.

Then, after Felipe has died, a simple act graphically conveys  
the tenderness with which the boy has regarded the old man:

.....El brazo se le cayó todo lo  
largo, y sus ojos, entreabiertos, tenían un  
dulzor amargo y triste que me sobrecogió; se los  
cerré con cuidado.

Tratado 4 Ps.425-426.

It mattered little that Lazarillo had come to realise  
that Felipe was as insane as he had maintained his own wife  
to be. When she appeared and Felipe jumped into the river  
to escape from her the narrator reflects:

En pos de él me eché porque hice cuenta que  
de loco a loco, más vale irse con el varón que  
quedarse con la hembra.....

Tratado 4 Ps.412-413.

Not long previously, the boy had witnessed the gruesome  
results of another's insanity, the murders committed by Julián  
of Lumbrales (Tratado 3). However, and in complete contrast,

Felipe's insanity, as well as being milder in tone, is channelled into less dangerous outlets such as astronomy. Cela's novel contains several portrayals to a varying degree of mental instability, whereas the work of 1554 had merely shown the particular vices of certain types - for example, the vanity of the 'escudero' or the avarice of the priest. However these were obsessions and no more, although, like the 'escudero', Felipe was concerned with appearances as shows his request to Lazarillo, shortly before he dies:

.....que el guiso de perdiz que te sobre me lo restriegues por los labios cuando haya expirado, que mejor me parece un cadáver con aire de haber muerto de indigestión, que otro con aspecto de haberlo hecho de hambre y de frío.....

Tratado 4 P.425.

This is the vanity of the 'escudero' carried to its grotesque and logical extreme and may suggest, considering the cases of insanity in Cela's work, a very fine dividing line between obsession and insanity.

The episode of the 'penitente Felipe' shows the bond that has developed between Lazarillo and the old man and when the latter dies the boy is so affected that he becomes depressed to the point of developing a death wish. Also, this episode is notable for the narrator's expressions of opinion of the society in which he finds himself. There exists a general attitude of fear and mistrust that will be seen intensified

and on a greater scale in the post civil war Madrid society of La colmena. In spite of the unreal nature of many of the characters and situations in the 'Nuevo Lazarillo', the feeling of hostility within this society is both real and disturbing. Of this, the narrator is patently aware:

.....que para comer todos los días y mantenerse derecho no hay como caminar y no estarse quieto, que en los pueblos dan al que va de camino - quizá para que no se pare - y niegan al que vieron nacer. Y tan crueles son, que si tiene hambre le llaman vago, y si le falta el sentido, le tiran piedras; con lo que siempre resulta que en cada pueblo de España hay un hombre en los huesos al que apedrean los mozos, llaman tonto las mujeres y dicen los demás hombres que lo que quiere es vivir sin trabajar.

Tratado 4 P.417-418.

It is true that Cela's work, like that of 1554, contains the types that easily lend themselves to caricature - characters like Felipe, don Roque and 'la tía Librada', but, in addition, the work provides a continual awareness of social malaise, witnessed in the fear, hostility, suspicion and, above all, mental derangement. Philanthropy is almost a lost cause and perhaps significantly, don Federico, the nearest thing to a philanthropist in the novel, is portrayed as an eccentric if not insane person. Also, and like Felipe, he is a figure of a bygone era and certainly not of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Horcajo episode (Tratado 5) has a certain quality of nightmare or phantasy that has been seen previously. Once more, Lazarillo finds himself in the midst of a group of hostile and apparently insane people. Their conduct is similar to that of the villagers of Lumbrales when they discovered the deceit played on them by the three musicians. In fact, the events at Horcajo, culminating in the narrator's nightmare, have the same unreal and dream-like quality as the encounter with Julián in Lumbrales. Since Lumbrales it would appear that Lazarillo has entered a world largely populated by madmen. When the narrator meets up with the French gymnasts the tone and subject matter of the work become a little more realistic, but, in general, society remains as inclement as ever.

Lazarillo's stay with señor Pierre and his companions (Tratado 6) shows a further development in his personality and outlook. On the one hand his tenderness and affection toward the wretched Marie, an extension of emotion first revealed in the encounter with Felipe, is shown, and on the other, his physical suffering at the hands of the gymnasts results in a hardening of his attitude toward his fellow man. As well as this, the narrator comes to realise that his spirit is gradually being eroded as the result of his experiences, whilst the cautious and cynical side of his nature is strengthening:

No sé por qué me faltó valentía para escaparme cualquier noche; lo que sí pude ver es que aquel arrojito de cuando era más tierno, había desaparecido en mí. Los años, a veces, son como las palizas, que quitan alegría y dan malicia, que matan el valor para dejar que viva la cautela.

Tratado 6 P.447.

However, in spite of this, he is still capable of feeling compassion for a fellow sufferer, in this case, Marie.

Lazarillo's feeling for the girl is in one way much more reminiscent of the relationship between his predecessor and the 'escudero' than that between himself and Felipe.

Concerning the 'escudero', Lazarillo of 1554 had said, "Tanta lástima aya Dios de mi, como yo auia dél, porque senti lo que sentia y muchas vezes auia por ello passado y passaua cada dia" (1554; Tratado 3 P.171). Here the narrator is, of course, thinking in terms of hunger, but Cela's Lazarillo might equally have said this of Marie, thinking of the physical suffering that they were both experiencing. Thus there exists a common bond between the narrator and the girl. She is the first really innocent person with whom the boy has come into contact, for even Felipe had his faults.

Marie had shown her benevolent nature when she adopted the blind baby that her companions wished to abandon and in spite of the continual abuse that she suffers, she accepts her lot silently and stoically:

La triste Marie era muy desgraciada y todos arremetían contra ella y le decían cosas tremendas. La señorita Violette le solía pegar alguna que otra torta y, a veces, hasta palizas enteras le daba; pero Marie jamás levantaba la voz y se limitaba a sollozar con un desamparo que partía el corazón.

Tratado 6 Ps. 440-441.

This silent resignation is soon to become the attitude of the narrator in this situation:

Tragué en silencio, aguanté lo mucho malo que quisieron hacerme y seguí viviendo y trabajando.

Tratado 6 P.447.

Lazarillo is by now some fifteen years old and for the first time has considered violence as a response to the hostility of others but has managed to control his instincts. The treatment that the sadistic Violette metes out and in particular her attitude toward Marie has forced him to this extreme. However expediency prevails and he does manage to check his aggressive inclination:

-Y tú, Novillo, levántate y no seas señorito.  
No te arrimes a Marie, que es una asquerosa.  
!Hala!

Me entraron unas horribles tentaciones de partirles la cara. Si lo hubiera hecho me habría matado el señor Pierre. Yo, con las carnes molidas y el humor turbio, me levanté y me marché.

Tratado 6 P.446.

By now, Lazarillo is emotionally involved with Marie, his early sympathy for the girl has now developed into a deeper affection as he sees in her the virtues and innocence that he has failed to encounter in any other person that he has met thus far:

Me entraron tentaciones de decirle que  
la quería yo...pero me callé.

Tratado 6 P.445.

Lazarillo's affection for Marie, their flight to the sanctuary of the house of the philanthropist don Federico and the subsequent contentment that both experience there is the first and only real happiness that the narrator finds in his wanderings. At last he is in a peaceful and sympathetic environment protected by "El único hombre que me pareció decente" (P.448). Yet, and naturally enough considering what he has suffered, Lazarillo is suspicious of his good fortune. As chance would have it, this respite is only of a temporary nature and soon he must resume his peripatetic existence:

.....ya es sabido que el hombre propone y Dios dispone, y que aunque mi propósito, ya se lo puede imaginar, fuera quedarme allí por los días de mi vida, la disposición divina ordenó las cosas de otro modo.

Tratado 6 P.458.

The narrator's belief that it is his destiny to continue indefinitely his wanderings, becomes gradually firmer. After leaving don Federico and Marie and the happiness that they had represented for him, Lazarillo seems to be guided by his destiny into more suffering and farther away from peace and happiness. He has been given a brief taste of this during his stay with don Federico and now seems doomed to follow what Pascual Duarte calls "el camino de los cardos y de las chumberas". Both Lazarillo and Duarte have, but to a different degree, this awareness of the role of destiny in their lives, but unlike Duarte, Lazarillo is very much the innocent sufferer. He must wander on and on, not necessarily to a final goal of happiness, but merely along the path of continual hardship:

Al llegar, a los cuatro o cinco días de marcha, a los montes que llaman de Cabrejas, pensé que, harto ya de padecer por el andar y andar sin descanso y sin tino, habrían de sentar bien a mi cuerpo pecador unos tiempos de paz y sosiego.

Lo pensé de repente, cuando veía a mis pies toda la llanada que dicen de la Mancha alumbrada como un ascua por el sol de la tarde.

Decidí conseguirlo y no lo logré; hice lo que pude, pero fue vano. El sino de mis huesos era trotar senderos y allanar caminos, y yo, ¡pobre de mí!, quise luchar con él; luego pude ver cuán vanamente.

The morale of the narrator had reached its lowest ebb during his stay with the French gymnasts and then, suddenly with Marie and don Federico he had attained a happiness hitherto unknown to him. However, this happiness had whimsically been shortlived. The subsequent adventures of the boy take place mainly in the village of Belinchón where he serves first an avaricious jew and then the Celestina type figure, 'la tía' Librada. Both of these figures are strongly caricatured by Cela. Lazarillo experiences hardship whilst he is with Roque, the chemist; - he does not eat well and fails to receive payment for his service. But the narrator realises that he has received worse treatment in the past than that meted out by the Jew and so resigns himself to his situation:

La vida en la botica era tan pobre como descansada, y así, aunque mucho no comía, como demasiado tampoco se me hacía trabajar, fui tirando sin mayores apuros hasta que me harté del señor licenciado y de sus parcas ahorradoras costumbres.

Tratado 7 P.480.

Librada, for whom Lazarillo left don Roque - "pensando que iba a mejorar" (P.485) - is, unlike don Roque, a study of insanity rather than of a particular vice. She indulges in various activities of a supernatural order and the boy finds these activities a great source of entertainment,

although a little frightening at times. But above all, she treats him fairly and asks only silence and discretion of him. Librada professes certain magical powers although Lazarillo is often sceptical of these. The old woman's machinations become increasingly exotic until a climax is reached and an end to the episode when her house is ransacked, a poisoning takes place and the suspect subsequently imprisoned, a madman is also incarcerated and, finally, Librada disappears. Amidst this grotesque and highly animated scene, Lazarillo flees and makes his way toward Madrid. He reaffirms his belief in the control of destiny over the individual and the consequential impotence of man in the face of his fate. Those who do not question their fate, he believes, and instead confine themselves to their immediate environment and problems, are far happier. The narrator has by now had sufficient experience of life to come to some sort of conclusion about it. His outlook, because of his belief in fate, is ultimately pessimistic. He appears to hold that the less one knows about life then the happier one will be. In his own case he has been caught up in the inevitable process that is fate and he must therefore, and cannot do otherwise but, submit to this:

Era ya un hombre, y los miedos, las hambres  
y las calamidades habían sido mi única escuela.  
Cada <sup>vez</sup> que un golpe torcido me hacía levantar el

vuelo, los pensamientos, tanto buenos como malos invadían mi mente hasta que la necesidad llegaba a darlos de lado. Entonces se me ocurrió cavilar, ¡bien lo recuerdo!, sobre los felices mortales que nacen, viven y mueren sin haber salido de tres leguas a la redonda de su pueblo, y pensé, ¡sólo Dios sabe con que ansia!, en lo dichoso que sería parándome para terminar mis días en las primeras casas que encontrase. Por qué la Providencia no lo quiso es cosa que desconozco; quizá mis carnes estuvieran marcadas con la señal que les impidiera dejar de trotar y trotar sin ton ni son, para arriba y para abajo. Pensé que el correr campos y pueblos, como empujado por el aire, había de ser mi eterno destino, y a él no quise oponerme.

Tratado 9 Ps.509-510.

Ironically, though, when he eventually arrives at the capital, Lazarillo finds that he has not yet served his last master. At last it seems as if the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has caught up with him. He is conscripted into military service and so once more loses, for what it was worth, his freedom. The government is now his master and ironically sees it as its task to instil in him the rudiments of a formal education, although he has already received a comprehensive education in life, a complete study of his fellow man. When he finally completes his period of service he also receives the ultimate symbol of modern man and his conformity to his civilisation,

documents of identity:

Aprendí la instrucción y los buenos modales, me acabaron de enseñar a leer y a escribir, y me metieron en la cabeza las cuatro reglas.

Cuando al cabo del tiempo me licenciaron, tenía todo: una documentación, una cartilla, un certificado de buena conducta...Lo único que me faltaba eran las ganas de seguir caminando sin ton ni son por los empolvados caminos, las frescas laderas de las montañas y las rumorosas orillas de los ríos.

Tratado 9 P.517.

Lazarillo has thus been passed through the mill of modern civilisation and, at least temporarily, has suffered the loss of identity through the conformity that this demands. However, he may well have cast off the shackles of this conformity later in his life, for, like Pascual Duarte there remains a part of his life of which there is no account. Lazarillo of 1554 was eventually successful, at least from a material point of view and this was what mattered to him. Of Cela's hero all we know is that at the end of his narrative he has learned much of life and of his fellow man. Subsequently he may well have enjoyed some sort of contentment, although the reader knows him well enough to realise that material success was not primarily what he was looking for. Rather, Cela's Lazarillo has sought an inner tranquility and a benevolent sign from his fellow travellers on the journey

through life. Yet it would seem from his final words that any sort of faith or optimism concerning life and society has yet to be found:

Después empezó la segunda parte de mi vida.  
Pasé por momentos buenos y por instantes malos;  
conocí días felices y semanas desgraciadas;  
gocé la buena salud y padecí el hambre aún  
mejor..., y llegué, paso a pasito, a lo que  
hoy soy.

Contar el camino, ¿para que? Fue la  
espinosa senda de todos quienes conocí...

Tratado 9 P.517.

Cela's Lazarillo moves in a society that seems to be of a bygone era rather than of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. There is a pervading timeless quality about his narrative and a lack of reality with many of the main characters. These are frequently deranged and often inhabit a dream-like world. Indeed, the narrator's account has some of the fantastic and disturbing quality of 'Alice in Wonderland' - the only realities of which the narrator can be sure are the privations that he suffers at the hands of those with whom he comes into contact and also the resulting disillusionment with the society that he has seen. Lazarillo of 1554 showed the vices of certain individuals and the necessity for expediency and a generally amoral attitude when confronted with the hostility of others. The 'Nuevo Lazarillo' is much more pessimistic

in that it shows a sensitive and well-intentioned human being failing to overcome through faith and moral qualities, the hostile environment into which he has been cast. The only two characters in the novel for whom the reader can feel a genuine sympathy, Marie and the narrator, are deprived of the happiness that they could have found together by an inclement destiny. If Pascual Duarte uses a hostile environment and an equally hostile destiny to shift the moral responsibility for his actions, then Cela's Lazarillo, in every respect a more sympathetic person, shows these two facets of his life not as the agents of destruction but rather as more negative phenomena. They frustrate happiness in a terrifying and absolute manner for the man who wishes simply to live a tranquil and fruitful existence.

La colmena.

After the rural setting of La familia de Pascual Duarte (1942) and Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes (1944) and, of course, the confines of the sanatorium of Pabellón de reposo (1943), appeared Cela's first portrayal of urban society with La colmena (1951). The first two novels mentioned above do, it is true, contain passages concerned with their respective protagonists' arrival at and experiences in the capital city. Pascual Duarte spends some fifteen days there after his flight from home, whilst Lazarillo finishes the account of his wanderings with his arrival at Madrid, where he finds himself, with his conscription, victim of the exigencies of the modern beaurocratic state. La colmena, on the other hand, is a novel wholly devoted to the city of Madrid and its inhabitants.

The action of this novel takes place in Madrid of 1942; some three years after the end of the Spanish Civil War and at a time when the Second World War was reaching its climax. Yet, in spite of this being a period crucial in Spanish and world history, Cela's novel is basically concerned with everyday life and its problems as seen by a section of Madrid society. There is an atmosphere of continual suspicion and hostility that permeates the novel and this is no doubt a result of the aftermath of the civil war. The

extent of this general attitude, its possible roots and its particular expression will be discussed subsequently. For the moment it is sufficient to say that Cela's novel shows the individual's preoccupation with the immediate concerns of life - food, distraction, money and material benefits, in whatever slight degree these may be obtained. Most of the characters have little time for ideals; Cela's intention is to portray individuals whose primary problem is with existence and the striving to make that existence a little more tolerable:

Mi novela 'La colmena', primer libro de la serie 'Caminos inciertos', no es otra cosa que un pálido reflejo, que una humilde sombra de la cotidiana, áspera, entrañable y dolorosa realidad.

.....

Esta novela mía no aspira a ser más - ni menos, cierta~~mente~~ - que un trozo de vida narrado paso a paso, sin reticencias, sin extrañas tragedias, sin caridad, como la vida discurre, exactamente como la vida discurre.

Nota a la primera edición.<sup>4</sup>

An evident part of the reality that Cela is describing is the passage of time; this is one of the major themes of La colmena and throughout, an inescapable aspect of this novel. The importance of time is acknowledged by the author:

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<sup>4</sup>La colmena. Editorial Noguer. Barcelona, 1965.

El cómplice del escritor es el tiempo. Y  
el tiempo es el implacable gorgojo que corroe  
y hunde la sociedad que atenaza el escritor.

P.18.

For the people of La colmena, concerned with the immediate and basic requirements of existence, time and life slip by almost unnoticed - unnoticed by them, that is, but certainly not by the author. It is as if these people are swept inexorably toward death whilst they are, for the most part, only semi-conscious of life. Thematically, then, time is of paramount importance in La colmena. Also, another manifestation of the time element is in the actual structure of the novel, in the fragmentation of this phenomenon in the Joycean manner. The passage and fragmentation of time are closely interwoven in Cela's novel; the former shows the monotony and often futility of existence, whilst the latter allows the author to use a cinematographic technique to look at the society that he is portraying. Therefore, a study of the Madrid society of La colmena necessitates a continual awareness of the temporal theme and structure of the novel, and for this reason, the present study will be divided into three main sections: 1. Time in La colmena. 2. Society in 1942 Madrid and 3. Martín Marco.

1. Time in La colmena.

The temporal aspect in La colmena manifests itself, then, in two distinct yet related ways. Firstly there is the constant reminder of the relentless march of time. As has been previously mentioned, most of the many characters that are to be found in the novel seem to be far too preoccupied to notice the phenomenon - or if they do, then they appear blissfully unaware of its significance. Witness, for example, the reaction of don Jaime Arce:

Don Jaime cambia de postura, se le estaba durmiendo una pierna. "¡Qué misterioso es esto! Tas, tas; tas, tas; y así toda la vida, día y noche, invierno y verano: el corazón!"

Chapter 1 P.25.

Life in Cela's novel is generally shown as something static; its people are primarily concerned with the present and the immediate future only. Existence is equated with the problems and sensations that the moment produces, and this brings us to the other and more obvious aspect of time in La colmena, that is the actual structure of the novel.

Each chapter deals with a specific period of the day; either morning, afternoon - evening, or night, and the action of the whole novel takes place over a period of several days. Specifically, chapters 1-6 cover two successive days, whilst the 'Final' takes place three or four days later. However,

the chapters are not in complete chronological sequence and even within and between chapters the reader is conducted back and forth in time. In this way an impression of fragmentation of time is experienced. To achieve this effect, the author has made use of a cinematographic technique in his narration. Therefore, each chapter is composed of a series of 'shots' which have been juxtaposed, but not necessarily in sequence. In addition, certain scenes are seen again, only from a different angle, another point of view, thus giving an impression of simultaneity of action.

La colmena, then, from a temporal and structural point of view, is composed of a hierarchy of temporal units. Firstly, the whole work encompasses a period of several days: secondly, each chapter is confined to a specific period of a certain day, (although, as will be seen later, this confinement is not absolute): and, finally, each chapter is further subdivided into moments or incidents, often out of chronological sequence, and giving the impression of being isolated and complete in themselves. Indeed, such is the structure of La colmena, that any one or even several of the units composing the work could be removed without causing it irreparable damage as a whole.

Chapters 1-6 cover a period of some two days, and for convenience these will be termed day 'A' and day 'B'. Thus

chapters 1 and 2 take place during the early evening and night of 'A'. The actual time is mentioned precisely on several occasions:

Suenan las nueve y media en el viejo reló de breves numeritos que brillan como si fueran de oro.

Chapter 1 P.69.

-¿Qué hora es?

-No sé; deben de ser ya más de las diez.

Chapter 2 Ps.87-88.

-¿Tiene usted hora, señorito?

El señorito se desabrocha y mira la hora en su grueso reloj de plata.

-Sí, van a dar las once.

Chapter 2 P.96.

Chapter 3 takes place during the afternoon of day 'B'; the time setting being given in the opening paragraph:

Don Pablo, después de la comida, se va a un tranquilo Café de la calle de San Bernado, a jugar una partida de ajedrez con don Francisco Robles y López - Patón, y a eso de las cinco o cinco y media sale en busca de doña Pura.....

Chapter 3 P.119.

Also:-

A las cinco, la tertulia del Café de la calle de San Bernado se disuelve, y a eso de las cinco y media, o aun antes, está cada mochuelo en su olivo.

Chapter 3 P.129.

In addition, there are references to day 'A', showing that the two days of chapters 1 and 2 are consecutive. For example,

mention is made of the murder of doña Margot which was discovered during the night of days 'A' and 'B':

-como decía, cuando anoche don Leoncio Maestre me comunicó la mala nueva del accidente acaecido en la persona de doña Margot Sobrón de Suárez.....

Chapter 3 P.139.

With Chapter 4, the author conducts us back in time to the night of day 'A' and, once again, makes several specific time references:

Victorita, a la hora de la cena, riñó con la madre.

Chapter 4 P.171.

Later, the city and its people sleep and prepare for the day ahead:

La noche se cierra, al filo de la una y media o de las dos de la madrugada, sobre el extraño corazón de la ciudad.

Miles de hombres se duermen abrazados a sus mujeres sin pensar en el duro, en el cruel día que quizá les espere, agazapado como un gato montés, dentro de tan pocas horas.

Cientos y cientos de bachilleres caen en el íntimo, en el sublime y delicadísimo vicio solitario.

Y algunas docenas de muchachas esperan -¿Qué esperan, Dios mío?, ¿por qué las tienen tan engañadas? - con la mente llena de dorados sueños...

Chapter 4 P.218.

From the temporal point of view, Chapter 5 is the most complex. It is set during the evening and night of day 'B'

and contains the structurally complicated episode of the photograph of the defunct don Obdulio in connection with the Julita - Ventura - don Roque triangle. Excluding the 'Final', this chapter is the last in chronological sequence and even includes a short scene (the arrival at don Roque's home of the photograph) which must take place in the morning of a day 'C'. This whole episode will subsequently be discussed in detail; for the moment the study of specific time references within the chapters will be continued. As before, there are concrete indications of the hour:

Hacia las ocho y media de la tarde, o a veces antes, ya suele estar Julita en casa.

Chapter 5 P.219.

A eso de las siete, entre dos enfermos, don Francisco sale al teléfono. Casi no se oye lo que habla.

Chapter 5 P.234.

With Chapter 6, the author leads us back in time to the morning of day 'B'. The 'cruel día', mentioned on Page 218, thus arrives. Martín Marco is seen awakening after spending the night with Purita (Pages 217-218), as the morning assails, almost imperceptibly, the whole city and its inhabitants:

La mañana sube, poco a poco, trepando como un gusano por los corazones de los hombres y de las mujeres de la ciudad; golpeando, casi con mimo, sobre los mirares recién despiertos, esos mirares que jamás descubren horizontes nuevos,

paisajes nuevos, nuevas decoraciones.

Chapter 6 P.277.

So the city awakens, and its people are faced with a new day with its problems, frustrations and occasional moments of respite.

The novel terminates with the 'Final', set some days later:

Han pasado tres o cuatro días.

Final P.279.

and during the morning:

Don Roberto lee el periódico mientras desayuna.

Final P.279.

From this survey of the general structure of La colmena, the order of events will be seen to be as follows:

Chapter 1. - Late afternoon - Evening of day 'A'.

Chapter 2. - Evening - Nightfall of day 'A'.

Chapter 3. - Afternoon of day 'B'.

Chapter 4. - Night of days 'A'-'B'.

Chapter 5. - Evening - Night of day 'B'.

Chapter 6. - Morning of day 'B'.

Final. - Morning, three or four days later.

Therefore, from this, if each chapter were to be placed in standard chronological order, starting with the earliest action and finishing with the last, then the sequence would be the following:

1, 2, 4, 6, 3, 5 and the the 'Final'.

However, this order is by no means absolute, for there is a liaison between the chapters that suggests that each is interdependent of the others, rather than being a complete and separate entity. There is a continual link, at times tenuous, between each and this link is the lives and actions of the characters in the novel. A situation is encountered and then followed, but not necessarily to completion, for by the very structural nature of La colmena this would be both impossible and also unreal. Cela is portraying a short period in the lives of a large number of people, and to do this successfully and without writing a work of mammoth proportions, he must put himself not in the position of the omniscient author but rather in that of a camera, seeing things as they occur and recording them. This cinematographic technique also enables him to travel back and forth within the time medium. The obvious example of this is the order of the chapters, although, this fragmentation and movement to and fro within the time dimension is extended to within the chapters themselves.

In each chapter of La colmena, Cela emphasises the sense of the moment, the awareness of and confinement to the present, by moving rapidly back and forth from one character or group to another. At times the tempo alters as the author spends

a relatively long period looking at one particular situation (for example, the death of doña Margot; Ch.3 Ps.138-142), but the former pace of the work is very quickly restored.

This division of the chapter into numerous short scenes with the description of various events, related and unrelated, often occurring simultaneously, has its literary precedents. In particular, one may be reminded of the 'Wandering Rocks' section of Joyce's Ulysses (1922), in which some eighteen incidents are shown happening in different parts of Dublin between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. A similar, but less concentrated, technique is used by John Dos Passos in Manhattan Transfer (1925). However, Dos Passos' novel of the city spans a whole generation of New Yorkers, whilst La colmena takes place over a period of several days and Ulysses in about one day. As the study of a city and its people, and from a technical point of view, La colmena resembles Manhattan Transfer; but from a temporal point of view (condensation of time and simultaneity of action) it has closer affinities with Ulysses.

In La colmena there is no conventional plot, and the nearest thing to a central, unifying element is the account of the actions of Martín Marco. The novel, in effect, revolves around Marco and about a dozen other main characters or groups of characters: don Roberto González and Filo;

Victorita; doña Rosa, Julita and Ventura Aguado; Pablo Alonso and Laurita; don Mario de la Vega and Eloy; Elvira and, perhaps, Celestino. On another level, come the lesser, but still important elements: Petrita; don Roque; doña Celia; doña Jesusa; señor Ramón and Julio García Morrazo, to name a representative few. And then, there are the minor characters, seen very occasionally: don Ibrahim; the homosexuals Suárez and Figueras; don Francisco; don Tesifonte and many others all come under this category.

Most, if not all of these people, are linked in some way in La colmena. They may frequent the same Café, live in the same building or have mutual acquaintances; the relationship is shown as the narrative unfolds. A good example of this technique is the don Mario - Eloy - Victorita - Paco relationship. The first two first meet in the Café of doña Rosa and don Mario offers Eloy work. Later we see the 'novios' Victorita and Paco and come to learn that don Mario has designs on this girl who is prepared to sell herself in order to buy medicines for her consumptive 'novio'. Also we are informed of the fact that Eloy is the brother of Paco. The reader is thus acquainted with the relationship between these four people, although they themselves are not. In this narration covering such a vast number of people (some three hundred with both major and minor roles) the

camera technique that Cela has adopted is ideal, for it gives a mobility and pace that would have otherwise been impossible. Also, a large number of characters and situations can be witnessed and returned to, without the author becoming bogged down with the individual or the single situation. The use of cinematographic technique, combined with movement back and forth within the time medium also allows the return to a situation that has been momentarily abandoned, with the situation held static and then, continuing from the point at which it was previously left.

One of the earliest and most obvious examples of the cinematographic technique and the shifting back in time occurs in the first and second chapters. Martín Marco is rejected from doña Rosa's Café by Pepe:

El hombre va hacia la puerta con Pepe detrás.  
Los dos salen afuera. Hace frío y las gentes  
pasan presurosas.

Chapter 1 P.42.

This episode is commented upon by several of the clients in the Café at a later point in the chapter:

-Oye, Luis, ¿qué pasa con ese joven?  
-Nada, don Pablo, que no le daba la gana  
de pagar el café que se había tomado.

Chapter 1 P.46.

Then, at a still later stage in the narrative, Pepe returns and informs doña Rosa that Marco has been despatched:

-¿Le has arreado?

-Sí, señorita.

-¿Cuántas?

-Dos.

.....

-¿Dónde se le has dado?

-Donde pude; en las piernas.

-Bien hecho. ¡Para que aprenda! ¡Así otra vez no querrá robarle el dinero a las gentes honradas.

Chapter 1 P.48.

The beginning of Chapter 2 sees Marco and Pepe in the street. Thus the 'camera' has now left the Café and sees the actual situation, this time from the exterior vantage point. Therefore, the incident has apparently been transfixed in time. The conversation between the two men outside the Café is recorded (Ch. 2 P.71), but then, as Marco wanders off into the city, the 'camera' returns to the interior of the Café. However, the scene has not yet been completely abandoned. Pepe returns and his conversation with doña Rosa is once more recorded, almost verbatim:

-¿Le has arreado?

-Sí, señorita.

-¿Cuántas?

-Dos.

-¿Dónde?

-Donde pude, en las piernas.

-¡Bien hecho! ¡Por mangante!

Chapter 2 P.74.

Thus, what the 'camera' sees and Pepe describes are two different things.

Other examples of this simultaneity of action include don Roberto's arrival home (mentioned Ch.2 P.92 and then witnessed Ch.4 P.172); don Mario de la Vega's telephone call (mentioned Ch.2 P.105 and then witnessed Ch.4 Ps.174-175) and, perhaps most complicated of all, the episode of Julita, Ventura and don Roque concerning doña Celia's 'casa de citas' and the photograph of don Obdulio.

The relationship of Julita and Ventura is first mentioned in Chapter 3 and their use of the room at doña Celia's is also introduced:

Ventura y Julita solían meterse en la habitación a las tres y media o cuatro y no se marchaban hasta dadas las ocho.

Chapter 3 P.156.

The day (unspecified) of their first visit is witnessed and the photograph of don Obdulio is mentioned (P. 157).

However, it is not until Chapter 5 that the complicated sequence of events relating to the photograph and the meeting of don Roque and his daughter on the stairs of the 'casa de citas' is unfurled. Julita arrives home on the evening of day 'B':

Hacia las ocho y media de la tarde, o a veces antes, ya suele estar Julita en su casa.

Chapter 5 P.219.

She falsely recounts to her mother her meeting with don Roque that day:

-No, por nada. Me acordé de él de repente porque lo vi en la calle.

-¡Con lo grande que es Madrid!

Julita sigue hablando.

-¡Ca es un pañuelo! Lo vi en la calle de Santa Engracia. Yo bajaba de una casa, de hacerme una fotografía.

.....

.....Él iba a la misma casa; por lo visto, tiene un amigo enfermo en la vecindad.

Chapter 5 Ps.219-220.

Subsequently, this conversation is left and the scene changes:

Julita esta abstraída, parece que no oye.

-Mamá...

-Qué.

(Chapter 5 P.220)

Later, the conversation is resumed at the same point:

Julita, abstraída, parece no oír, parece como si estuviera en la luna.

-Mamá...

-Qué.

Chapter 5 P.225.

For a while the conversation is continued until it is abruptly terminated as the action moves forward in time to the next day and the arrival of the photograph of don Obdulio (Ps.226-227). Subsequently, Julita sees Ventura, gives him the photograph and adds:

.....Ayer me encontré a mi padre en

la escalera.

Chapter 5 P.228.

There is then a shift back in time; the scene between Ventura and doña Celia:

Poco antes de verse con Julita, Ventura se encontró a doña Celia en la calle de Luchana.

Chapter 5 P.228.

This is followed by a movement forward, past the time of the meeting of Julita and Ventura and described on page 228, and is concerned with the latter sending the photograph to don Roque (P.229). Cela then employs the future tense to show the recipient's reaction at a future date:

Cuando don Roque la reciba, se quedará sin aliento. A don Obdulio no lo podrá recordar, pero la carta, a no dudarlo, le encogerá el ánimo.

Chapter 5 P.229.

Thus, Cela moves forward in time from day 'B', and then, the episode of the photograph still not fully explained, he takes us back in time to the evening of day 'B' and continues the conversation of Julita and her mother from the point at which it was last left (P.226). Therefore:

La muchacha parece estar en trance, el ademán soñador, la mirada perdida, en los labios la sonrisa de felicidad.

-Es muy bueno, mamá, muy bueno, muy bueno. Me cogió una mano, me miró fijo a los ojos...

Chapter 5 P.235.

Then the author takes us back once more, this time to witness Don Roque's meeting with his daughter at doña Celia's (first mentioned P.220):

Julita, al llegar a la altura del entresuelo, se encuentra con don Roque.

-¡Hola, hija! ¿ De dónde vienes?

Julita está pasada.

-De...la fotografía. Y tú, ¿adónde vas?

-Pues...a ver a un amigo enfermo; el pobre está muy malo.

Chapter 5 Ps.250-251.

Shortly afterwards, the removal of the photograph from the room in doña Celia's house is shown (Ps.253-254). And, finally, we are conducted forward again in time to the evening of the same day - 'B'. The Moisés family are seen at supper, and then, don Roque and doña Visi are seen in bed, with the latter excitedly discussing (and this, perhaps, is the final irony of the episode) Julita's novio (P.266). Don Roque remains understandably non-committal on this subject.

This whole episode is the most complicated in La colmena, with the author continually shifting back and forth in the time medium. Chapter 5 thus shows Cela experimenting to a greater degree than in any other section of this novel with camera technique and the fragmentation of time without concern for normal chronological sequence. In fact, the chronological disorder of this chapter is similar to the very

disorder of the chapters themselves in the work, except that it is concentrated and on a smaller scale, confined to a mere half dozen or so characters. It might even be said that in the Julita-Ventura-don Roque episode of Chapter 5, the author has tended to confuse the reader, so great are the movements back and forth. Here the chronological disorder has not quite been carried 'ad absurdum', but there is little doubt that this section requires the utmost diligence on the part of the reader who wishes to unravel the time sequence and follow comprehensively the chain of events.

Apart from the use of time within the structure of La colmena (fragmentation and simultaneity) to give each moment an almost static quality, Cela is also preoccupied with the phenomenon of time passing. At first sight, these two conflicting approaches would suggest a paradox, however, it is on two different planes that the author is dealing with the temporal problem. Firstly, the structure of the novel suggests the individual confinement to the moment and the exigencies of that moment. For most of the characters of La colmena the future is unimportant until it becomes the present. The lives of the majority represented have little real object save existence; they are confronted with their present circumstances and are always seen within this context.

Most have little or no time to think in abstract terms of life and its meaning or possible futility; meanwhile life slips by almost unnoticed.

Cela frequently refers to the inexorable march of time, a phenomenon unnoticed by the individuals in the novel since they have other and more immediate concerns. The monotony and lack of purpose of the lives of these people is frightening and depressing:

Detrás de los días vienen las noches, detrás de las noches vienen los días. El año tiene cuatro estaciones; primavera, verano, otoño, invierno. Hay verdades que se sienten dentro del cuerpo, como el hambre o las ganas de orinar.

Chapter 2 P.83.

Thus life is the commonplace, reflected in such basic necessities as eating and urinating. Filo is one of the few characters who is aware of growing old and the possible futility of her own life:

-¿Qué vieja soy ya, verdad? Mira como tengo la cara de arrugas. Ahora, esperar que los hijos crezcan, seguir envejeciendo y después morir. Como mamá, la pobre.

Chapter 2 P.88.

Yet, at least she has her husband and children to live for and unlike many of the people seen in La colmena she does not suffer from a spiritual as well as material poverty. For so many others, the future holds little or nothing; for a few

there is the possibility of material betterment. Don Roque can hope that one day one of his daughters may possess the Café of doña Rosa whilst Elvira, a prostitute well past her prime, has ambitions of a far more modest nature:

Ahora se conforma con no ir al hospital,  
con poder seguir en su miserable fonducha; a  
lo mejor, dentro de unos años, su sueño dorado  
es una cama en el hospital, al lado del  
radiador de la calefacción.

Chapter 2 P.93.

For the people in the bee-hive life is generally without consolation or diversion. Sex may provide momentary relief from monotony and privations, but even this tends to be mechanical and dispassionate. In his portrayal of this society, Cela places the emphasis on eroticism and not on love, for this would seem to be too abstract and idealistic to concern them. Distractions are an attempt to alleviate the burden of the inclemencies and monotony of life; even the very young are assailed by this boredom and must find their own ways to help time pass; their problem is the same as that facing the adults, their mode of distraction is, however, generally innocent:

Dos niños de cuatro o cinco años juegan  
aburridamente, sin ningún entusiasmo, al tren  
por entre las mesas.....  
.....

Son dos niños ordenancistas, consecuentes, dos niños que juegan al tren, aunque se aburren como ostras, porque se han propuesto divertirse y, para divertirse, se han propuesto, pase lo que pase, jugar al tren durante toda la tarde. Si ellos no lo consiguen, ¡ Qué culpa tienen? Ellos hacen todo lo posible.

Chapter 1 Ps.35-36.

Yet, all of these people endure the monotony of their existence, and, indeed, few of them are even aware of it; it is left to the author to remind the reader, at times directly, of this monotony:

Flota en el aire como un pesar que se va clavando en los corazones. Los corazones no duelen y pueden sufrir, hora tras hora, hasta toda una vida, sin que nadie sepamos nunca, demasiado a ciencia cierta, qué es lo que pasa.

Chapter 1 P.31.

At times there are undertones of humour in the author's allusions to the frustration that the passing hours and days reveal:

.....el reló quedó posado sobre el mostrador del Café, como para servir de recuerdo de unas horas que pasaron sin traer el hombre para doña Rosa y el comer caliente todos los días, para el muerto. ¡ La vida!

Chapter 1 P.69.

Martín Marco's view of time and life is a mixture of pessimism and frustration and a general feeling of the helplessness of man as opposed to the view of Nati Robles who feels that

time provides opportunity at least:

.....Ya me casaré, yo creo que hay tiempo para todo.

-!Feliz tú! Yo creo que no hay tiempo para nada; yo creo que si el tiempo sobra es porque, como es tan poco, no sabemos lo que hacer con él.

Chapter 3 P.165.

Ironically, when Marco does decide to organise himself and reshape his life, something unexplained and unknown to him is about to explode over his head and probably frustrate him at this crucial point. In the 'Final', Marco wanders the outskirts of Madrid, blissfully ignorant of this threat in the same way that the majority of his acquaintances and the other characters of La colmena are blissfully ignorant of the futility of their own lives and of the way that time is passing and, as it does, is steadily gnawing away at their already barren existence:

La mañana sube, poco a poco, trepando como un gusano por los corazones de los hombres y de las mujeres de la ciudad; golpeando, casi con mimo, sobre los mirares recién despiertos, esos mirares que jamás descubren horizontes nuevos, paisajes nuevos, nuevas decoraciones.

La mañana, esa mañana eternamente repetida, juega un poco, sin embargo, a cambiar la faz de la ciudad, ese sepulcro, esa cucaña, esa colmena...

!Que Dios nos coja confesados!

Chapter 6 P.277.

These people of the city are apparently trapped by time and environment; in the first they are swept forward toward death and possible oblivion and their lives seem futile and very often without even a gesture of living - they merely exist. The environment in which they are caught up is the city, but it is not the city that makes it hostile, for in La colmena the city of Madrid is merely the frame-work within which its people struggle with each other, themselves and the inclemencies of life. These inclemencies, such as the shortage of food, lack of human charity and general suspicion of one's neighbour may well be the result of the atmosphere that the Civil War has left. Certainly the general shortage of material goods for those without the money to buy on the 'blackmarket' is the consequence of three years of war and destruction in Spain and the ensuing period of economic standstill. However, the lack of charity, the eroticism and general loss of human dignity seen in La colmena suggests a certain malaise that may be a latent part of the human make-up that manifests itself when life becomes difficult and obliges the individual to suffer privations and make sacrifices. If philanthropy is shown to have become almost a lost cause in this novel the reader must try to decide whether this is the result of the difficulties of an era in the history of Spain or whether man is basically a selfish

and uncharitable animal. For this reason, a study of the society of 1942 Madrid and the atmosphere that overshadows that society is necessary.

## 2. Society in 1942 Madrid.

Although the action of La colmena takes place in 1942, some three years after the termination of the Spanish Civil War, the novel contains scarcely any reference to the war itself. The influence that the Civil War has had and may continue to have on the characters of the novel is shown by insinuation rather than by direct reference. For example, there is no mention of the siege of Madrid nor of the destruction of parts of the city that this involved. The effects of the war are made known in other ways with the emphasis on its effect on the way of life of those who survived it. There is the hunger that many are suffering, the 'black market', the occasional description of a wound sustained during the hostilities and which has left a permanent mark and above all, there is the ever-present feeling of mistrust and suspicion that the people of Madrid harbour and often demonstrate.

For most of the characters seen in La colmena times are hard and often brutally so. There is little money to be had for the majority, little food and little pleasure; perhaps the sole exception to this last being sexual pleasure - but

only when it is cheap or costs nothing at all. In the atmosphere of suspicion and eroticism that the novel portrays, love is a rarity and charity an equally out of place phenomenon. For these people struggling to survive in a hostile social environment, love and charity are luxuries that can ill be afforded. To survive one must need to be both as cunning and expedient as the next man. Ideals are for the poet; for the man or woman who wishes to eat they are an unnecessary burden.

La colmena is a panorama of Madrid society in 1942.

The city itself has a strange role in the novel; its presence is felt rather than graphically described. The main concern of the author is with the people who dwell in the city and the city is the common factor in all of their lives - the battle-field on which they struggle for survival. The people of the city are seen living out their insignificant and monotonous lives in the bars, apartments, Cafés or 'casas de citas' of what could be almost any large modern city. However, three years before this particular city had been at the centre of a bloody civil war and in 1942 its inhabitants had still yet to recover from the emotional and physical upheaval that the war had caused. The strength and morale of many had been sapped by the conflict and its resultant hardships. Understandably, the baser instincts were now in

control of many of these people whose sole aim was to survive, and, this being achieved, to make life as tolerable as possible.

In La colmena there are some three hundred characters who are seen for a short period of a few days, leading, we assume, the sort of existence that is normal and natural to them in their particular circumstances. As the author himself points out:

Esta novela mía no aspira a ser más - ni menos, ciertamente - que un trozo de vida narrado paso a paso, sin reticencias, sin extrañas tragedias, sin caridad, como la vida discurre, exactamente como la vida discurre.

Nota a la primera edición.

The opening chapter of La colmena, an afternoon scene in the Café of doña Rosa, shows a section (middle-class and below) of Madrilenians at leisure. The people are in that particular place at that particular time through habit or routine and the impression conveyed is one of stagnation and monotony. Even the children present are victims of this boredom and lethargy and the very act of trying to combat this has become boring in itself:

Son dos niños ordenanistas, consecuentes, dos niños que juegan al tren, aunque se aburren como ostras, porque se han propuesto divertirse y, para divertirse, se han propuesto, pase lo que pase, jugar al tren toda la tarde.

Here, the monotony is relieved only by the thunder of doña Rosa's voice, the fainting of a young boy trying to write poetry or the client who cannot pay for his coffee and is therefore ejected. But these are merely brief intervals of activity and soon things return to normal; the languid conversations are resumed and the clients look wearily about the Café or at each other.

This Café of doña Rosa is, in many ways, a microcosm of the city and possibly of contemporary Spanish society. Doña Rosa is the absolute ruler within this, her domain. She is also the typical and conservative property owner whose interests would be best safeguarded in a right-wing regime. Her greatest fear would be of Socialist revolution and the public and communal ownership that this could possibly entail. She would know only too well that prior to the Civil War, both Communists and Socialists had put into practice sporadic and generally unworkable schemes of communal and co-operative ownership. However, the message of such schemes would have been clear, but with the Nationalist victory the 'doña Rosas' could regard themselves as safe, for the time being at least. It was thus patently in the interest of people like her to see that the right-wing regime continued.

Doña Rosa's admiration for and preoccupation with the

fortunes of Adolf Hitler in the European war, in 1942 at a critical stage, reflect the anxieties and sentiments of many Spaniards of the Right that should the Axis be defeated, then the democracies and Russia might consider afresh the totalitarian government in Spain with a view to removing it:

A doña Rosa le preocupa la suerte de las armas alemanas. Lee con toda atención, día a día, el parte del Cuartel General del Führer, y relaciona, por una serie de vagos presentimientos que no se atreve a intentar a ver claros, el destino de la Wehrmacht con el destino de su Café.

Chapter 1 Ps.67-68.

Doña Rosa is the Führer of her Café; she has complete control over those on her premises, especially her staff, on whom she seems to take a sadistic delight in showing that she is indeed their manipulator. She subjects them to constant streams of abuse and a generally intimidating attitude; above all, she is exhilarated with the power that she possesses and can demonstrate:

Doña Rosa, entre sorbo y sorbo de ojen, habla sola, en voz baja, un poco sin sentido, sin ton ni son y a la buena de Dios.

-Pero quien manda aquí soy yo, ¡mal que os pese! Si quiero me echo otra copa y no tengo que dar cuenta a nadie. Y si me da la gana, tiro la botella contra un espejo. No lo hago porque no quiero. Y si quiero, echo el cierre para siempre y aquí no se despacha un

café ni a Dios. Todo esto es mío, mi trabajo me costó levantarlo.

Doña Rosa, por la mañana temprano, siente que el Café es más suyo que nunca.

-El Café es como el gato, sólo que más grande. Como el gato es mío, si me da la gana le doy morcilla o lo mato a palos.

Chapter 6 Ps.274-275.

Thus, as with Hitler, power, even on this comparatively small scale, has become an obsession and the dominating factor in an individual's life.

The clients of the Café are a mixture of 'haves' and 'have nots'. Of the former there is, for example, the printer don Mario de la Vega; he undoubtedly lives comfortably and is pleased to be in a position of power with the jobless Eloy and is unable to resist a little sport with him:

-!Buen puro se está usted fumando, amigo!

.....

-¿Quiere usted fumarse uno?

-!Hombre...!

Vega sonrió, casi arrepintiéndose de lo que iba a decir.

-Pues trabaje usted como trabajo yo.

Chapter 1 P.33.

Then there are those whose lives are far from comfortable, but who often strive to conceal their hardships. One of these is Elvira, the prostitute who has seen much better times and now lives a life of pretence - pretence that she is still able to choose her male friends and also that she is eating

satisfactorily; but as the author informs the reader:

La señorita Elvira lleva una vida perra,  
una vida que, bien mirado, ni merecería la  
pena vivirla. No hace nada, eso es cierto,  
pero por no hacer nada, ni come siquiera.

Chapter 1 P.27.

There is don Leonardo Meléndez, whose financial ventures end in disaster and who, seemingly unconscious of this degradation, owes the bootblack Segura, a fortune. Don Jaime Arce is equally unfortunate or foolhardy in the financial sphere, and now spends his time in the Café of doña Rosa in as sterile a way as any of the other clients. Martín Marco is unable to pay for his coffee; the young poet faints, presumably due to lack of nourishment and general self-neglect.

This, then, is a glimpse of a section of Madrid society - a group of people who, at first sight, have only one thing in common, and that is that they frequent the same Café at usually the same time. They are the 'bees' of La colmena, but unlike the insects of this name, they are far from industrious and fail to do anything constructive. Rich and poor alike give an impression of decadence, stagnation and general spiritual poverty. Doña Rosa's Café is the starting point of Cela's narrative and also, for many of those present in the opening chapter, it is the hub of their lives.

From this Café the progress of one of these characters,

Martín Marco, is at first followed, and then, gradually, other characters may be linked, followed into their homes, places of work (and this applies to the minority), and familiar haunts in various parts of the city. Their hopes, disappointments, problems and also occasional moments of pleasure will be laid bare to the reader as events unfold and the inhabitants of the city find themselves confronted with the harsh realities of existence. A few are fairly fortunate; doña Rosa is the person of power within her particular domain, and like those others in the novel who have money in a society that is, for the most part, without it, she receives no mercy from the author. Others, the dreamers, are also satirised for their impracticality in an environment that necessitates expediency and exertion. Very few are shown in a sympathetic light; that is as having both moral fibre and a realistic approach to life in 1942 Madrid. Life is the challenge to the individual in La colmena; it is undoubtedly hard, but some face up to the problems and privations better than their fellows. Young and old alike, rich and poor, face common problems - survival and monotony.

As might be expected, the inclemencies of life in 1942 Madrid assail the young and innocent. However, if the young are to survive and be given the chance to wait upon better times to come, then they must soon lose this innocence. These inclemencies, like death, are by no means confined to

a particular age group or a particular morality. The gypsy boy who sings in the streets - about six years of age we are informed - has been forced prematurely to adjust himself to his social surroundings and then undertake the struggle for survival:

El niño no tiene cara de persona, tiene cara de animal doméstico, de sucia bestia, de pervertida bestia de corral. Son muy pocos sus años para que el dolor haya marcado aún el navajazo del cinismo - o de la resignación - en su cara, y su cara tiene una bella e ingenua expresión estúpida, una expresión de no entender nada de lo que pasa. Todo lo que pasa es un milagro para el gitanito, que nació de milagro, que come de milagro, y que tiene fuerzas para cantar de puro milagro.

Chapter 2 P.83.

The problems confronting the people of La colmena are those that the quest for survival presents. The first and basic necessity is money. The gypsy boy sings to obtain money so that he may eat and therefore live. Roberto González has a variety of jobs so that he may support his family. Marco relies, as far as we can see, on the generosity of others to support him, even though his sister Filo can ill-afford to give. Eloy must be prepared to suffer humiliation at the hands of Mario de la Vega in order to secure work; this achieved he is informed that he will receive no work

contract. In effect he must be grateful for the opportunity to work and is, of course, only too glad to be given the chance. Victorita is prepared to sell herself in order to buy the food and medicines that will keep her novio Paco alive for longer than would have otherwise been the case. Petrita offers herself to Celestino to settle Marco's debt and she will probably never declare herself to Marco nor expect anything in return for this. Hunger and the resultant quest for money is thus the cause of the general degradation of the characters in this novel of Cela, although, in the case of, for example, Petrita, she is ennobled rather than degraded and like Filo, she is one of the few persons seen in the novel who manage to raise themselves spiritually above their fellows.

Hunger is, then, one major theme of La colmena, and another, already mentioned is sex. The eroticism of the work may be divided into several differing categories. Firstly, there is the eroticism of those who find it the sole pleasure in, or an escape from, their wretched existence; an example of this is the liaison between Petrita and the 'guardia' Julio García Morrazo - sexual union provides for them fleeting moments of security in a very insecure atmosphere. For Lola, the mistress of don Roque, some material gain will also presumably be made in the precarious relationship with

Roque, precarious because she knows full well that as soon as he becomes tired of her, she will be cast off and another found. Don Roque comes into the category of those of a middle-class background who find that erotic pursuits help to relieve the monotony of a humdrum existence and who are also able to finance, according to their means, these pursuits. Ventura Aguado is proud of his sexual conquests and content, for the moment at least, with his current liaison with Roque's daughter Julita, whilst she enjoys the clandestine nature of their meetings and also gives herself willingly in the cause of what she believes to be love, but what is more in the nature of a romantic diversion in the style of a Madame Bovary. Thus Julita finds escape from the monotonous middle-class home and environment into which she was born. Pablo Alonso is basically a warm-natured person who is easily bored; he is also mildly ostentatious with his generosity, but at least he is giving Laurita a taste of the better life that was previously unknown to her:

Laurita es guapa. Es hija de una portera de la calle de Lagasca. Tiene diecinueve años. Antes no tenía nunca un duro para divertirse y mucho menos cincuenta duros para un bolso. Con su novio, que era cartero, no se iba a ninguna parte. Laurita ya estaba harta de coger frío en Rosales, se le estaban llenando los dedos y las orejas de sabañones.

A su amiga Estrella le puso un piso en Menéndez Pelayo un señor que se dedica a traer aceite.

Chapter 2 P.81.

Those who are financially secure can, if they so desire, use their money to be very selective in their quest for sexual satisfaction. Don Mario de la Vega is able to employ the skills of doña Ramona in pursuit of Victorita. Don Francisco Robles, a doctor with a grown-up family and an unhappy, neglected wife, has the resources and inclination to buy a thirteen year old girl who will be kept in doña Celia's 'casa de citas' for his future enjoyment:

Doña Carmen vendió a Merceditas por cien duros, se la compró don Francisco, el del consultorio.

Al hombre le dijo:

-!Las primicias, don Francisco, las primicias! ¡Un clavelito!

Y a la niña:

-Mira, hija, don Francisco lo único que quiere es jugar, y además, ¡algún día tenía que ser! ¿No comprendes?

Chapter 5 P.265.

With a view to a new liaison, and marriage, Marujita Ranero contacts her former lover and the father of her twins, Consorcio López, and informs him in a cold and unemotional manner that her husband is dying:

-El tiene un cáncer como una casa; el médico me dijo que no puede salir adelante.

-Ya, ya. Oye.

-Qué.

-¿De verdad que piensas comprar el Café?

-Si tú quieres, sí. En cuanto que se muera y nos podamos casar. ¿Lo quieres de regalo de boda?

Chapter 3 P.158.

However, there are the occasional cases where love and sexual pleasure are combined and where there appears to be a genuine affection forged, perhaps, by the hostility of the environment and inclemencies of the era. Such is the case with Roberto González and his wife Filo. They both struggle for each other and for their children and their reward is the satisfaction of knowing that they have something well worth the consuming effort and privations that they must make. Thus, for them, sexual pleasure is the expression of their affection and unity in the struggle for survival:

-Sí, Roberto, es verdad. ¡Qué día más feliz mañana!

-!Pues claro, Filo! Y, además, ya sabes lo que yo digo, ¡mientras todos tengamos salud!

-Y la tenemos, Roberto, gracias a Dios.

-Sí, no podemos quejarnos. ¡Cuántos están peor! Nos ~~otros~~ otros, mal o bien, vamos saliendo. Yo no pido más.

-Ni yo, Roberto. Verdaderamente, muchas gracias tenemos que dar a Dios, ¿no te parece?

Filo está mimosa con su marido. La mujer es muy agradecida; el que le hagan un poco de

caso le llena de alegría.

Filo cambia algo la voz.

-Oye, Roberto.

-Qué.

-Deja el periódico, hombre.

Chapter 4 Ps.209-210.

Don Roberto deja el periódico.

El matrimonio se besa con cierta pericia.

Al cabo de los años, don Roberto y Filo han descubierto un mundo casi ilimitado.

-Oye, Filo, pero ¿has mirado el calendario?

-!Qué nos importa a nosotros el calendario, Roberto! !Si vieras como te quiero! !Cada día más!

-Bueno, pero ¿vamos a hacerlo...así?

-Sí, Roberto, así.

Filo tiene las mejillas sonrosadas, casi arrebatadas.

Don Roberto razona como un filósofo.

-Bueno, después de todo, donde comen cinco cachorros, bien pueden comer seis, ¿no te parece?

Chapter 4 Ps.212-213.

Filo and Roberto are among the exceptions in La colmena to the dominating tone of eroticism as an escape from the monotony that assails both wealthy and poor; an eroticism that is both dispassionate and mechanical and without tenderness..Love is something abstract and altogether too idealistic for the people portrayed in 1942 Madrid. Living in an era of uncertainty there seems to be little place or point for the long term thought or the permanent relationship.

What is important is the moment and the sensation that the moment brings, whether it be pain or pleasure. Problems and hardship are the norm for most of these people; when the opportunity for pleasure occurs it must be taken advantage of to the utmost of the individual's capabilities. Ideals, as this writer has previously mentioned, play very little part in the lives of these people, however, not without significance is the fact that the great idealist in La colmena, Martín Marco, is also the main character. His attitude and approach to life compared with that of his fellow Madrilenians is patently shown by Cela and often satirised by the author. To see if Marco's outlook leads to a more fruitful existence than that of his fellows in the novel, a study of this man and his thoughts and actions will now be made.

### 3. Martín Marco.

Of all the many characters in La colmena, none is more important than Martín Marco. In a novel with a traditional plot, Marco would be the central character, yet, because of the structure of this work, the action cannot be said to revolve completely around him. He is not a decisive factor in the lives of the others involved in the narrative and it is only with the short and mysterious 'Final' that Marco really becomes the hub of the action, and ironically, he is completely unaware of this. However, from his very first appearance in the Café of doña Rosa, the reader's attention

is summoned by Marco. Throughout the narrative his actions are pursued from time to time, whilst in the intervening periods in which he does not figure in the account, attention is often turned to those in some way connected with him. His sister Filo and her family and problems are seen; doña Rosa and the clients of her Café; Pablo Alonso and Laurita; Ventura and Julita; Celestino Ortiz. The other, characters not personally acquainted with him, share with Marco a common bond, the city and its streets, Cafés, and 'casas de citas', in fact, the common property and experience of the people of 1942 Madrid.

In the opening chapter of the novel, as the 'camera-eye' looks at the various clients present in doña Rosa's Café, Marco becomes the centre of attention, the focal point, for a short while. His failure to pay results, momentarily, in the author focussing the 'camera' on Marco and the ensuing reactions of some of the other clients to the scene are witnessed. However Marco is, at this point, no more important in the narrative than, for example, the young boy writing poetry who arouses a similar interest when he faints. It is not until the following chapter (2) that Marco receives any sort of continuous attention. His exit from the Café is shown again; he is introduced to the reader and then followed along the streets of the city:

Martín Marco, paliducho, desmedrado, con el pantalón desflecado y la americana raída, se despide del camarero llevándose la mano al ala de su triste y mugriento sombrero gris.

.....

Martín Marco, el hombre que no ha pagado el café y que mira la ciudad como un niño enfermo y acosado, mete las manos en los bolsillos del pantalón.

Chapter 2 Ps.71 and 72.

Henceforward, Marco will be shown as the individual in the hostile urban environment. He will be seen as one of the many of the 'have nots' in the narrative, disgruntled with not only his personal predicament but also with that of the society in which he finds himself. He is a thinker with Socialist tendencies - a dangerous combination in a totalitarian state and made more dangerous by the fact that the Civil War was still recent history. When Marco meets Nati Robles (Ch. 3 P.153) we are informed that before the Civil War both were members of the F.U.E. - Federación Universitaria Escolar - a left-wing student movement. This probably explains his reticence when confronted by Nati or anyone else who may have known him in his student days. Understandably, Marco may fear renunciation to the authorities of his past political affiliations. This also raises the question of his role during the Civil War. Of this nothing is known although one cannot help but suspect that this may have some

bearing on the mysterious 'Final' or even explain it. However Marco hardly appears to be a subversive element since he is a man of thought rather than of action, and even his thoughts are inconsistent and not too carefully formulated, the product of emotion rather than of logic. For his facile idealism he is justly satirised by the author:

-La vida - piensa - es todo. Con lo que unos se gastan para hacer sus necesidades a gusto, otros tendríamos para comer un año. ¡Está bueno! Las guerras deberían hacerse para que haya menos gentes que hagan sus necesidades a gusto y pueda comer el resto un poco mejor. Lo malo es que, cualquiera sabe por que, los intelectuales seguimos comiendo mal y haciendo nuestras cosas en los Cafés. ¡Vaya por Dios!

A Martín Marco le preocupa el problema social. No tiene ideas muy claras sobre nada, pero le preocupa el problema social.

-Eso de que haya pobres y ricos - dice a veces - está mal; es mejor que seamos todos iguales, ni muy pobres ni muy ricos, todos un término medio. A la humanidad hay que reformarla.

#### Chapter 2 Ps. 76-77.

As will be seen, Marco presents the picture of a thinker whose ideas are not altogether consistent and who must, at times, forsake his ideals in order to survive. Martín Marco has no fixed income but is a 'francotirador', contributing

occasionally to a network of Falange publications. Articles written had to be submitted for approval to the 'Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular' in the Calle de Génova and if accepted were subsequently published simultaneously in various provincial newspapers controlled by the Falange. For this work the writer would receive a small remuneration. In a passage of great irony Marco informs the 'guardia' who asks to see his documentation of these publications and of the singular title of his latest article:

-Colaboro en la prensa del Movimiento, pueden ustedes preguntar en la Vicesecretaría, ahí en Génova. Mi último artículo salió hace unos días en varios periódicos de provincias; en 'Odiel', de Huelva; en 'Proa', de León; en 'Ofensiva', de Cuenca. Se llamaba 'Razones de la permanencia espiritual de Isabel la Católica'.

Chapter 4 P.208.

In view of the occasional nature of this employment, Marco relies upon the generosity of others for his survival. His sister Filo gives him food and a little money when she can afford it; Pablo Alonso gives him his shelter and clothing; Celestino allows him credit; doña Jesusa gives him a bed for the night and Pura for company, and he also receives money from Ventura Aguado (Ch.3 P.130) and from Nati Robles (Ch.3 P.165). However, despite all this Marco continually expresses his disdain for charity or help:

.....No hables de tanta terneza. Me  
revienta la compasión.

Chapter 2 P.87.

Marco is, then, resentful of the help that others give him and has developed a mild persecution complex. He resents the fact that some live well whilst he must suffer 'la miseria de los intelectuales'; he is unable to see, and don Mario de la Vega would undoubtedly have told him this, that if one is to live any sort of tolerable existence then hard work is the solution. It is not until the 'Final' that Marco comes to realise that work, however monotonous or unpalatable, is indeed the only answer. But until this attitude is arrived at he seems only too content to play the martyr and use his own unfortunate position as the basis for a general hostility towards his fellows.

Marco sees himself as ever the victim of others' spite, mistrust and selfishness. Concerning the bad relations that he has with his brother in law, Roberto González, he states:

.....Yo no le tengo manía, es él quien me  
la tiene a mí. Yo lo noto y me defiendo.  
Yo sé que somos de dos maneras distintas.

Chapter 2 P.89.

He is unnecessarily hostile toward Celestino Ortiz when the latter enquires about the money that Marco owes to him; He firmly believed, as one might expect from a person of his outlook, that when Pepe ejected him from doña Rosa's Café

the waiter was only too ready to use violence on him, although the thought was furthest from Pepe's mind:

-Hoy me echaron a patadas de otro Café.

-¿Te pegaron?

-No, no me pegaron, pero la intención era bien clara.

Chapter 2 P.99.

The author, too, points out that this hostility is probably due to the fact that Marco is leading a wretched existence; were his stomach to be more adequately filled, then his attitude might well be different:

Martín la miró temeroso. Martín mira con cierto miedo a todas las caras que le resultan algo conocidas, pero que no llega a identificar. El hombre siempre piensa que se le van a echar encima y que le van a empezar a decir cosas desagradables; si comiese mejor, probablemente no le pasaría esto.

(Chapter 3 P.153)

To Marco's dislike of charity and his attitude of general hostility, may be added the self pity that he often feels and seldom tries to conceal. He seems to revel in his self-imposed martyrdom, as when he meets Nati Robles, once a fellow student and now, in contrast to Marco, prosperous and poised:

.....¿Llevas prisa?

-Pues no, la verdad; ya sabes que soy un hombre que no merece la pena que ande de prisa.

Chapter 3 P.154.

Marco is thus portrayed in La colmena as the underfed

and dissatisfied intellectual who has taken the role of a sort of conscience of the society in which he reluctantly finds himself. The author shows the suffering of the many and contrasts it with the comparative well-being of the few - the doña Rosas and don Marios of 1942 Madrid. However, in general, Cela remains detached from the plight of the unfortunate and the selfishness of those with money and, therefore, power. The author usually observes rather than comments, leaving moral judgement to the reader. Marco voices some of the obvious grievances, such as the inequality that exists, but fails, it seems, to see the real tragedy - the loss of human dignity that affects both rich and poor. The poor are forced to undergo privations and, what is worse, humiliation at the hands of those with the power, whilst these latter are themselves corrupted by their dominant role in this society. As has been mentioned previously, doña Rosa and don Mario de la Vega enjoy humiliating those in their power, whilst somebody like Victorita is forced to sell herself to buy medicines to keep her consumptive novio alive. In this last case, the girl may be ennobled in the eyes of the reader, but this cannot be said of doña Ramona who procures her or Vega who is prepared to take advantage of her unfortunate circumstances. Hunger, eroticism and the degradation resulting from these two phenomena are, then, the characteristics of this society, and

yet Marco, the supposed thinker, is too blind to see beyond 'la miseria de los intelectuales'. He fails to appreciate, for example, the honest struggle for survival of his sister Filo and her family. Marco is far too preoccupied with his state of affairs and his own petty hostilities. He despises his brother-in-law's practical outlook on life and fails to see the stupidity of his own hackneyed theories on the subject:

-A él le es todo igual y piensa que lo mejor es ir tirando como se pueda. A mí, no; a mí no me es todo igual ni mucho menos. Yo sé que hay cosas buenas y cosas malas, cosas que se deben hacer y cosas que se deben evitar.

Chapter 2 P.89.

This sort of thinking is typical of the misguided idealist-intellectual who refuses to bow his head to the expediency that his circumstances demand. He will try to shun the real problems of existence in his environment, the unglamorous but basic necessities such as food and warmth, and in so doing he becomes the pathetic and almost ridiculous figure for whom one can hold very little sympathy. Pride is his major weakness; pride that brings about his disassociation from the society of his fellows and contempt for any sort of help proffered even though this help is often accepted. The pride and principles of the man are shown by

the author to be foolish and inconsistent and detrimental to Marco's physical and mental state. Marco suggests that he is concerned with the prevalence of social injustice, but probably he is more preoccupied with the treatment that he, personally, receives from his fellows. When Martín Marco speaks of equality in society (Ps.76-77) one comes to suspect after a fuller acquaintance with him that he speaks not out of altruism but rather thinking in terms of the benefits for him that this social equality might entail.

Marco is then possibly selfish and certainly proud, and this latter vice costs him dear and may even sabotage any sort of serious view of his role and attitude. With a flourish he returns to the Café of doña Rosa merely to show that he is now able to pay for what he consumes and is therefore not the vagrant that his earlier failure to pay (Chapter 1) may have suggested to doña Rosa and the clients present at that time.

-Me quedan ocho duros y pico - piensa -; yo no creo que sea robar comprarme unos pitillos y darle una lección a esa tía asquerosa del Café.

.....

.....El camarero se le acerca.

-Hoy está rabiosa; si lo ve va a empezar a tirar coces.

-Allá ella. Tome usted un duro y tráigame café.

Una veinte de ayer y una veinte de hoy, dos cuarenta;

quédese con la vuelta; yo no soy ningún  
muerto de hambre.

.....

-Que venga el limpia.

-Bien.

Martín insiste.

-Y el cerillero.

#### Chapter 5 Ps.247-248.

Then, ironically, follows the loss of the twenty five pesetas; a combination of circumstances, originally precipitated by Marco's pride, have resulted in further misfortune for him. As a result of this Nati will not receive a present and Martín no doubt feels that fate as well as society is now persecuting him.

Finally, and again ironically, when Marco does decide to take hold of himself and adopt some sort of practical outlook to life it seems as if it is already too late for him. When we see him for the last time, in the 'Final', something is about to explode over his head. Whatever this is, serious or otherwise, possibly something to do with his present activities or connected with the Civil War, or both, it is left unexplained by the author. Perhaps the explanation was to come with another novel in the series Caminos inciertos. However, speculation apart, the interesting and ironical point of the 'Final' is that Marco, for the first time really at the centre of the stage, is completely unaware of this possible

danger to his person. Whilst those whose help he had so disdained in the past make frantic efforts on his behalf, Marco wanders blissfully through the outskirts of the city, in an atmosphere of relative calm, rethinking his attitude to life and, at last, seeing things in their true perspective:

-Sí, me voy a organizar. Trabajar todos los días un poco es la mejor manera. Si me cogieran en cualquier oficina, aceptaba. Al principio, no, pero después se puede hasta escribir, a ratos perdidos, sobre todo si tienen buena calefacción. Le voy a hablar a Pablo, él seguramente sabrá de algo. En Sindicatos se debe estar bastante bien, dan pagas extraordinarias.

Final P.290.

Martín has also changed his view of war as the great social equaliser (Chapter 2 P.77) and now sees it more in terms of human suffering, although he is still concerned, and probably erroneously, with the cultural stagnation that he believes that war causes:

-Esto de la guerra es la gran barbaridad. Todos pierden y ninguno hace avanzar ni un paso la Cultura.

Final P.291.

Marco's change of heart is thus by no means sudden and total. He may acknowledge that war, for instance, causes a great deal of misery to all concerned, whether at the front or in the city beyond the zone of battle, whether soldiers or civilians, young or old, innocent and guilty. Also war often leaves

its terrible aftermath; this is seen and felt in the Madrid that Marco and his fellows inhabit. The Civil War has passed and yet it has left its traces on the people who were both directly and indirectly involved. These traces are spiritual as well as physical; a wound sustained in the hostilities may have left a permanent mark for all to see and associate with the past horror, but more disturbing are the inner marks that the war has left. In general society has become callous, suspicious and selfish. In La colmena the Civil War is seldom mentioned, but what cannot be ignored are the scars of degradation, hostility and loss of human dignity that it has bequeathed as its most disturbing memorial. There are occasional signs of hope from people like Filo and Roberto, Ramón the baker or Petrita and perhaps most significant of all, in the 'Final' when many of Marco's acquaintances are genuinely concerned for his well-being and, more important, making a combined effort to protect him. With time, the people of La colmena may still have come to realise that the danger to themselves was not from the authorities, but rather from within themselves, born of an attitude that if allowed to develop, could be just as destructive as any political conflict or oppression.

### Conclusion.

One of the most striking features of the three novels that have been discussed is the breakdown, to a varying degree in each, of social and human relationships that they reflect. La familia de Pascual Duarte, Nuevas andanzas y desventuras de Lazarillo de Tormes and La colmena seem to be so dissimilar at first sight and indeed so they are in setting and structure; however, thematically, these three novels of Camilo José Cela have much in common. In each is seen the individual as part of and reacting to a hostile social environment, and as a result, becoming the 'loner' or 'outsider' figure.

Whatever opinion the reader adopts concerning Pascual Duarte himself, there can be no argument that his family and the other members of the rustic society that he describes, are of a generally primitive and hostile character. Cela's Lazarillo is confronted with this same hostility, although he does not find himself responding in a similarly brutal and violent manner. Rather, he accepts the rigours of life and comes to develop, like Duarte, the view of a hostile destiny as the controlling factor in human life. Pascual Duarte may, of course, use this belief in the impotence of the individual in the face of destiny, as a means of unburdening himself of the moral responsibility for his actions.

However, Lazarillo has no such need; he has remained completely passive and resigned to the fact that he may well be a mere puppet of fate, forever intended to suffer the inclemencies of life and his fellow man. In any case, Lazarillo comes to a conclusion concerning man and his destiny purely as the result of his bitter experiences; he has no need to state a belief in the power of destiny merely in order that this may possibly avoid another's condemnation of the narrator's actions. Lazarillo has done nothing that could incur criticism or condemnation.

Whatever the reader's personal feelings toward Pascual Duarte and Lazarillo, and this writer believes that the latter is a far more sympathetic character in every way, it must be accepted that if these two men do genuinely believe in a cruel and omnipotent destiny, then La familia de Pascual Duarte and the 'Nuevo Lazarillo' - ignoring for the moment the society portrayed in these novels - are completely pessimistic and depressing in tone. In both novels, destiny appears to frustrate every attempt that either of the protagonists make to attain stability or happiness in life. Duarte shows himself to be forever hounded in this way; of the two children that he fathers, the first is not even born, whilst the second survives its birth by only a few months. He is frustrated in his desire to escape to the Americas and when he returns home after this, his optimism and belief

that he can start life anew is soon shattered when he finds Lola pregnant by another. Duarte's expressions of violence may well be his desperate reaction to the frustration that continually seems to enshroud him; the act of matricide that closes his account being the last and major attempt to break free of the shackles of unhappiness and frustration personified in his mother. But this act seems to be of little avail, for even fourteen years after this crime the narrator finds himself back in jail and awaiting his own demise. Perhaps by this time Duarte has every reason to believe in the power of destiny and then, when he comes to write his story, may see that ironically it could be of some benefit to him by bearing the ultimate responsibility for his actions.

Lazarillo is also continually hounded by society and, in his own mind at least, destiny. His life is a long process of suffering, and, when the chance of happiness or relief appears, Lazarillo soon has it snatched from his grasp. The contentment and tranquility that he experiences with Marie during their stay with don Federico is short-lived and the boy finds himself once more travelling Pascual Duarte's "camino de los cardos y de las chumberas".

A similar frustration is witnessed in La colmena, although society rather than destiny is responsible. The hostility of one's fellow man permeates this novel as it does the others, however the tone is different. Physical brutality is replaced

here by a general selfishness and lack of charity. People do not cudgel each other but rather remain indifferent when the phenomena of need or suffering present themselves, as they frequently do. There is an almost total feeling of breakdown and despair where human relationships are involved; Roberto and Filo are amongst the few exceptions to this and their marriage suggests that a worthwhile relationship can exist despite material and social difficulties. But most of the other characters have renounced the struggle and retreated into an attitude of lethargy and apathy. Those with money and power are able to exploit those without either of these, whilst all are assailed by the monotony of existence and are often unaware of this. For the majority hunger and survival are the immediate problems of life and leave little room for ideals or philanthropic concerns. Eroticism is an obvious means of escape for rich and poor alike; the only difference being that the former are able to be more selective in pursuits of this nature. As in La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes of 1554 love and ideals are subordinated to expediency and the basic exigencies of the present circumstances of the individual. Time marches relentlessly on over the heads of a people who are playing out their insignificant lives oblivious to the futility of their existence. The struggle for survival in adverse circumstances does not ennoble the vast majority of these people but rather denigrates them.

However, by the time that the action of La colmena reaches its conclusion a faint glimmer of hope is appearing, although even this is accompanied by a possible note of further frustration and therefore pessimism. Marco decides to reorganise his life and possibly shed some of his hazy ideals and obsessions. This, in itself represents an encouraging change of heart in a man who now seems ready to face squarely the problems that confront him and his society instead of living in his own subjective world of suspicion and hostility toward his fellow man. This former attitude of Martín Marco was one born of an awareness of his own deficiencies, the culpability for which he projected onto his fellows, similar in many respects to Pascual Duarte's assertion, sincere or otherwise, that destiny, heredity and social environment were responsible for his wretched existence. It would be too much to hope that all of the characters in this novel might similarly attempt to put their own house in order for material conditions would probably prove too difficult for this. But at least one man is taking a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, however, and here the tone of pessimism may prevail, as the reader and some of Marco's acquaintances know, something unknown seems likely to frustrate his plans. Time frustrates man as does money and lack of materials in La colmena and now, in the 'Final', something else seems ready

to foil the desires of this particular individual. Whatever this is, is purely a matter for conjecture, the important thing is that at last Marco has adopted the right frame of mind and also, and significantly, a small section of Marco's society is cooperating solely in the interest of helping another in need.

In the three novels studied intimate human relationships have not been described; rather the interaction of society and the individual, and this has been shown from a depressing and pessimistic angle. It is possible that with the 'Final' of La colmena an altruistic motivation in human relationships is seen re-emerging after being long buried in the chasms of the human mind. This is indeed only a possibility, but at least enough to give rise to a certain feeling of cautious optimism where none may previously have existed.

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