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A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF VIOLENCE

by

María Cristina Rojas de Ferro

*A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy*

Department of Political Science

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

April, 1994

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submitted by

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 22, 1994

**To Mauricio Ferro
keen reader,
Discerning critic and
companion of over 20 years.**

***In memoriam*
Ernesto Rojas and Magdalena de la Torre
- mis viejos.**

ABSTRACT

A Political Economy of Violence deals with the relationship between violence and the development of capitalism. This dissertation asks the question of why violence has been an integral feature of capitalist development in the third world. After pointing out the shortcomings of political economy and previous studies on violence to provide an adequate answer, a different political economy of violence is proposed.

The concepts of 'political economy' and 'violence' are provided with a broader meaning. Political economy includes other forms of production and accumulation than simply those of 'things'; violence incorporates more than its purely phenomenal realm. Three main moments of violence: representation, manifestation and resolution replace the conception of violence as a phenomenal event. Epistemologically, the concept of 'regime of representation' makes it possible to account for the encounter between things and meanings, between local and external representations. The concept of regime of representation also accommodates processes of exchange between the self and the other, between the present and the past, between a period and the next. Methodologically, an interpretation of history in terms of regimes of representation supposes a dialogical process facilitating these encounters and exchanges.

This perspective is applied to explore a pivotal period in the history of Colombia, 1849-1878. It was in those years that an attempt was made both to establish Colombia's identity as a civilized and democratic nation and to develop its economy through *laissez-faire* capitalism. The regime of representation was centred on the "will to civilization". The imaginary of the civilization-deprived nation, where individuals were envisioned as lacking a constructive vision, discharged the idea of a self-regulatory principle. The political economy was centred in the drive to accumulate civilization's secrets: morality and instruction, under the conviction that they will be followed latter by the accumulation of wealth. In Colombia, the formation of gender, class, racial and regional identities within this regime of representation arrested the formation of an "indifferent" capitalist labour market. The 'will to civilization' did not allow an isolation of the political from the economic and thus inhibited the consolidation of a nation-state.

The analysis of Colombia also challenges conventional understanding of the relationship between violence and the development of capitalism. Violence in the relations of production was related to the violence of representation which established a hierarchical grading of individuals along racial and gender identities.

The Colombian case is also crucial for an understanding of the relationship between violence and the formation of foundational myths. The analysis of Colombia allows the author to uncover the linkages between the formation of individual and regional identities, capitalist development and the formation of the nation-state. The will to civilization precluded the formation of the nation, the state was deprived of the monopoly of force and law emerged as a site for infinite acts of private revenge.

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More than an individual contribution, this dissertation is a familial venture. Juliana Rojas and Ariel Pakes provided me with the wisdom needed to keep writing without confusing the trivial with the substantial. There is no page in this dissertation which had not been carefully examined and touched by my sister María Magdalena Rojas. I have no words for her generosity and dedication. My two sons Gonzalo and Rodrigo Ferro, have played perhaps the most difficult role. They grew and kept smiling despite my not being there. Thanks.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Colombia has often been seen as "exceptional" due to the way in which democracy and violence have advanced apace. Thus, unlike other countries in Latin America, Colombia has consolidated electoral competition as the means to accomplish changes in government. The electoral process took root during the mid-nineteenth century when the Liberal and Conservative parties emerged. Since then, Colombia has avoided the long periods of military rule which have plagued many other parts of Latin America. Nevertheless, between the War of Independence in 1810 and the end of the nineteenth century, nine civil wars and nearly fifty regional conflicts marred the attempt to consolidate Colombia as a nation. With the opening of the twentieth century, the form and pattern of violence changed. Civil wars were replaced first by conflicts over land and by workers' struggles and then, towards the middle of the century, by the eruption of what has become known as *La Violencia*.

The existence of violence in other Third World contexts has, of course, been acknowledged in the literature about development. "Bloody Taylorism", "savage capitalism", "praetorianism" and "bureaucratic-authoritarianism" are some expressions designed to capture an element of violence in Third World development. Yet violence is too frequently treated as a simple deviation from the general premises of political economy.¹ Thus the discipline's major premises were left intact, and the crucial

¹ A basic premise within the field of Development Studies which flourished after the Second World War was the 'abnormal' character of the development process, as reflected in the concern with problems such as 'political instability' and 'underdevelopment'. Explanations about the 'failure' of capitalism were centred in this exceptionality of the Third World. Critics of development studies have argued that the act of defining third world countries as different - of discursively constructing their difference - involved domination. Said's criticism of the way the Orient was constituted as well as dominated by Europe and

problem, the relationship between the production of 'things' and their surrounding violence has remained inexplicit.

This thesis aims to develop a **political economy of violence** that will enable us more adequately to grasp the specificities of Colombian history, and more broadly, to situate violence as part of the capitalist development process. In order to capture the linkage between political economy and violence, this thesis proposes a method of analysis centred on the notion of *regime of representation* as the place of encounter of those events that in a phenomenal approximation may well appear as discontinuous. A regime of representation is a space of encounter where the past, the present and the future meet; where the self becomes different from the other; and where events are linked together and endowed with meaning. The regime of representation is a space of presences and absences; it includes what appears and is visible, as well as that which is suppressed and condemned to remain in the backstage. A regime of representation extends in time and space through the construction of meanings which are relatively fixed and distinct, so that the present can be differentiated from the past, and the self differentiated from the other. Regimes of representation may be able to fix these differences and endure, or, on the contrary, contradictions may become evident and the regime of representation may be

Escobar's concept of developmentalization exemplify this charge that the disciplines of development and implicitly a political economy more broadly served to reproduce Imperial pretensions. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); Arturo Escobar, "Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of his Work for the Third World", *Alternatives*, 10 (1984-85); see also Homi K. Bhabha, "Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism", *The Politics of Theory*, eds. Frances Barker et al (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983). David Slater "The geopolitical framework and the enframing of development theory", *Trans. Inst. Br. Geography*, 10, (1993).

transformed or disappear. The encounter between political economy and violence happens within regimes of representation. Moreover, political economy is not immune from the violence engendered in the production and circulation of meanings. To conceive of relations between individuals as relations between things², for example, is to exert violence. To naturalize a hierarchical order (sexual, racial or geo-political) or standard of reasonableness (rational economic man) is to suppress alternative ones.

This dissertation seeks to go beyond the limitations of conventional political economy to address the relationship between capitalist development and violence. Such a political economy requires the abandonment of a phenomenal definition of both 'political economy', in the restricted sense of the production and circulation of 'things', and of violence, restricted to observable manifestations like wars. Processes of production and exchange are examined as explicitly embedded within broader systems of meanings. Political economy encompasses production, circulation and exchange not solely of 'things' but also of meanings. As Shapiro maintains, the production and circulation of meanings are 'repressed economies' immanent in cultural practices even though they and the systems of power and authority to which they are related remain concealed and fugitive.³ As with the concept of 'political economy', the notion of violence is broadened

² Capitalism is a system of exchange in which, as Marx recognized, the processes of exchange between individuals are thought as exchange of things. Marx referred to the development of money relations as "universal prostitution". Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Penguin Books, 1973), 163.

³ Michael J. Shapiro, *Reading the Postmodern Polity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 54.

here so as to formulate a relationship between politics, economics and violence. Usually violence is defined as "any observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are seized or physically damaged in spite of resistance".⁴ When restricted to 'observable interactions' more subtle aspects of violence, such as the violence implicit in naming, interpreting and qualifying are ignored. Three main moments of violence: representation, manifestation and resolution, replace the conception of violence simply as a phenomenal event, a manifestation. In *A Political Economy of Violence*, violence is approached neither as a derivative nor as a purely manifested phenomenon. Recognizing these three moments of violence and elaborating the linkages between the symbolic or represented dimension of violence, its manifestation and its resolution (the capacity to end violence by means other than force) problematizes the appearance of a direct relationship between cause, manifestation and solution to violence.

In the development of capitalism, a diversity of meanings emerged. In the early stages of capitalist development, 'interest' and 'civilization' were linked together so as to make possible the separation of the 'economy' from the 'political'. In the capitalist system, the representation of 'undifferentiated' individuals (Marx), whose search for interest would lead to the wealth of the nation (Adam Smith), held a central position. Traditional studies in political economy have paid inadequate attention to the representational dimension in the study of the development of capitalism. By seeing capitalism primarily as a means

⁴ Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, (New York: Random House, 1978), 176.

for the production or circulation of things, the linkage between capitalism and violence was rendered obscure.

This perspective will be used to explore a pivotal period in Colombian development, 1849 - 1878. It was in this period that an attempt was made both to establish Colombia's identity as a civilized and democratic nation and to develop its economy through *laissez-faire* capitalism. As will be seen, the regime of representation was centred on the "will to civilization". The formation of gender, class, racial and regional identities within arrested the formation of an "indifferent" capitalist labour market as well as the isolation of the political from the economic and thus inhibited the consolidation of a nation-state.

Colombia has often been seen as an "exception" to stories of development given the extent to which violence and democracy have advanced apace. At the same time, the political has been seen as severed from the economic, so as to make possible the assertion that "violence is the flipside of Colombian democracy,"⁵ or that, in Colombia, 'politics does not correspond to the economic process'. Rather than considering Colombia as an anomaly as seen through the lens of traditional political economy, this dissertation uses Colombia's experience to question the premises supporting predominant theories of both violence and political economy.

⁵ Daniel Pécaut, "Guerrillas and Violence", in *Violence in Colombia, the Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, eds. C. Berquist et al (Wilmington, Delaware: SR books, 1992), 217.

Colombia differs from other Latin American countries in that there have not been long periods of military dictatorships. In the 20th century the country experienced only four years of military rule (1953 - 1957), and even today, the Liberal-Conservative dichotomy dominates political understanding. Despite a tradition of democratic electoral competition, Colombia is remarkable not only for the persistence of violence but also for its particular representation of violence. Violence has designated historical periods, named particular actors, and legitimated counter-violence strategies. Entire periods in the history of the country have been called *la(s) violencia(s)*. *La Violencia* designates a period of eight years (1949 - 1957) in which it is estimated that 180 000 people (2% of the population) were killed, nearly 400 000 plots of land were abandoned and 2 million people were displaced from their land. Like the civil wars of the 19th century, *La Violencia* took the form of a bipartisan conflict between Liberals and Conservatives, but it lacked the military structure of a civil war. Contemporary violence is referred to as *las violencias*, the plural expression emphasizing the diversity and changing forms of violence.⁶ It has been characterized by its 'multivariety',⁷ having a socio-economic, political, cultural, regional, and lately, a drug-related dimension. A government commission refers to the situation in the 1980s as a 'superimposition' of violent acts whose forms include the

⁶ Gonzalo Sanchez differentiates the civil wars of the nineteenth century from *las violencias*, as follows: "What was typical of the civil wars is that segments of the ruling class took part in them, supplying not only political, but also military command... [In contrast to the civil war, in "la violencia" of 1946-1957] the ruling class provided the ideological conduct, while the military conduct of the fighting was assumed by the people, and by the peasantry in particular... In the new phase [after 1977] the ruling classes lost both the orientation and management of ideology, and also political and military command". Gonzalo Sanchez "Los Estudios sobre la Violencia: Balance y Perspectivas", in *Pasado y Presente de la Violencia en Colombia*, (Bogotá: CEREC, 1986), 12 - 13.

⁷ Expression used by A. Camacho, "La violencia en Colombia: Elementos para una Interpretación", *Revista Foro*, (June, 1988).

organization of private armies, the private settlement of accounts, the rise of so-called self-defense groups, terrorism, death squads, and the organization of cleanup operations against juveniles, petty criminals, prostitutes, vagrants, and homosexuals.⁸

The discourse on *la(s) violencia(s)* subsumes a number of small, non-represented or invisible violences. An element of elusiveness regarding the authorship of violence appears in both popular discourse and in fiction. Violence has taken on an identity of its own, turning itself into an actor: *la violencia* is represented as an overwhelming subject capable of causing painful and devastating events. In popular expressions, for example, violence has been personalized in statements such as "*La violencia* killed my family...*La violencia* took my land". Fiction has also revealed the "subjective" aspect of this violence. Gabriel García Márquez in his novel, *The Evil Hour*, concludes the search for the author of violence with the attribution: "It's the whole town and it isn't anybody."⁹

The discourse on *la(s) violencia(s)* has had major implications in another sense. It has altered the identities of individual and collective actors by transforming their representation and the definition of the sites where violence occurs. The depiction of

⁸ The report distinguishes at least 10 different types of violence: criminal violence against the state and against private citizens; *guerrilla* violence against the state and against private citizens; state violence against guerrillas, against social movements, and against ethnic minorities; private non-organized violence; private organized violence; and private-family violence. Comisión de Estudios sobre la Violencia Colombia: *Violencia y Democracia. Informe presentado al Ministerio de Gobierno*, (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Centro Editorial, 1987).

⁹ Gabriel García Márquez, *La Mala Hora*, (Bogotá: Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1978). For the concept of *la violencia* as an actor see Carlos Miguel Ortiz Sarmiento, *Estado y Subversión en Colombia*, (Bogotá: Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1985), 22.

certain acts as violent as well as the designation of the subjects and objects of violence reveals a regularity: not only are certain acts and qualities repeatedly distinguished as more violent than others, but, at the same time, the identity of actors participating in the political arena has been subject to a process of transformation and stigmatization. Without categorization, the boundaries between *bandoleros* and *guerrilleros*, between legitimate and illegitimate violence are difficult to trace. Classifying an action as 'violent' is not an automatic replication of events: on the contrary, the term violence may be employed only to describe the resistance of the dominated groups such as women, workers, blacks or Indians. The violence inflicted upon them - the root of their resistance - may be designated under a category that obscures and dilutes its oppressiveness.

The analysis of violence in Colombia presented in this dissertation challenges views in which violence is seen merely in its phenomenal, external manifestation - such as war, open conflicts or physical violence. The unifying elements in situations of violence call into question subjectivist accounts where violence appears only as the sum of scattered events or as the result of a single subject that invented or precipitated them. The very diversity and quantity of events, actors, and places where violence is manifest is a problem for those who would explain violence as a symptom of contradictions or dysfunctions in the social system either in the form of the opposition feudalism/capitalism or tradition/modernity. Thus, the uneven distribution of violence across space, the discontinuity between the conditions under which violence becomes apparent, between its representation and its resolution, the diversity of the ways in which violence is

experienced, all these elements call into question a purely phenomenal understanding of violence. To restrict our vision to only the most easily observable dimensions of violence, the tip of the iceberg, is to sanction its accidental, casual character - and hence to place a shadow over the more permanent, subtle forms of violence. In this way the capacity of violence to constrain, define, and re-create action remains opaque to analysis.

The Colombian case not only problematizes conventional understandings of the normal interaction of democracy, modernity, constitutionality and other political indicators with violence. It also challenges conventional understandings of the relationship between **violence and the development of capitalism**. My analysis centres on the period between 1849 and 1878, a period in which the country was opened up to external markets and a *laissez-faire* economic policy was adopted. The experience with export markets, such as tobacco, indigo and quinine, ended in a series of failures, land was exhausted, technology did not improve, quality was very poor, and most of the investors ended as poor as before.¹⁰ Violence was related to the failures of Colombia's economy. Export activity was characterized by the direct exercise of violence in the process of surplus extraction.

¹⁰ The paradoxical situation is that real exports per capita increased by 120% between 1850 and 1882. But afterwards, as in the case of tobacco, the amount of exports is maintained but the price diminished by 30% and 40%. At the end of 1880s exports fell to the level of 1850. Quinine and indigo had an even shorter history of success than that of tobacco. After reaching the position of leading exporter of quinine in 1880, by the end of the decade it disappeared from the Colombian exports. See José Antonio Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial 1830-1910*.

The analysis of the 1849-1878 period is also crucial for an understanding of the relationship between violence and the formation of the nation state. At this time, Colombians were engaged in the task of imagining the nation:¹¹ Forty years had elapsed since Independence in 1810 and there was a feeling that colonial institutions still remained in the country in the form of economic, social, cultural and political institution. slavery, the state monopoly over tobacco, legislation regarding Indian common lands (*resguardos*), ecclesiastical *censos* (i.e. church liens or mortgages), and *patronato* (special power conceded by the Pope to the Spanish Crown to orient Christian civilization) were some of the colonial practices which survived Independence. The 'Generation of 1849'¹² whose leaders were born and raised in the republican era, defined their struggle as one between these Colonial institutions and democracy. Several reforms attempted to replace the old colonial institutions with republican ones. Slavery and communal Indian lands (*resguardos*) were abolished in 1851 and 1850 respectively; the state's monopoly of tobacco ended in 1850; freedom of the press and religious freedom formed part of the Constitution of 1853; universal male suffrage, federalism as well as the abolition of the *fuero ecclesiastico* and of compulsory tithe collections were also introduced in the Constitution of 1853; the correctional and judicial processes were reformed. The Liberal

¹¹ The concept of nation as 'imagined political communities' comes from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

¹² The most important representatives of this generation within the Liberal party are Miguel Samper (1825-1899), his brother José María Samper (1828-1888), José Hilario López, Manuel Ancízar (1812-1882), Florentino González (1805-1874), Salvador Camacho Roldán (1827-1900), Aníbal Galindo (1834-1901), Manuel Murillo Toro (1816-1880), and José María Rojas Garrido (1824-1883). This generation is also known as *los radicales del Siglo XIX* because of their ideological and political contribution to the period of liberal radicalism linked to the Constitution of 1863. The best representatives of the Conservative party are José Eusebio Caro (1817-1853), Sergio Arboleda and Rafael Núñez (1825-1894).

and Conservative parties were each consolidated in this period and became the catalysts for launching or opposing programs of change.¹³ The Liberal party, which remained in power most of the time, was identified as the motor of change, while the Conservatives appeared to be halting the processes of reform.

There was also a feeling of fear prompted by the prospect of the disappearance of 'old' systems of hierarchy and power. An important source of fear was related to the disappearance of slavery. Manumitted blacks were considered a threat to the white population as reflected in the attempt to draft special legislation regulating the black population, i.e. the revival of the vagrancy law in 1843. Religious freedom went hand in hand with claims about the priesthood's potential threat to Republican institutions, leading ultimately to the re-expulsion of the Jesuits from New Granada in 1850 by the Liberal President José Hilario López. Jesuit allegiance to an international order was seen as a threat to the construction of a national and liberal project. There were also fears for the the loss of self-identity on the part of the Colombian elite. This fear is reflected in the debate on the adequacy of British liberalism as the model to replace colonial institutions, defended by the Liberal Generation of 1849. In opposition, Conservatives Miguel Antonio Caro and Sergio Arboleda are the best representatives of the defense of

¹³ A characteristic of the Colombian party system is the all-embracing distinction between Liberals and Conservatives. Although most of Latin America developed Liberal and Conservative parties, only in Colombia and, perhaps, Uruguay have the original parties dominated to the present. Partisan affiliation has provided not only an element of continuity between nineteenth century violence and the period of *La Violencia*, but also a sense of identity. A scholar summarizes the overwhelming character of party identification during *La Violencia* period: "Party identification became a question of life or death. One's fate was often decided by a one-word answer to the question of which party one belonged to, and there was no such thing as neutrality". Paul Oquist, *Violence, Conflict and Politics in Colombia*, (New York: 1980), 169.

the Spanish legacy of religion and morality, considered by them to be the pillars of civilization. A more widespread fear among the mid-nineteenth century elite was *el miedo al pueblo*¹⁴ (the fear of the people). The fear of *mestizos*, Indians and blacks informed the project to be pursued by the Colombian elite. These fears accompanied the establishment of the economic basis, the foundational myths of the nation, the state, and the constitutions. They informed the predominant regime of representation and explain the main contradictions of the liberal ideal and its demise as pursued by the Colombian elite of the last century.

In post-colonial Colombia, the predominant regime of representation was the **will to civilization**. The new political parties, Liberal and Conservative, concurred that the most important goal was to promote and defend civilization, which was seen as fundamental to material progress. Party leaders proclaimed unanimously that the source of civilization was in the European Continent, and that the Independence gained in 1810 was not the beginning of a new civilization. Civilizations could neither be invented nor improvised, they agreed. European civilization furnished the model to be emulated, while indigenous practices were considered as vices to be eradicated.

¹⁴ According to historian Fabio Zambrano, this fear is central for understanding the contraction of the political system in Colombia, explaining one of the characteristic of Colombian politics: a *democracia sin pueblo* (democracy without people). Fabio Zambrano Pantoja, "El miedo al pueblo", in *Análisis. Conflicto Social y Violencia en Colombia*, Documento 53, CINEP (1989); "Contradicciones del Sistema Político Colombiano", Documento 50, CINEP (1988).

The consensus reached by Liberals and Conservatives did not extend to how to forge civilization. Liberals, who had gained the presidency in the elections of 1849, envisioned a civilization ensuing from 'sovereign individuals'. They were inspired by the image of the individual proclaimed at the heartland of *laissez-faire* doctrines. The sovereign individual was embodied in the dream of a *civilización mestiza*, in which the Indian and black colour would fade in their encounter with white descendants. Economically, Liberals endorsed the division of labour in which Europe produced manufactured goods and Colombia specialized in agricultural exports. Politically, the aim of civilization suggested, to them, the need for an enlightened democracy where both intelligence and wealth would guide the people's destiny. The Liberal party, which was able to retain power during most of the three decades following the 1849 election, introduced reforms intended to make the individual sovereign: they abolished slavery, restricted corporal punishment and decreed press and religious freedoms; they promoted free trade, abolished state monopolies and lessened the intervention of the state.

For Conservatives, the best means to reach civilization were, in order, Christian morality, enlightenment and wealth. Conservatives centred the quest for civilization on the dissemination of 'good' doctrines, which were those coinciding with the principles of Christian morality. *Laissez-faire* and the emphasis on the sovereign individual became the epitome of pernicious doctrines whose dissemination threatened Christian civilization. Conservatives were more prone than Liberals to restrict the circulation of printed material, to restrict legitimate religious practice to the Roman Catholic faith, and to

advocate more government intervention. Like Liberals they tended to support freer trade, but unlike them they strongly supported the central organization of power.

The attempts to create civilization and to build a nation were linked to civil wars and political battles. They took the form of constitutional battles between Liberals and Conservatives.¹⁵ The act of writing a Constitution concentrated the essence of nationness. During the 19th century the country had fifteen different constitutions, four written in the period under study.

In addition to the constitutional battles, four major civil wars were fought in the 30 year period between 1849 - 1878; in 1851 war broke out when a Conservative faction opposed the Liberal reform which ended slavery. In 1854 Liberals and Conservatives joined forces to end six months of dictatorship by a Liberal general who was defending the old constitution (1843) against the one approved in 1853. In 1861, Liberals went to war against the Conservative government. They accused the government of infringing the Constitution of 1858 regarding the sovereignty of the provinces. After claiming victory, the Liberals issued a new Constitution in 1863. In 1876 the Conservatives went to war alleging an infringement of the Constitution of 1863 by the government: an educational reform of national scope had been issued reversing the proclaimed sovereignty of the

¹⁵ A study of Constitutional Law in Colombia has been named "The Battle of Constitutions". See Hernando Valencia Villa, *Cartas de Batalla. Una Crítica del Constitucionalismo Colombiano*, (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987).

provinces. As a result of the war, the Conservatives were defeated, the dream of *civilization* was eroded and replaced by the image of restoration, *The Regeneración*.

These passages in the history of Colombia suggest a complex process of exchange between violence, capitalist development and the formation of the nation-state. Different forms of production exhibited different manifestations and representations of violence. Intertwined with these forms of production were a diversity of meanings accompanying the formation of racial, gender and class identities. Certain identities were considered more civilized than others, and also more capable of undertaking the project of progress. Like race and gender, regions were the object of distinctions with regard to the extent to which they were represented as violent, their place on the scale of civilization and their role in the international division of labour. Capitalist development did not exhibit an even trajectory of progress: those sites which were prosperous under colonialism were not those which prospered after independence. In this dissertation I uncover the linkages between the formation of individual and regional identities, capitalist development and the formation of the nation state.

Methodologically, an emphasis on regimes of representation brings the people's meanings, their representations, onto the stage. It brings together not only forms of production and the meanings accompanying them, but also the violence which is generated in the process of establishing identities and differences. I will use popular literature as well as constitutional and political debates to bring the nineteenth century

actors onto the stage and let them reveal the predominant regime of representation. The emphasis on regimes of representation invites us to relinquish the tendency to deduce reality from concepts such as *laissez-faire* capitalism, capitalist mode of production or development. The method discourages granting privileged status to the economic over the political, to external over internal factors, to the structural over the intentional, or to class over ethnicity or gender. On the contrary, an analysis centred on regimes of representation asks for an exchange among representations and a disclosure of the efforts to give salience to one meaning and to suppress alternative ones. Instead of asking why *laissez-faire* failed, or how the political influenced the economic, the analysis of the regime of representation looks at the form that these concepts had once they entered the universe of local representations.

A Political Economy of Violence also seeks in violence a force propelling or halting the transformation of political economies. Changes in the use of force, as Marx recognizes, were not strange to the emergence of capitalism, in the same way that the persistence of forced labour is not alien to the process of capitalist expansion in the Third World. A Political Economy of Violence deals with the violence of political economy. A restricted political economy which assumes a separation between politics and economics, universalizes the 'rational economic man' as a standard of reasonableness, or conceals the violence implicit in the meanings accompanying forms of production and circulation, is a violent political economy. Its violence ensues from the suppression of alternative political economies as well as the imposition of privileged forms of interpretation and the

silencing of alternative systems of meaning-provision. The approach adopted entails an examination of the violent way in which the political and the economic are represented and the economic and political ways in which violence is manifested.

The encounter between the formation of individual and collective identities, capitalist development and violence, formed in a regime of representation centred in the will to civilization provide the content for *A Political Economy of Violence*. Chapter II *Interpreting Political Economy*, studies the main contributions made by those who have been attracted by the paradoxical events of Colombian politics in the period under consideration, 1849-1878. The chapter considers the degree to which political economy, as traditionally understood, sheds light on the relationship between violence and the development of capitalism. Both liberal economic theory and Marxist political economy take the economy as their object of analysis, as the universe where 'things' are produced, transformed and exchanged. The problem becomes how to link this production and circulation of things with violence. The tendency has been to look for an explanation either in a sphere outside the economic or in some specificity of the Third World.

Chapter II develops the argument that we need to broaden the understanding of political economy beyond the circulation of 'things' so as to include all forms of production, transformation and exchange. Political economy, as production and exchange of things, developed with the development of capitalism, and was accompanied by a specific set of meanings. Then both were extended in time and space. Both capitalism and its political

economy were transformed in the process; the extent of that transformation and of the reciprocal effects of centre and periphery on the identity of each are still not fully understood. Here I propose a broader conception of violence which will elucidate its interaction with the expansion and transformation of capitalism and with the imagined identities of disparate nations.

Chapter III *The 'will to civilization'* argues that the regime of representation during the period, 1849-1878, was not *laissez-faire* but, rather, the 'will to civilization'. In this period the regime of representation based on the exchange of things had not yet been established. The mimetic desire to attain civilization, the **will to civilization**, was the unifying force in whose name the main reforms were made. The will to civilization was the point of encounter between the desire to overcome the colonial past and the desire to constitute an orderly society. It was the point of encounter between the 'self' and the 'other' which took the form of a barbarian-civilized dichotomy. Violence stemmed from acts of suppression from civilization, acts which excluded some from the realm of the civilized, as well as from the establishment of hierarchies and categories of civilization according to race, gender and class factors.

Chapter IV *The political economy of civilization*, traces the production, accumulation and exchange of meaning around the will to civilization. Power was concentrated in those possessing civilization's secrets: male Creole literati. Words became valuable

commodities motivating struggles over their mode of circulation (free or restricted), their authorization (divine authority or legal foundation), and strategies to control and shape them. This chapter also addresses the issue of power exercised by the actors forging the 'will to civilization'. Previous historical interpretations have pointed to the economy as the main source of power. The Colombian case reveals the limits of this interpretation. An alternative interpretation is the empowerment of certain groups during colonial times, whose power increased during the struggle for independence. This power did not emanate from the possession of material wealth; its source was the possession of the art of civilization. The literati emerge as the architects of the 'will to civilization'. Grammar and Constitutions were the main battlefield where struggles were fought.

Chapter V *The will to civilization and its encounter with laissez-faire*, focuses on the contradictory encounter between the two regimes of representation. Contrary to arguments which contend that *laissez-faire* held a hegemonic position, it is argued here that the will to civilization was the prevalent representation, entering into contradiction with *laissez-faire*'s main assumptions. The will to civilization presupposed ethnic, gender and class hierarchies that collided with *laissez-faire* principles. A free labour market presumes the presence of an 'undifferentiated' labour force. Therefore, the gender, ethnic and class hierarchies conflicted with *laissez-faire* capitalism. The idea of a self-regulatory principle did not prosper. The economy was not perceived as a separate sphere from politics, but, on the contrary, the former was subordinated to the latter. The fact that the

accumulation process was centred in the will to civilize hindered the expansion of productivity.

Chapter VI *Violence and the development of capitalism*, enquires about the relationship between two moments of violence: representation and manifestation. It illustrates how diverse representations of violence coincided with diverse manifestations of violence in relations of production. A relationship is found between the use of force in the relations of production and a hierarchical conception of individuals. By comparing several regions in terms of the degree to which labour was perceived as 'undifferentiated', the chapter establishes a relation between individual identities and processes of accumulation in capitalist development.

Chapter VII *The nation, the state and violence*, deals with the third moment of violence: its resolution. It is argued that the tension between individual/collective identities impedes the stability of the regime of representation. Manifested violence occurs when antagonisms become visible and their resolution becomes imperative. The moments when antagonisms are visible are moments of crisis in the regime of representation. The superseding of violence coincides with the emergence of a new regime of representation.

This chapter traces the connections among 'the will to civilization' and the vision of the nation, the concept of the state, and juridical institutions. It illustrates how the regime

of representation shaped, in a definite way, the forms of state, law, democracy, and the nation. Finally, the chapter illustrates the relationship between identity formation, open violence during civil wars, and the stability or crisis of regimes of representation. The will to civilization was replaced, by 1878, by the *Regeneración*, another unstable regime of representation.

Chapter VIII Conclusion: A political economy of violence, summarizes the manner in which the analysis of nineteenth century Colombia reveals what had remained in obscurity: the existence of a political economy centred in the will to civilization and the violence accompanying this political economy. The chapter illustrates the presence of two different construction of identities within the same process of capitalist expansion: where capitalism developed early, its expansion was characterized by a positive construction of identities, leading force to be displaced and replaced by an 'invisible hand'; in the Third World, on the contrary, the expansion of capitalism was characterized by a negative construction of difference. Conventional studies in political economy have ignored this representational dimension in the study of the development of capitalism.

Chapter 2

Interpreting Political Economy

To interpret our reality through schemes which are alien to us only has the effect of making us even more unknown, even less free, even more solitary.

Gabriel García Márquez (1971)

Scholars have turned to nineteenth century Latin America in search of answers to the issues of development. The situation of Latin America as the first formal colonial empire and earliest neo-colonial region, as well as the endurance of non-capitalist production relationships, has made the region a "test case" for debates about the development of capitalism.¹ In the nineteenth century, Latin America was opened up to external markets and the continent adopted *laissez-faire* principles. This makes it a relatively recent real-life experiment with which to explore hypotheses about the secrets of capitalist economic development - principally the important theoretical support for laissez-faire policies. The challenge for the supporters of one or the other argument was posed by the fact that after 150 years of linkage with the world economy and the introduction of capitalist property relations - ample time for the 'logic of capitalism' to unfold - post-colonial countries have not reversed the initial international division of labour; pre-capitalist and capitalist elements still coexist, and the use of force is still part of the process of capitalist expansion. An explanation seemed to be required.

Despite their differences, theories about the political economy of the period have uniformly sought the explanation for the failure of capitalist development in certain 'irregularities' common to the Third World, and outside the proper functioning of the economic model. A recent representative example concludes that:

¹ The idea of the XIX Century as a "test case" comes from Florencia Mallon, "Introduction", *Latin American Perspectives*, vol 13, 43, 1, (1986), 3.

The distinctive experience of Liberalism in Latin America derived from the fact that Liberal ideas were applied in countries which were highly stratified, socially and racially, and economically underdeveloped, and in which the tradition of centralized authority ran deep. In short, they were applied in an environment which was resistant and hostile, and which in some cases engendered a strong opposing ideology of conservatism."²

While arguments about the feasibility of *laissez-faire* diverged on methodological and political positions, traditional political economy analysis suggested that Latin America had specific characteristics which prevented the logic of capitalist accumulation from functioning properly. The dichotomous thinking which has characterized traditional political economy³ facilitated the argument about the 'exceptionality' of the Third World. The distinction of 'economics' and 'politics' (where the former is the aspect related to the production and distribution of 'things', and 'politics' is the place where antagonisms develop about 'who gets what') as well as the epistemological distinction between subject and object informed the discussion about capitalist development. The world of object-things becomes the reality to be studied using a 'rational economic knowledge'.⁴ The focus in the realm of production and circulation of things, as well as the universalization

² Charles A. Hale, "Political and Social Ideas," *Latin America Economy and Society, 1870 - 1930*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1989), 226.

³ For the characterization of traditional political economy I have been inspired by Craig N. Murphy and R. Tooze, "Getting Beyond the 'Common Sense' of the IPE Orthodoxy," *The New International Political Economy*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991). For a similar criticism of IPE see, in the same volume, Stephen Gill, "Historical Materialism, Gramsci, and International Political Economy".

⁴ Craig N. Murphy and R. Tooze, "Getting Beyond the 'Common Sense' of the IPE Orthodoxy," *The New International Political Economy*, 18.

of the concept of interest and its application to "all aspects of history"⁵, had the effect of concealing the linkages between capitalism and violence. An exclusive focus on the economy of 'things' marginalizes the consideration of meanings as part of political economy.

For some authors, it was the type of insertion into the world economy that had different effects in the centre and the periphery. For others, it was the combination of diverse modes of production (capitalist and pre-capitalist) which impeded capitalist expansion. Culture, values and autocratic structures were the evidence preferred by modernization scholars to vindicate the failure of *laissez-faire* in Latin America. Within the dependency, world system, or modes of production perspectives, the tendency was to locate the explanation in either external or internal, political or economic, individual or structural factors.

The multiplicity of 'tests' to which the Latin American experience was submitted has reached a dead end.⁶ The crisis of development studies has made it possible to consider

⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 165. Regarding the problematic of the universalization of the concept of interest, see also Robert Cox, "Production and Hegemony. Towards a Political Economy of World Order", in *The Emerging International Economic Order*, ed. Harold K. Jacobson and Dusan Sidjanski (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982).

⁶ This debate first appeared in David Booth, "Marxism and Development Sociology: Interpreting the Impasse," *World Development*, Vol 13, 7 (1985). The debate was joined by Stuart Corbridge, "Post-Marxism and Development Studies: Beyond the Impasse," *World Development*, 18, 5 (May 1990); N. Mouzelis, "Sociology of Development: Reflections on the Present Crisis," *Sociology*, 22:1 (1988). These new reflections on development studies have paved the way for a rejection of economism and of teleological interpretations of history. The former reject the 'economic' as the privileged site for historical explanation.

new questions, not asked before. If economic and deterministic tendencies were disregarded, the way was clear for consideration of the historical role of new forces: thus actors and their beliefs joined the conversation as factors. These had been discarded in previous explanations which had centred on structural determinants. Also, the question has come to be seen, not as revolving around the 'exceptionality' of the Third World countries, but as also involving the 'universalization' of capitalism. The search now entailed the historical conditions making possible the emergence of a new way of relating to the world and the conditions enabling its geographical expansion. Once capitalism ceased to be seen as the inexorable result of necessary laws, the central question became which historical conditions would allow its emergence as a new logic for relating to the world: the self-interested rational logic. Contrary to pre-capitalist formations where the drive for accumulation was centred on force, in capitalism, this drive is the pursuit of rational self-interest which tended to transform production in the direction of greater efficiency.⁷

A reflection on previous interpretations of nineteenth century Colombia will allow me to show the limits of traditional political economy. Between 1849 and 1876 the country

⁷ Robert Brenner maintains that what needs to be explained is the movement into qualitative change which took place in capitalism, where the logic of accumulation ceased to be the accumulation of force, and became the pursuit of rational self-interest. Brenner also argues that this transition is inexplicable in terms of rational self-interest. This is the mistake of Smith: he ends up assuming the extraordinary phenomenon that needs to be explained. In Brenner's view the transition "must be understood as an *unintended consequence* of the actions of individual pre-capitalist actors and especially the conflicts between pre-capitalist classes" Robert Brenner, "The Social Basis of Economic Development" *Analytical Marxism*, ed. John Roemer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

adopted a program of economic liberalism or openness and was inserted into the world market. This period, starting with the year in which the Liberal party gained power, has traditionally been labelled as a time of the 'unchallenged hegemony' of the principles of economic liberalism.⁸ The economic policies put in place after the mid-nineteenth century seem to confirm the consolidation of *laissez-faire* principles: the country strengthened its integration with the international market through agricultural exports. There was a broad consensus among the country's leaders about the desirability of freeing the market from governmental and institutional constraints.⁹ Civil wars, regional conflicts, and the use of force in the appropriation of surplus labour, paralleled the country's integration into the world market. By the 1870s, crises were brewing in export production, political allegiances, and the foundational model which represented the leading classes' dream for the emergent republic. The unfolding of these events has posed a paradox regarding the linkages between the adoption of *laissez-faire*, the presence of violence and the development of capitalism. A perusal of the most recent literature

⁸ The expression 'unchallenged hegemony' belongs to Frank Safford in his study of the "The Emergence of Economic Liberalism in Colombia," in *Guiding the Invisible Hand*, ed., Joseph L. Love and Nils Jacobsen (New York: Praeger, 1988).

⁹ Tariffs on imports were reduced and simplified in the reform of 1847, and in subsequent reforms carried out in 1861, 1870 and 1873. In 1847, the government promoted the privatization of tobacco, a state monopoly since colonial times. The Liberal government installed in 1849 accelerated the pace of reform. Legislation passed on May 21, 1851 abolished slavery. The law of decentralization of Indian communal land (1850) allowed Indians to sell their land. These measures were considered crucial to liberate the factors of production. In 1850 and 1851, the laws on "decentralization of rent and expenditures" were approved in favour of the provinces. Most provinces abolished the *diezmos* tax and the monopoly of *aguardiente*. These reforms are summarized in Jorge O. Melo, "Las vicisitudes del Modelo Liberal (1850-1899)," in *Historia Económica de Colombia*, ed. José. A. Ocampo (Bogotá: Siglo XXI, 1987). See also G. Molina, *Las Ideas Liberales en Colombia 1849 - 1914*, (Bogotá: Editorial Tercer Mundo, 1970), and Frank Safford, "The Emergence of Economic Liberalism in Colombia," in *Guiding the Invisible Hand*.

about this period will allow me to discuss both the events which unfolded and the limits of existing political economy analysis.

The second part of the chapter proposes some changes in the conception of political economy so as to include other forms of production, exchange and accumulation, and the meanings accompanying them. It also addresses the violence related to diverse forms of production and accumulation. The abandonment of a restricted view of violence is called for, and the representation, manifestation and resolution are considered as three moments of violence. The concept of 'regime of representation' is introduced. Epistemologically, the emphasis on regime of representation avoids interpretations of one reality from a reality which is alien to it. In that sense, an emphasis on regimes of representation allows us to consider local interpretations as well those interpretations which have been marginalized in a traditional conception of political economy.

2.1 Reading the Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Colombia

Economic motives have generally occupied the privileged ground upon which to build the history of development processes. Marxist scholars based their analysis on the determinant role that the 'economic' level plays in the formation of classes, identified as the "motor" of history. From the perspective of classical liberal political economy, the

world of 'rational' economic motivation provides the cohesive element which coordinates the wills of scattered individuals.

The unfolding of events in nineteenth century Colombia suggests, however, that history is not always driven by the dictates of economics. For various reasons, economic referents do not provide the basis upon which to ground historical analysis. First, the numerous civil wars which followed independence were motivated by a mixture of religious, ethnic, educational and regional objectives. The war of 1839, known as the "war of the monasteries" or the "war of the Generals" (*guerra de los Supremos*), erupted when the government attempted to close small monasteries, and was supported by army generals (*supremos*) disappointed with the central government. The abolition of slavery together with religious measures constituted the main motives for the war of 1851; in 1854 Conservatives and Liberals joined forces to depose a general who had overthrown the legitimate government to protest against the Constitution approved in 1853; in 1861 Liberals went to war in the name of the federal Constitution of 1853, alleging that their Conservative opponents had infringed the principles of federalism; religious and educational reforms generated the war of 1876. Racial issues also contributed to conflict and to the ritual of war. Race was a main element in the war of 1851, and in the war of 1861.¹⁰ The ways and wages of war often defied the logic of purely economic considerations. *Hacendados* financed their own armies and were declared generals, with the battalion receiving the financier's name. Money, soldiers and horses came from the

¹⁰ See chapter 7.

hacienda, and often war bankrupted *hacendados*. These Constitutional, religious, racial and educational interests cannot be reduced to class conflicts or economic forces.

Second, the strong divisions which existed between the two political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, render problematic an analysis which explains political cleavages by means of an underlying economic conflict of interests. A common tendency among students of Colombian politics has been to depict the profound enmity between Liberals and Conservatives as part of the sub-culture of the political system, where each party is presented as having its own vision, memories and traditions. Conservatives are depicted as believers in Catholicism, order, authority and a centrist model of state organization; Liberals are portrayed as defenders of federalism, less concerned with the problem of order, and as opposing control by Church or the State.¹¹ Once the existence of a fundamental division is established, this conflict enters as a main explanation for the unfolding of Colombian history. Historical causality is ascribed to political 'hereditary hatred' or the consociational character of Colombian democracy.¹² Social beliefs, cultural practices or ideologies are kept alive by reinforcing certain practices and avoiding others. Part of the historical task is to disclose these practices and the means by which beliefs emerge, are transformed or disappear.

¹¹ Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue: The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863 - 1899*, (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1981). See also Helen Delpar, "Aspects of Liberal factionalism in Colombia, 1875 - 1885", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, (May 1971).

¹² The use of 'hereditary hatred' has been the most common expression to characterize the enmity between Liberals and Conservatives. One of the most recent examples is Daniel Pecaut, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930 - 1954*, 2 vols, (Bogotá: Siglo XXI editores, 1987). A study of politics using the concept of 'consociational democracy' is Jonathan Hartlyn, *The politics of coalition rule in Colombia*, (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Another tendency is to persist in the search for economic determinants, as if economic referents were the only possible point of entry into historical interpretations. In the case of nineteenth century Colombia, several hypotheses postulate a relationship between political economy and development. Central to these hypotheses has been the establishment of the relationship between the adoption of *laissez-faire* and the presence of violence. Scholars have unanimously arrived at pessimistic conclusions about the possibility of accomplishing economic growth based on *laissez-faire* capitalism. Despite the variety of methodological assumptions, and the richness of insights about this period, these responses still do not provide a complete account of the relations between the development of capitalism and violence. As will be disclosed in what follows, these scholars have been trapped in a restricted understanding of political economy, one which grants special status to the production and circulation of 'things', and which ignores the production and circulation of meanings.

2.1.1 *Laissez-faire?* yes, but in a 'wrong' context

One way to look at the relationship between political economy and violence is to start from a conception of the 'economic' as characterized by the absence of violence, and then to attribute capitalism's failure to the violent context. This is the path chosen in William Paul McGreevey's economic history.¹³ McGreevey asks why the adoption of

¹³ William P. McGreevey, *Historia Económica de Colombia 1845 - 1930*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1971).

laissez faire principles in mid-century Colombia had a negative effect on the growth of the national economy, contradicting the predictions of liberal economic theory. The answer, he concludes, is grounded in the 'different' working conditions of economic liberalism in West European countries when compared with most of Latin America.

For McGreevey, the political arena, specifically the failure to establish 'a viable' system of government, carries the main burden for explaining the sources of conflict and for preventing economic progress. Colombian elites, according to McGreevey, pursued only egoistic ends and made the state weak. The elites were divided among themselves and tried to resolve their disagreements through war and open conflicts. The weakness of the state made the achievement of public order very difficult. The failure of economic liberalism was the result of an elite "trying to implement solutions appropriate to a homogeneous country [such as the countries of the North Atlantic] without an indigenous population, to an environment formed by **distinct societies**".¹⁴

McGreevey's explanation illustrates the ethnocentric bias of a separation of politics and economics. The concept of *laissez-faire* is not submitted to scrutiny so as to enquire about its conditions of possibility. McGreevey assumes that the problems must be explained from outside the economic arena. The use of the 'differential' character of the surrounding environment allows him to save the theoretical 'truism' of economic liberalism: when applied in the proper context, economic liberalism produces the

¹⁴ Ibid., 142. Emphasis added.

intended effects. To fall back on 'difference' as an explanatory mechanism illustrates, the ethnocentrism hidden under economistic positions. The 'different' character of the Third World explains the abnormal course of economic liberalism in that atypical environment.

Despite this limitation, however, McGreevey's political economy allows us to see the preponderance that wars and conflict had over purely 'economic' considerations. In his analysis the losses which resulted from civil wars overwhelmed the benefits from the increase in imports and national income.¹⁵

2.1.2 Searching for structural conditions in the process of development

Contrary to McGreevey's view, Frank Safford ¹⁶ challenges the assumption that Latin American elites fall on the negative side of Talcott Parsons' pattern variables.¹⁷ He

¹⁵ Ibid., 180.

¹⁶ Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976); Frank Safford, "The Emergence of Economic Liberalism in Colombia," *Guiding the Invisible Hand*. See also Frank Safford, "Reflexiones sobre la Historia Económica de Colombia, 1845-1930, de William McGreevey," in *Aspectos del Siglo XIX en Colombia*, ed. Frank Safford (Medellín: Ediciones Hombre Nuevo, 1977).

¹⁷ Parsons's analysis took the form of paired variables: disinterest/self-interest, universalism/particularism, affective neutrality/affectivity, and functional specificity/diffuseness. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, (New York: MacMillan Free Press, 1937, 1968). Sociology of development is grounded upon Parsons' pattern variables. Third World countries are catalogued as having a predominance of ascriptive, particularistic, affective and diffuse patterns of action. The failure to develop is seen as a consequence of the predominant value systems.

shows how the Colombian elite struggled to pursue the 'ideal of the practical', or the ideal of technical development, and how some changes were put into practice to encourage discipline and habits of work. Liberal reformers changed the previous methods of "coercion of the lower classes in favour of market discipline."¹⁸ These changes included support for technical training, the development of teachers' training and primary schools, and even a military school established to form 'scientific officers'. In 1867, the National University was created with an emphasis on natural sciences and engineering. In 1877, the school of engineering was converted to a military school of Civil and Military Engineering. The National Institute of Agriculture was established in 1880; in the same year the National Congress approved the creation of several mining engineering programs. In their pursuit of the practical, Colombians also sent their sons abroad for technical training. Despite these efforts, Safford concludes that the elite's orientation to technical development did not materialize. He argues that the elite's goal of "changing values without changing social structures was substantially unattainable."¹⁹

Safford's major contribution is to recover the centrality that educational issues had for the divisions between Liberal and Conservative elites.²⁰ Since early in the nineteenth century, members of the Colombian elite were concerned about how to bring about the 'moral development' of the population, an aim which included fostering the discipline of

¹⁸ Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite*, 229.

¹⁹ Frank Safford, "On Paradigms and the Pursuit of the Practical: A response," *Latin American Research Review*, 13:2 (1978), 254.

²⁰ This point will be central to chapter 3.

labour.²¹ Furthermore, a main divisive issue was the orientation of university instruction for upper-class students. On the one hand were those who wanted to channel students away from the study of law, medicine and literature, and to increase scientific education. Opposed were those who wanted to channel the students into law and humanities. Also at stake was a struggle over whether control of education would rest with the main provinces, like Bogotá and Popayán, or with small cities. The ideal of a scientific and centralized system of education gained support during the 1821-1845 period but declined in favour in the years following the Liberal triumph of 1849. Liberals sought to destroy the centralist, elitist and repressive character of the previous system.²² Schools were at the centre of political conflict in another sense as well: they were used as barracks in time of war and became the target of destruction amid the conflict between Liberals and Conservatives.

Safford also points to the ambiguity which characterized the elite's search for progress.

On the one hand, the Liberal reforms provoked violent conflict and civil wars. Liberals

²¹ Among these projects were the re-establishment of the Casa de Refugio ('workhouse') in 1833: "like its American counterpart, the House of Refuge represented an attempt to endow a semi-penal institution with constructive and corrective functions what emphasize the instruction of youths in basic literacy as well as artisan skills" Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite*, 59. A similar intent was the establishment of forced apprenticeship (*concertaje*) of vagrant or homeless youths. The Law of April 1836 defined as vagrant prostitutes and unemployed or partially employed. It also included minors who scandalized society and those students who refused to obey their teachers. Vagrants were forced into the army or to forced public labour. This law was used mainly to control manumitted blacks.

²² Safford mentions three important changes implemented: the law of May 8, 1848 undermined the centralist system by making it unnecessary for *colegios* to meet Bogotá-prescribed standards on faculty and curriculum. The law of May 15, 1850, the 'freedom of instruction' was carried to the extreme of making it unnecessary to obtain an academic degree to practice law or medicine. The law also abolished the three national universities, renaming them *colegios nacionales*, in order to reduce the distance between the cultural centres and the *colegios* in poorer provinces. Ibid.

encouraged turbulence among certain elements in the lower classes while their reforms irritated their Conservative opponents to the extent that the army attempted rebellion in 1851, and instigated several wars between 1859 and 1863. On the other hand, an ambiguous strategy appears in the erratic behaviour of the Colombian leaders. The project they undertook one year was neglected the next; their passion for political life obscured the commitment to scientific principles. Paradoxically, the most notable proponents of technical improvement were also the most disruptive politicians. It is Safford's conclusion that "what one hand built up with enlightened policy, the other devastated with the sword or undermined with political machinations."²³

A major flaw in Safford's analysis is that instead of pursuing this ambivalence as a possible explanation to the unfolding of events, he introduces the dichotomy between values and structure as a better explanation. Sometimes the weight of the explanation falls on the individuals' political irresponsibility or the degree of their commitment. But generally it is the economic and political structure which bears the bulk of the explanation: "The efforts of Colombia's political leaders to inculcate the practical were obstructed by factors beyond their control. Political and economic conditions in nineteenth-century Colombia did not provide a favourable environment for the kind of change they advocated...Unfavorable economic circumstances were complicated by the country's unstable politics."²⁴

²³ Ibid., 230.

²⁴ Ibid., 11.

While, for McGreevey, economic liberalism was frustrated by the adverse conditions of the political environment, in Safford's analysis liberal values do not work as a result of adverse economic conditions:

Given the constricted economic opportunities in most regions of the country, the goal of technical progress tended to have a certain phantasmic unreality. In the context of nineteenth-century Colombia, material improvement was an ideal abstraction, like so many others imported from the advanced countries. Colombian leaders did in some way believe in this abstraction, but in their economic milieu it represented a formal value rather than a behavioral reality.²⁵

A dichotomous political economy which severs, a priori, the political from the economic misleadingly falls into either 'politicism' or 'economism'. Inadequacies in capitalist development is explained on the basis that it was in the wrong political or economic context. The questions of how appropriate were the values to the context, or why values were in conflict do not enter as a possibility in this kind of analysis.

2.1.3 Capitalism? yes, but of a different kind...

Another understanding of the links among *laissez-faire* economics, violence and development is proposed by Jose A. Ocampo.²⁶ In his view *laissez-faire* policies were not deliberately chosen by Colombian leaders. *Laissez-faire* "was the result of concrete

²⁵ Ibid., 231.

²⁶ Jose A. Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial 1830 - 1910*, (Bogotá: Siglo XXI editores de Colombia, 1984).

material conditions; that is, an ideology **historically necessary** and not a 'mistaken economic policy'.²⁷ Failures in the process of development are attributed to the linkages with the external market resulting from the location of the country as a 'secondary periphery' in the world economy.

In a secondary periphery, the extraction of economic surplus takes the form of 'production-financial speculation': the intention is to profit to the maximum from the opportunities offered by an unbalanced world market. An interest in long-term investment or the establishment of an export sector with some stability is absent. The need to appropriate extraordinary profits explains the 'savage' character of capitalism. The violence associated with forms of production necessarily result from the priority placed on speedy recovery of profits from the export opportunities. This form of 'production-financial speculation' is a 'rational' option, given the articulation of Colombia's economy with the world economy.

To prove his point, Ocampo uses the sequence of successes and failures experienced, first with exports of tobacco, then with cinchona bark, tannin and cotton, as well as with such manufactured products as hats. The linkage with the external sector was characterized by short cycles of expansion and decay. The first period from 1850 to 1857 was a period of expansion in tobacco and cinchona. This period is followed by a crisis of these products during 1858 until 1869, followed by small cycles of recovery and decline. After

²⁷ Ibid., 46.

1870 came a period of expansion, and coffee appears as an important product. Recession and crisis appear again in 1874 - 1877, to be followed by a boom in cinchona and coffee exports, followed by a severe depression and then recovery in 1883 - 1898. The century ended in the War of the One Thousand Days (1899-1902).

Contradicting McGreevey's argument which suggests that political instability is the cause of economic decay, Ocampo inverts the relationship: since 1858 periods of political turmoil were preceded by depressions of the external sector: "political instability accentuated the crisis of the exporting sector, but it did not give rise to the crisis."²⁸ Ocampo also illustrates how the process of surplus extraction in export production, as in the case of tobacco, was characterized by the use of direct violence. Cinchona's extraction also took the form of "savage capitalism": the product was extracted by Indians in their common land (southern Colombia) or on private property. The merchant either bought the product directly from the extractors (*cascarilleros*), or in the eastern region of Santander, through an organized enterprise (*empresa de explotación*) where the worker was paid according to the amount collected. In Santander, the *empresa* had their own private armies to defend property and product.

Ocampo's economic history of the nineteenth century offers rich insights into the linkages between the development of the national economy and the opportunities offered by the international market. Colombians responded to favourable price conditions in the world

²⁸ Ibid., 115.

market, first with tobacco exports, followed by quinine and coffee. This is also a good illustration of the instability of the world market for peripheral countries: the tobacco boom lasted less than four decades, and quinine less than three.

Ocampo's explanation is flawed by the appeal to external conditions as an explanation for the violence characteristic of the behaviour of mid-nineteenth century elites. It is difficult to deduce from this external linkage either the forms adopted nationally in order to fulfil the external demand, or the change towards a 'less speculative', less violent and more capitalistic form of exploitation. External determinants are unable to explain the diversity of internal processes, as will be discussed in chapter 6. A diversity of forms of production, rather than uniformity, characterized the linkage with the external market: a single product, like tobacco, combined violent and less-violent forms of surplus extraction. These forms varied regionally: in Cundinamarca a *hacienda* system was used while in Santander and Antioquia share cropping forms of production were used. Cinchona's production also varied by region, ranging from 'primitive' exploitation in Cauca to 'savage capitalism' in Santander. The problem becomes more complex if we consider that violence did not characterize all the exports. For example, the exportation of *jipijapa* hats, made by women artisans, seems to have been largely free from physical violence. According to a description of the province of Velez,²⁹ a main centre of artisan activity, violence did not occur:

²⁹ Manuel Ancizar, *Peregrinación de Alpha*, (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura, 1942), 95.

...there is a middle class, composed of labourer women occupied in commerce and in the fabrication of products for consumption, being an example of the contribution of work and economy to welfare...They exert authority over the proletarians not with dominion but with a soft treatment like equals...In this excellent daughter of the *pueblo's* heart there is no room for the haughtiness nor for the harshness which wealth produces in others.

It is also dubious whether failures in the external market were a result of purely external conditions. Internal conditions such as crop procedures which lead to land exhaustion, poor conditions of packing and lack of quality control also contributed to unsuccessful insertion into the world market. A purely external emphasis can not explain, for example, why coffee exports survived despite the discontinuity in the world demand and also were able to play an important role in the accumulation process. Ocampo's comments on the process of coffee expansion seem to suggest that the answer lies in a change in the internal process of production and not in the external world economy. He signals changes in the internal structure of property relations in the regions of Antioquia and Caldas, which used *parcelaria* production (share cropping):

The *parcelaria* production had several advantages from the point of view of capitalist development. On the one hand, it abolished monetary investment in coffee production on the part of the entrepreneurs, and the problems of lack of discipline of the traditional *hacienda*. On the other, it allowed the inclusion of lands otherwise unused in the agriculture of *roza y quema*.³⁰

³⁰ Jose A. Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial 1830 - 1910*, 345.

According to this passage, internal rather than external considerations are more likely explanations for changes in the social organization of production.³¹ The question not answered is why in some regions the problem of the 'lack of discipline' did not appear and what effect does this non appearance have on the development of capitalism in these regions.

2.1.4 The world economy + internal class divisions

Another approach incorporates both the process of integration into the world capitalist system and the political and ideological interests of contending class factions. As in Charles Berquist's economic history of the nineteenth century, politics and economics are seen as forming part of the same process, "the national fortunes of Liberal and Conservative parties and the fate of liberal political economy, paralleled the fortunes of export agriculture."³²

³¹ This is Brenner's main criticism of the world system approach. See Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism," in *Introduction to the Sociology of "Developing Societies"*, eds., Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin; Robert Brenner, "The Social Basis of Economic Development," in *Analytical Marxism*, ed. John Roemer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

³² Charles Berquist, *Labour in Latin America. Comparative Essays on Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Colombia*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1986), 290.

To sustain his point, Berquist poses a causal relation between the success of export agriculture and the Liberals' political preponderance.³³ While accepting a uniformity of class composition among the elite, he identifies each party with a different economic interest: Liberals are identified with the export economy and Conservatives with nationalist tendencies oriented towards domestic problems. The fate of the Liberal party is related to the crisis of the export economy in the 1870s. This crisis threatened the fiscal and economic foundations of liberalism. The victory of Conservatives and the Regeneration period are presented as a response to the problems resulting from the advocacy of higher tariffs and industrialization and "reflected the resurgence of Conservative forces in a society still overwhelmingly characterized by traditional agriculture for domestic consumption."³⁴ Another external event, a spectacular rise in the price of coffee in the 1880s, "revitalized the shattered, demoralized Liberal party and undermined the confidence, unity and ability to govern of the Conservative party."³⁵

Berquist's call for a political economy approach which integrates political and economic factors is welcome. His attempt, however, is flawed by his willingness to consider economic interests as the privileged point from which to read the history of nineteenth

³³ Charles Berquist, *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1910*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976); and Charles Berquist, "The Political Economy of the Colombian Presidential Election of 1897," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1, (February 1976).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

century Colombia. He is overly reliant on the derivation of elite interests from their position in the occupational structure (those with import-export interests versus groups not involved with the export-import economy) and overly inclined to relate the ability to sustain these interests to the fortunes of export agriculture. Criticisms of the first tendency have been well formulated by Safford.³⁶ The economic interests of upper, classes during the nineteenth century tended to be complementary, rather than contradictory. Merchants and landowners figured in the ranks of the Liberal and Conservative parties. An analysis centred on the different positions held in the occupational structure has not proved more valid. The Colombian elite in the nineteenth century were not differentiated by their location in the agrarian, merchant, financial or industrial places. They rather tended to combine, and to move from one to the other. It would also be mistaken to presume that they had enormous financial capital. On the contrary, the local elites were poor when compared with their American neighbours:

[In Colombia] the private sector was as poor [as the public sector]. As compared with the standards of Rio de Janeiro, Mexico or Lima, the wealthiest class in Colombia was an indigent class. The upper class rent during the first part of the XIX century reached \$5,000 per person/year and those with a capital bigger than \$100,000 could be counted with one hand.³⁷

³⁶ Safford (1977) Frank Safford, "Aspectos Sociales en la Política de la Nueva Granada 1825-1850," in Frank Safford, *Aspectos del Siglo XIX en Colombia*, 178 passim.

³⁷ Frank Safford, "Empresarios Nacionales y Extranjeros en Colombia durante el siglo XIX", in *Aspectos del Siglo XIX en Colombia*, Frank Safford, ed., 31. See also Frank Safford, "Aspectos Sociales de la Política en la Nueva Granada, 1825 -1850," *Aspectos del Siglo XIX en Colombia*, Frank Safford, ed., 153 - 200.

Berquist's argument is equally weak regarding the linkage between external trade and domestic conflict. Not every crisis in the export economy was followed by an internal conflict, and not every civil war happened in a situation of economic crisis. As Palacios³⁸ has shown, trade fluctuations did have effects on the fiscal budget, creating political tensions and contributing to the atmosphere of instability. But the low export coefficient at that time makes it seem unlikely that the trade cycle affected, in a strong way, the social and economic structures of the country.

2.1.5 Capitalism? yes, but 'savage'

Salomon Kalmanovitz' interpretation of the political economy of the nineteenth century is critical of the 'misuse of totality' as an explanatory instrument. His is an analysis centred on endogenous factors. He poses the specificity of capitalism in the Third World by the fact that capitalism arrived late. 'Being late' points to a relationship of domination between countries.

In his consideration of endogenous factors, Kalmanovitz focuses on the categories of feudal and capitalist modes of production and sees development as being oriented either toward capitalism or toward an involution of the system. The Colombian case is

³⁸ Palacios illustrates this case with tobacco, the main export product. In his view employment and the area under cultivation were so marginal "that it cannot be compared with the political consequences of the crisis in tobacco production: namely the fall of liberalism". Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia, 1850-1970*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 6.

characterized as a superior stage of the social development of feudalism.³⁹ Opening to the external market consolidated not the transformation to capitalism but rather an involution toward feudal structures, called a process of *enfeudamiento* (feudalization). In the *hacienda* system the labour process uses coercive practices. The system of exploitation is based on violence:

A peasant's freedom was restricted by relations of force in addition to juridical and ideological relations. Arbitrary indebtedness of the *arrendatario* and his family to the landowner was reinforced by the presence of judges, major, private or public armies at the disposition of the proprietor...

The true legal status of the peasant was the same as an insane person or a child: he could not seek employment with another landlord, was unable to sell, buy or rent or to perform any operation like the ones that took place within the *private* sphere of bourgeois society. Even more, in some regions the *arrendatario* had to offer their daughters to the sexual appetite of the owner and their sons were enlisted in the *patron's* army.⁴⁰

The mode of production is, then, a 'hybrid' between feudalism and capitalism, where the relationship between peasant and landowner is servile.⁴¹ This violence encouraged another violence: "Violence awakens in the peasants 'slyness, fraud and all human possibilities' to avoid the landlord's exploitation, and in addition gave rise to violence on

³⁹ See Salomon Kalmanovitz, "Desarrollo Capitalista en el Campo Colombiano," in *Colombia Hoy*, eds. Mario Arrubla et al (Bogotá: Siglo XXI editores, 1978), 278. In this article Kalmanowitz characterizes the development of capitalism as 'savage capitalism'.

⁴⁰ Salomon Kalmanovitz, *El desarrollo tardío del capitalismo. Un enfoque crítico de la teoría de la dependencia*, (Bogotá: siglo XXI editores, 1986), 53 - 55.

⁴¹ Salomon Kalmanowitz, "El régimen agrario durante el siglo XIX en Colombia", in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, tomo II, segunda edición, (Bogotá: Círculo de Lectores, S.A., 1982), 308.

the part of the oppressed."⁴² Among the differences between true capitalism and feudalism, Kalmanowitz mentions the existence of accumulation of capital and profits in those sectors linked to the external market. There is also a major circulation of commodities and a social division of labour. Land and labour have more mobility than in feudalism, and some peasants have rights over land, as was the case in the Antioqueño colonization ⁴³.

Answering the question of why there is a return to feudalism, Kalmanowitz argues that the conditions of the external market encouraged cost reductions and the desire to maximize profits; but this desire was not enough to move capitalists toward the use of free labour and to the 'scientific' organization of jobs. In his view, the use of forced labour "would not change until the breakdown of the social structure by the mobilization of the oppressed and until the general conditions of capital accumulation would create the social environment for the freedom of labour from its 'obligation' to landowners."⁴⁴ Kalmanovitz acknowledges that the external market is unable to change the conditions of production, as affirmed in a world system perspective.

Nevertheless, he adopts a 'hybrid' position between mechanic evolutionism, and voluntarism. The use of economic categories from which historical development is

⁴² Salomon Kalmanovitz, *Economía y Nación, Una Breve Historia de Colombia*, (Colombia: Siglo XXI editores, 1985), 215.

⁴³ Ibid., 211 *passim*.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 182.

deduced prevents Kalmanovitz from addressing this problem: the capacity of the external market to set off the process of development. Thus he falls into evolutionism by viewing the spontaneous development of capital accumulation as the determinant factor. Nonetheless, certain passages suggest a different dynamic, as in the analysis of Antioquia, which industrialized first:

...in Antioquia the population was more white, homogeneous and free than in the rest of the country. Those were key factors in the formation of a society of small units of production (miners and peasants) with mercantile linkages, side by side with *haciendas* with share cropping or with cattle raising with waged labour.. In addition they did not have an aversion to physical work, independently of the status of the individual, that is, each one had a broad capacity of self-determination...(emphasis as in original).

Also within the Antioqueño society emerged an heterogeneous population which included capitalist classes and had pronounced individualization...In the highlands there was a primacy of moral order and accumulation, while in the lowlands the predominant element was licentious behaviour, accumulation was in few hands (owners of cattle and gold intermediaries), that is, people abandoned to an underdeveloped destiny.⁴⁵

To accept an explanation of capitalist development based in the character of its population is to fall into an ethnocentric explanation whose roots come from the nineteenth century. Had Kalmanovitz attributed less weight to his interpretation of historical movement in terms of changes in property relations, the Antioqueño phenomena could have enriched his discussion of the dynamics of capitalism.

⁴⁵ Salomon Kalmanovitz, *Economía y Nación, Una Breve Historia de Colombia*, 237 - 238.

2.1.6 The search for hegemony

Trying to avoid both economism and politicism, Marco Palacios⁴⁶ centres his problematic in the dominant classes' capacity to become a "leading" class. The main problem was "that during the nineteenth century, the regional fragmentation of political power became the bare expression of the lack of an hegemonic class (in the Gramscian sense) able to unify politically the nation and to integrate, through representation, the other fractions of the dominant classes."⁴⁷ Neo-colonial Colombia was a society fragmented by geography, history, tradition, ethnic relations and material conditions, where capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production coexisted in an economy with a minimal internal market.

Palacios' main hypothesis is that elites were united around the economic project but differed over the proper functioning of capitalism:

The main differences between Liberals and Conservatives found expression in the political definition of the subaltern and dominated classes. Liberals were convinced that capitalism *per se* promoted individual freedom and political democracy, and that vertical mobility would proceed uninterrupted with the development process. Conservatives and *regeneracionistas* believed that 'spontaneous' capitalism corrupted the pillars of progress: authority, religious

⁴⁶ Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia, 1850 - 1970*. The Spanish version is used for those parts which do not appear in the English edition: Marco Palacios, *El Cafe en Colombia 1850 - 1970*, (Mexico: El Ancora Editores, 1983).

⁴⁷ Marco Palacios, "La Fragmentación Regional de las Clases Dominantes en Colombia: Una Perspectiva Histórica," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 42 (1980), 1664.

tradition and a central state. Capitalism required a stable social order; discipline of all classes was a pre-requisite of modernity.⁴⁸

According to Palacios the adoption of economic liberalism during the second half of the nineteenth century was more a move on the part of the local oligarchy to strengthen their social domination than an economic policy. Its adoption was related to the desire to overcome a 'barbarian' stage and to reach 'civilization'.⁴⁹ Palacios depicts *hacendados* as Europe-centric individuals whose desire "was to impose civilization in the hollows of the Andes through growing coffee;"⁵⁰ *hacendados* were "men without rural ties and traditions, their aspirations tended towards city life and civilization".⁵¹ Although the *hacienda* is depicted as 'far from capitalist', it did not have a common structure throughout the country. Palacios mentions class and 'race' as factors of differentiation.⁵² While in Cundinamarca and Tolima, owner and worker were 'racially' dissimilar, in Antioquia they were more homogeneous.

There is no doubt that Palacios' insights can enhance our understanding of nineteenth-century Colombia. Among them is the centrality conferred on the role of ideology and

⁴⁸ Marco Palacios, *El Café en Colombia 1850 - 1970*, 29.

⁴⁹ Marco Palacios, "La Fragmentación Regional de las Clases Dominantes en Colombia: Una Perspectiva Histórica, 1675.

⁵⁰ Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia 1850 - 1970*, 77.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁵² Marco Palacios, "La Fragmentación Regional de las Clases Dominantes en Colombia: Una Perspectiva Histórica, 1679.

hegemonic consensus, as well as on the domination by the leading classes as part of the explanation for the conflict between Liberals and Conservatives. No less important is his consideration of regional fragmentation as an obstacle in the construction of an hegemonic project at the national level.

Notwithstanding the richness of Palacios' analysis, he did not abstain from a restricted analysis of political economy. Although he recognizes that the division between Liberal and Conservative leaders owed as much to political and religious ideologies as to economic policy, that ideology, in the end, involves the understanding of the working of capitalism: Liberals believed that capitalism promoted individual freedom and political democracy, while Conservatives believed that 'spontaneous' capitalism undermined the pillars of progress. The richness of this insight is diminished by attributing the differences to the functioning of 'capitalism' and hindering the possibility of considering additional factors. As Palacios in fact recognized, Liberals were as skeptical as Conservatives of the functioning of free labour relations: "the social and political practice of radicals [Liberals] was conservative and hierarchical. Merchants, city dwellers by origin and vocation, became landowners and *hacendado-exportador*. As landowners they are absent from their land and maintained pre-capitalist social relations".⁵³ Indeed, as his analysis of Antioquia suggests, Conservatives in Antioquia tended to be less hierarchical than Liberals in Cundinamarca. Unlike Kalmanovitz, Palacios sees the situation of development in Antioquia more as the result of the ability of the leading

⁵³ Marco Palacios, *El Cafe en Colombia 1850 - 1970*, 31.

classes to establish a regional hegemony: "In Antioquia an ethnic frontier was mapped which included all the fundamental classes in the region".⁵⁴ Palacios sees the Antioqueño regionalism as a political and cultural manifestation of the region's unity under a conservative and pragmatic leading class.

Although Palacios stumbled onto the presence of non-economic factors (racial and ethnic) in the diversity of forms of production, he did not fully recognize its significance - nor could he, given his theoretical preoccupation. The most striking example is Palacios' mention of the desire for 'civilization' on the part of the nineteenth century elite. Due to a restricted view of political economy, this desire is equated with economic motives. His first chapter of *El Café en Colombia*, is entitled 'the road towards civilization' in which he stated that in the 19th century: "No other word surpassed in circulation the word civilization". Yet, he interpreted this desire solely from an economic perspective and, as a consequence, attributed a wholly economic content to the desire for civilization. In his view the word civilization was "the nineteenth century equivalent of our expression economic development". To equate the will to civilization with economic development is to obscure the richness of the debate and the struggles surrounding the desire for civilization.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 34.

2.1.7 The limits of traditional political economy

A critical reading of previous interpretations of Colombian political economy throws into question the value of an analysis centred solely on 'the production and circulation of things' as the most suitable explanation of the relationship between violence and the development of capitalism in the nineteenth century.

Economic motives, hidden or openly stated, are not the best candidates to provide an explanation of mid-nineteenth century events. In the first place, the presence of an economic rationality is questioned when it is realized that as a result of civil wars, army generals very often lost all their fortunes and their land was left without workers, that the population at large became more impoverished, and that the cost of wars overwhelmed the benefits of exports. To provide an economic explanation of these events is to force those actors living in the nineteenth century to look at their events with a rationality alien to them. Such a political economy fails to identify and to give a proper place to the actors' own intentions and motivations.

Second, an analysis centred on the different positions held in the economic structure as an explanation of the antagonisms between Liberals and Conservatives has not proved more valid either. The Colombian elite in the nineteenth century was not differentiated by its location in the agrarian, merchant, financial or industrial segments of capital.

Parties did not recruit their members predominantly from one sector or the other. Elites tended to combine and to move from one sector to the other, so that party allegiance was not homogeneous in relation to the fractions of capital represented. If the economic structure fails to explain the differential positions between party leaders, the question to be answered is what other sources of contradictions were present? What forces explain the differential power between those who rule and the governed?

A class analysis found it equally difficult to explain the practices in the relations of production: both Liberals and Conservatives employed forced labour with their subordinates and the relations with their subordinates could barely be referred to as a 'class' relationship in terms of the restricted mobility of workers and the use of force. Furthermore, Liberals and Conservatives did not diverge in their skepticism about 'spontaneous' capitalism. How can we explain that despite the adoption of *laissez-faire* principles, a wage labour relationship was not generalized?

Third, an essentialist understanding of *laissez-faire* emphasizing only the economic aspects of policy prescriptions is also weak. This understanding generally defines *laissez-faire* as "that corpus of ideology, theory, and policy prescription that sought to free economic activity from all constraints on the market and to promote the international division of labour through the alleged complementarity of parts of the world

economy."⁵⁵ Once *laissez-faire* is provided with a literal, 'essentialist' meaning it is easy to slip into ethnocentric conclusions about the hostile context as the main explanation for its failure. One consequence of this literal understanding is the difficulty in relating *laissez-faire* and violence. Once *laissez-faire* is stripped of any relation with forms of government, the capacity to disentangle its violence is lost. Gramsci has already alleged that *laissez-faire* "is also a form of state 'regulation', introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means."⁵⁶ The understanding of *laissez-faire* as devoid of violence served to perpetuate a myth in Colombian historiography in which liberalism's philosophical base for the reforms have been seen as inspired in an optimist vision, within a spirit of struggle against the 'monopoly of knowledge', a belief in the emancipatory character of the law and the primacy of the legislative against the coercive forms of domination, whose rationale rested in the desire to open the country to the modern enlightened world. If any vices are attributed to the liberal program they are its excessively 'spiritual', or utopian character.⁵⁷ The establishment of a linkage between

⁵⁵ Joseph L. Love and Nils Jacobsen, *Guiding The Invisible Hand*, vii.

⁵⁶ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (New York: International publishers, 1971), 160.

⁵⁷ This is the description of Gerardo Molina, *Las Ideas Liberales en Colombia, 1849 - 1914*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1970). The myth of the 'angelical' character of the Liberal reforms is common in the interpretation of nineteenth century history. A widespread legend said that when Victor Hugo read the Colombian constitution of 1863 he declared that it was "a constitution for angels". See Jorge O. Melo, "Del federalismo a la Constitución de 1886", *Nueva Historia de Colombia*, Vol:1 (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta Colombiana, 1989), 18. Marxists have not escaped from this utopian vision as Berquist's analysis shows "Imbibing an integral world view which had become dominant in the industrializing nations of the West, Liberals ultimately sought to write down into law a philosophy of man and society fundamentally at odds with the structure of the society they live in" Charles Berquist, *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886 - 1910*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1978), 11.

the adoption of these celestial *laissez-faire* principles and the presence of civil wars and violence becomes an impossible endeavour.

Last, but not the least important, an exclusive focus on the accumulation of 'things' conceals the presence of other struggles taking place in the nineteenth century whose acknowledgment could better explain the violence prevalent in this period. The scrutiny in the following chapter reveals that the **will for civilization** predated the struggle for accumulation of capital, and that the former entailed as much violence as the latter. A closer look at the past reveals that what was at stake and what divided Liberals and Conservatives was the struggle for 'civilization'. The reading of history based on the accumulation of wealth has led to inadequate consideration of the importance of the struggle for "civilization", in whose name civil wars were fought and political conflict occurred.

2.2 A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF VIOLENCE: an alternative interpretation

In this dissertation, the concepts of 'political economy' and 'violence' are provided with a broader meaning. Political economy includes other forms of production and accumulation than simply those of 'things'; violence incorporates more than its purely phenomenal realm. Once they are considered beyond the phenomenal realm, one can be

related to the other. Epistemologically, the concept of 'regime of representation' makes it possible to account for the encounter between things and meanings, between local and external interpretations. The concept of regime of representation also accommodates processes of exchange between the self and the other, between the present and the past, between one period and the next. Methodologically, an interpretation of history in terms of regimes of representation supposes a dialogical process facilitating these encounters and exchanges.

2.2.1 A different political economy

With *laissez-faire* capitalism a specific mode of reasoning developed in which the pursuit of rational self-interest is understood to lead individuals to produce for exchange, to produce more efficiently and to improve the process of production.⁵⁸ In a *laissez-faire* economy, individuals establish relations through the exchange of commodities, where, following Marx, relations between individuals take the form of relations between things.

This dissertation proposes a notion of political economy able to account for the formation of meanings accompanying diverse forms of accumulation. Meanings change with the transformation of forms of accumulation, as was the case in the passage from feudalism to capitalism, where the feudal drive to accumulate force was replaced by the drive to

⁵⁸ Robert Brenner, "The Social Basis of Economic Development", in *Analytical Marxism*.

accumulate wealth.⁵⁹ This conception of political economy also recognizes the existence of parallel processes of accumulation which can either be mutually reinforcing, or where the presence of one would weaken the other. For example, Foucault's notion of a political economy of power poses the existence of two kinds of interrelated power, the "accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital."⁶⁰ Bourdieu's symbolic capital is another form of political economy whose foundation is the accumulation of cultural capital.⁶¹ Its aim is the struggle for recognition, and its power relies on the capacity to make distinctions. Dorothy Smith points to the existence of an economy of knowledge. Concepts, she says "become constituted as a kind of 'currency' - a medium of exchange among ideologists...ideological practice detaches the concept from its ground and origin in real individuals and their activity."⁶²

The proposed concept of **political economy** includes those forms of production, circulation and exchange embedded within broader forms of accumulation. *Laissez-faire* capitalism is but one form of political economy organized around the production and circulation of 'things'. To make possible the production and circulation of things, a

⁵⁹ As stated by Brenner, in pre-capitalism the lords have "to improve their methods of war. Indeed, we can say the drive to *political accumulation*, to *state building*, is the *pre-capitalist* analogue to the capitalist drive to *accumulate capital*". Ibid., 32.

⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1979), 221.

⁶¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Choses Dites*, (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1987).

⁶² Dorothy Smith, "The Social Construction of Documentary Reality", *Sociological Inquiry*, 44: 4, 261. See also her collection of articles in Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987).

change in the system of meaning production must take place with regard to individuals' identities, to the relations among individuals, and to the governing relations of these individuals. In *laissez-faire* individuals cease to be considered as guided by passions, and interest takes passion's place.⁶³ Capitalist relations of production fostered the notion of 'undifferentiated' individuals equated under the guise of the search for self interest. For Marx, exchange relations presumed the existence of individuals who are indifferent to one another: in the exchange relationship, "whatever other individual distinction there may be does not concern them; *they are indifferent to all their other individual peculiarities*".⁶⁴ Even more "in the developed system of exchange...the ties of personal dependence, of distinction of blood, education, etc. are in fact exploded, ripped."⁶⁵ Finally, the constitution of individual identities is not independent of the form of government of those individuals. Governance (patriarchy, feudalism, capitalism, etc) rests on the definition of differences separating those who govern and those to be governed. Foucault's conception of government points to the relationship between forms of government and the conception of identities. In a broad sense he states how "every relationship of power puts into operation differentiations which are at the same time its conditions and its results."⁶⁶ More specifically, the birth of the discipline known as

⁶³ The change to the concept of interest is discussed in Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). I will go back to this point in chapter 7.

⁶⁴ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Penguin Books, 1973), 247, 156.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", in *Michel Foucault Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (Second Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1982), 223.

'political economy', in Foucault's view, depended upon the emergence of **population** as a new subject and the relation between population, territory and wealth.⁶⁷

In other words *laissez-faire* capitalism can be seen as a form of accumulation of things embedded within a broader system of meaning with regard to individual identities, the relations between individuals and their government. The economy conceived as a realm independent of politics supposed the conception of individuals guided by interest. The displacement of force from the labour contract supposed, on the one hand, the presence of 'undifferentiated' individuals, and, on the other, the displacement of force from the relations of production and its concentration in the state. As we shall see below, this system of meanings was not predominant in nineteenth century Colombia. In Colombia, hierarchical differences along gender, race and class hindered the emergence of an undifferentiated labour market; passionate and semi-barbarian beliefs about individuals prevented the idea of an economy severed from the political. On the contrary, the former was subordinated to the latter.

2.2.2 The moments of violence

Usually violence is confined to its observable and physical dimension. In this dissertation, the notion of violence is broadened so as to formulate a relationship with political economy. Three main moments of violence: representation, manifestation and resolution,

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, "Governmentality", in *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell et al (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

replace the conception of violence as a phenomenal event, a manifestation. Violence is not simply manifestation; it also involves a violence of representation and the resolution of violence. When restricted to 'observable interactions', more subtle aspects of violence, such as the violence implicit in naming, interpreting and qualifying are ignored.

The *violence of representation* ⁶⁸ refers to the act of endowing things with meanings. To name an action as 'rational', to designate an actor as 'legitimate', to describe a process as 'efficient' is to condemn another as 'traditional', 'insane' or 'backward'. Derrida has referred to the violence of representation as an originary violence: a violence which gives names, inscribes within a difference, classifies.⁶⁹ Discourse, as Foucault stated, is "a violence that we do to things",⁷⁰ and history is a violent interpretation: "the successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing [history's] rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Teresa de Lauretis also uses the expression violence of rhetoric: "The Violence of Rhetoric," in *The Violence of Representation*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).

⁶⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language", in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, ed. Michel Foucault (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 229.

⁷¹ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Interpreting Politics*, ed. Michael Gibbons (New York: New York University Press, 1987), 229.

The violence of representation is crucial to understanding relations of identity/difference. This is because the constitution of identities are based on exclusion, and every act of exclusion is a violent act. That is why relations of identity/difference carry a paradoxical element: "To possess a true identity is to be false to difference, while to be true to difference is to sacrifice the promise of a true identity".⁷² Furthermore, not every act of identity construction carries the same violence. In distinctions of the form A/B, both terms have a positive connotation, while in the distinction A/not-A, only A has a positive reality; not-A is the privation or absence of A.⁷³ In that sense, we can say that when identities are constructed in the form A/not-A, ontological violence will be felt within the not-A side of the dichotomy. This case has been raised by individuals whose identity has fallen within the excluded (negative) side against which positiveness have been formed: women, Blacks, Orientals, Indigenous, colonized, gays and lesbians. They have put in evidence how their identity became the negative pole against which white, men, Western, colonizer, civilizers formed their identities. As such, a violence of representation is exerted on them.

⁷² Regarding the argument that "every relation of identity is established in relation to differences" see William E. Connolly, *Identity/difference. Democratic negotiations of political paradox*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 67. Regarding the diverse forms of appropriation of the Other in the discipline of International Relations see E. Fuat Keyman "Resisting Difference: The Problem of the Other in International Relations Theory". (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Acapulco, Mexico, March, 1993).

⁷³ On this point I have been inspired by Nancy Jay, "Gender and Dichotomy", *Feminist Studies*, 7, 1 (spring 1981).

In the construction of identities in the form A/not-A, one identity is pure positiveness, the other negativity.⁷⁴ A consequence is that any attempt on the part of the 'not-A' identity to gain positiveness is perceived as a threat to the 'A' side of the dichotomy. Relations between A/not-A are antagonistic, one presupposes the other's disappearance.⁷⁵

Fanon's narrative in *The Wretched of the Earth*⁷⁶ illustrates well the case where the positiveness of the colonizer is established against the negativity of the colonized. The colonizer established its identity by establishing differences in dress, skin color, customs from the colonized. The colonized becomes the negativity of the colonizer. Natives and settlers do not live in a common space, but in two zones that are antagonistic. Spatially the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations; ontologically the colonizer, is a governing race, whom, unlike the original inhabitants, is endowed with positive meaning. In Fanon's description, the destruction of the colonial world does not take place by the establishment of lines of communication between the two worlds but, rather, one has to be annihilated by the other by the use of force. A similar situation happened with the millenarian movement:

⁷⁴ This quality of not-A is named the "infinite of the negative" whose consequence is lack of internal boundaries in Not-A. Ibid., 44-45.

⁷⁵ On this point see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London: Verso, 1985), 122 *passim*.

⁷⁶ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

Here the world divides...into two camps: peasants' culture representing the identity of the movement, and urban culture incarnating the evil. The second is the negative reverse of the first... When the millenarian rebellion takes place, the assault on the city is fierce, total and discriminate...⁷⁷

This passage also illustrates the relation between the violence of representation and the second moment, the *manifestation of violence*. Manifestation is violence's phenomenal, observable dimension. This dimension is related to the violence of representation. In a relation of difference of the form A/not-A in which the second is the negative of the first, antagonism is solved by force. This is the case in Fanon's description and in the millenarian movement: where one pole is the negative of the other, no lines of communication can be established between them. Gramsci's conception of 'war of movement' corresponds with manifested violence: the 'war of movement' is a war waged by the use of force and happens when there is a desire to annihilate the enemy.⁷⁸ Manifested violence also coincides with Girard's relations of antagonism: the members of the community are transformed into 'twins' matching images of violence; they are each doubles of the other.⁷⁹

Manifested violence, or in Girard's words, reciprocal violence, is a violence which always produces more violence. It is like a vicious circle defined in terms of vengeance

⁷⁷ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 129 - 130.

⁷⁸ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

⁷⁹ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 79.

and reprisals. This form of violence is the source of self-propagating, imitative violence: "As long as a working capital of accumulated hatred and suspicion exists at the center of the community, it will continue to increase no matter what men do."⁸⁰ Girard's *double bind* suggests also the ambivalent character of reciprocal violence, "violence can only be countered by more violence".⁸¹ Its ambivalence refers to manifest violence's capacity either to produce more or to put an end to violence. The spread of doubles causes and yet is the condition which contains violence:

The universal spread of 'doubles', the complete effacement of differences, heightened antagonisms but also making them interchangeable, is the prerequisite for the establishment of violent unanimity. For order to be reborn, disorder must first triumph; for myths to achieve their complete integration, they must first suffer total disintegration.⁸²

The violence of all against all gives way to the antagonism of all against one; reciprocal violence is transformed into unanimous violence. However, "there is no universal rule for quelling violence, no principle of guaranteed effectiveness. At times all the remedies, harsh as well as gentle, seem efficacious; at other times, every measure seems to heighten the fever it is striving to abate".⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid., 81.

⁸¹ Ibid., 31.

⁸² Ibid., 79.

⁸³ Ibid., 30 - 31.

According to Girard, to escape from this circle of violence, a violence of a different type is introduced: substitutive violence. This corresponds to the *resolution of violence*, its third moment. The resolution of violence engenders a violence of representation but of a different type, "incapable of serving as a connecting link between the violence that preceded and the one that must follow."⁸⁴ If the violence of representation is an originary moment; manifestation, a phenomenal moment; resolution is a moment of ending, cessation. Substitute violence is a process aimed to end manifested violence. Resolution is the moment when antagonisms have to be solved and strategies are designed to provide a solution to them.

The resolution of violence is a moment associate with the nation, the state, 'politics' as a separate sphere, the institutionalization of the juridical. All are historical forms which resulted from attempts to put an end to violence. For Gramsci, violence is both generated and substituted throughout the creation of myths. For him myths are the "creation of a concrete fantasy which acts on a dispersed and shattered people to arouse and organize its collective will."⁸⁵ He, like Girard, acknowledges two opposing forces arising from myths: violence and consent. The former, as in Sorel's myth, works by 'differentiation' (cleavage); it is a force violent and destructive. Consent, from which 'collective will' arises, is constructive. Gramsci, however, does not make one the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 126.

contrary of the other, violence is not the opposite of consent, they both form part of what he denominates the 'dual perspective':

The dual perspective can present itself on various levels, from the most elementary to the more complex; but these can all theoretically be reduced to two fundamental levels, corresponding to the dual nature of Machiavelli's Centaur - half-animal and half-human. They are the levels of force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilization, of the individual moment and of the universal moment, of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy, etc.⁸⁶

Gramsci's conception of 'dual perspective' has important consequences not only for the conception of violence but also for a different concept of political economy. As far as the concept of economics it does not belong only to civil society, nor is it free from force. For Gramsci "*laissez-faire* is a form of state 'regulation' introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means".⁸⁷ By the same principle, the state is hegemony armored by coercion.⁸⁸

Gramsci's concept of a 'dual perspective' allows also a different conceptualization of war. Wars, like violence, are not only phenomenal events but are waged in the ideological terrain as well. The use of force corresponds to a 'war of movement', while consent corresponds to a 'war of position'. Force, 'domination', is applied only to those

⁸⁶ Ibid., 169 -170.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 160.

⁸⁸ On this concept of the enlarged or integral state in Gramsci, see Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980).

cases of antagonistic groups which one intends to eliminate. Consent takes place in the gaining of support from auxiliary forces or allies. For Gramsci the 'war of movement' occupies the subordinate place, while the war of position becomes the crucial struggle: "In politics the 'war of position', once won, is decisive definitively".⁸⁹

Thus violence is not only a force propelling more violence, but is also a force able to stem proper solutions which later on become institutionalized. In the modern period, the nation, the state, 'politics' as a separate sphere, the institutionalization of the juridical, all are historical forms which resulted from attempts to put an end to violence. All of them have as a precondition modes of representation which transcend violence. As has been illustrated by Girard, in traditional societies, sacrifice was the form of substitute violence. In sacrifice, communities deflected upon a victim their own violence. The imitative violence of all is directed against one: the victim, who is marked by a difference. The victim substitutes for all members of the community. Sacrifice protects the community from its own violence; its purpose is to restore harmony. In modern societies the role of sacrifice is performed by the judiciary system. It serves to deflect the menace of vengeance by limiting vengeance to a single act of reprisal.

The passage from violence to consent happens in representation. This becomes clear in Gramsci's understanding of the passage to the 'political' moment: when individual or

⁸⁹ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 239. The importance of the concept of 'war of position' in Gramsci's thought is stated clearly in Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 193 - 204.

mechanical interests (economic) are articulated to general, collective interests. This movement coincides with Gramsci's *hegemonic moment* in which a certain degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organization of the various social classes is attained through an articulation of diverse interests. This moment also coincides with the formation of the state and nation. This moment

in which one becomes aware that one's corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too. This is the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere to the complex structures; it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'party', come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself through society - bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a 'universal' plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinated groups. It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter's maximum expansion. But the development and expansion of the particular are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all 'national' energies.⁹⁰

The political moment is the moment of the nation and the state. These national forces are not independent of the creation of myths. The hegemonic moment consists in the organization of 'dispersed people' around a concrete fantasy, or 'collective myth'. In this moment internal and external forces are related to each other. "It is also necessary to take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with these internal

⁹⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 181.

relations of nation-states, creating new, unique and historically concrete combinations".⁹¹

Nations have conditions of possibility which makes possible their emergence. These conditions of possibility are spatial, temporal and ontological. As Benedict Anderson maintains, a nation is "an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".⁹² A nation is limited because it is imagined within certain boundaries. It is sovereign because nations are dreamt as being free. They are a community because a nation is conceived as a horizontal comradeship. According to Anderson, certain conditions make it possible to imagine a nation. On the one hand, language and the weakening of religious communities and the dynastic realm are related to the appearance of nationalism. On the other, changes in 'modes of apprehending the world' are also conditions of possibility before the nation can be imagined. To link, in space and time, individuals unknown to each other made possible the birth of the imagined community. Both the novel and the newspaper provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the imagined community by facilitating simultaneity-along-time.

In Benedict Anderson's narrative about the emergence of nations, South American creoles appear as pioneers in the invention of nations. To illustrate how nations emerged as

⁹¹ Ibid., 182.

⁹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, New York: Verso, 1983), 6.

'imagined communities', he quotes at length the words of Pedro Fermín de Vargas, a creole literati of nineteenth century Colombia:

To expand our agriculture it would be necessary to hispanicize our Indians. Their idleness, stupidity, and indifference towards normal endeavours causes one to think that they come from a degenerate race which deteriorates in proportion to the distance from its origin...*it would be very desirable that the Indians be extinguished, by miscegenation with the whites, declaring them free of tribute and other charges, and giving them private property in land.*⁹³

In line with the general argument sustained in this dissertation, Anderson contends that miscegenation was seen as the road to civilization and nation-ness. Independence was a national movement, and Indians and blacks were redefined by creoles as fellow-nationals. A paradoxical element in the invention of nations, in Anderson's view, is that although Spanish-America had earlier conceptions of nation-ness than did most of Europe it failed in the generation of a wide nationalism. While the presence of administrative organizations created the possibility of a boundary oriented fraternity; the conception of simultaneity was hampered by the development of forms of capitalism and technology which did not correspond to the stretch of the empire.

Anderson provides valuable insights regarding the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the nation, but as this dissertation suggests, the ontology of being, the constitution of identities, is a necessary condition of possibility for the emergence of nations. Printing facilitates simultaneity along time and space, but without an ontological

⁹³ Quoted in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London-New York: Verso, 1991): 13 - 14.

dimension, simultaneity becomes mere co-presence. A common identity must be established as well. This commonality implies, in the first place, ontological presence, and on the other, the mobility of the frontier⁹⁴ linking these presences. Acts of suppression of history, as in the case of the stories of Indigenous, women and black peoples, hinder the emergence of the nation. To concede to one identity full presence, as in the case of Western enlightened men, and to define the others by their lack of this presence, prevented the formation of the nation.

This assertion problematizes Anderson's sharp distinction between nationalism and racism. In his view "nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations."⁹⁵ The examination of race and nation in Colombia challenges that clear distinction. Historical destiny did not embrace all races equally, neither was Fermín de Vargas a 'cosmic optimism': "the Indian is ultimately redeemable - by impregnation with white, 'civilized' semen, and the acquisition of private property, *like everyone else*" (emphasis in original).⁹⁶ The 'cosmic optimism' surrounding the imagined community of nineteenth century creoles did not cover everyone in the same way. The community imagined was one in the process of becoming white. Therein lay

⁹⁴ This concept is developed in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, (London: Verso, 1985).

⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 149.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

its hope for civilization. The colour of the expected progeny was indeed a matter of great concern for Fermin de Vargas and his fellow creoles.⁹⁷

This dissertation illustrates how the prevalent regime of representation in nineteenth century Colombia, the will to civilization, precluded not only the universalization of interests and the conception of an undifferentiated labour market, as in *laissez faire* capitalism, but also the formation of the nation, the state and the juridical.

2.2.3 The regime of representation

Once the concepts of political economy and violence are broadened, and the phenomenal realm is momentarily expanded --to include the realm of meanings-- the problem becomes how to understand processes of historical development. This dissertation proposes an entry into history using the category of *regime of representation*. A 'regime of representation' is the space of encounter between the past, the present and the future; it is a space of encounter between the self and the other, and between selves and the external world. The regime of representation is a space of presences and absences; it includes things that appear, that are visible, as well as those that are suppressed, condemned to remain in the backstage.

⁹⁷ Anderson equates Fermin's optimistic program for miscegenation and "his absence of concern for the colour of the expected progeny". Ibid., 58.

The regime of representation is a process of linking practices, an *acontecer vinculante*⁹⁸. As such, it extends in time through the construction of systems of meanings relatively fixed and distinct. This system, as Laclau and Mouffe remark,⁹⁹ never manages to be fully fixed. It explains the open-ended character of history. Regimes of representation are historical constructs, as such they gain some **stability** and are maintained but they also enter into **crisis** and disappear. During periods of stability systems of differentiation gain a certain stability and persist. Gramsci calls this a *hegemonic moment* in which a 'collective will' (consent) prevails. In these moments there is a unity of opposites and of distinctions ¹⁰⁰. Gramsci's hegemonic moment is similar to Girard's 'cultural order' which is defined as a "regulated system of distinctions in which differences among individuals are used to establish their 'identity' and their mutual relationships".¹⁰¹ Periods of crisis, on the contrary, are periods of identity crisis where some differences become visible, and violence (in the phenomenal sense) occurs. Gramsci's well known notion of crisis summarizes these elements. In periods of crisis, there is a loss of consensus, and force becomes the predominant element:

If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer 'leading' but only dominant, exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer

⁹⁸ This expression belongs to Antanas Mockus, *Representar y Disponer*, (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional, 1988).

⁹⁹ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 111.

¹⁰⁰ The unity of opposites and distincts form Gramsci's, "historic blocs", *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, 137.

¹⁰¹ Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 49.

believe what they used to believe previously, etc. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.¹⁰²

A regime of representation is both a space of violence and consent: it defines what counts as visible and what remains on the backstage. The establishment of 'what counts as self-evident, universal and necessary', as Foucault contends, is an act of violence, originated in the capacity of seizing history's rules and using them in one's own favour. A regime of representation is a space of violence in another sense as well: the definitions of self identities and of relations of political antagonisms, are marked by relations of exclusion and the establishment of hierarchical differences. All relations of identity/antagonism are forged out of the tension between the 'I' and the 'other'. Following Laclau, the "'Other' is what prevents me from being totally myself".¹⁰³ This 'self-other' relation of antagonism is not expressed directly but, as in Girard's postulate, it takes a triangular form: they converge in the desire for the same object, resulting in conflict.

The regime of representation is also the space where violence is substituted. The regime of representation is a space of desire and a political space. As a space of desire, it is "the terrain of a game whose result is not predetermined from the beginning".¹⁰⁴ The regime

¹⁰² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 275 - 276.

¹⁰³ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 125.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

of representation is a political space, like the one conceptualized by Jenson,¹⁰⁵ where politics is the terrain on which actors struggle for representation; it entails a struggle to become visible as well as a contest for defining identities and differences.

2.2.4 A political economy of violence

Once the concepts of political economy and violence are broadened, and regime of representation becomes the space facilitating their encounter, it is possible to understand how political economy is related to the three moments of violence. First, different forms of production and circulation are linked to diverse instances of the violence of representation. Bourdieu's cultural capital supposes the existence of symbolic violence, or violence exerted *dans les formes*. Symbolic violence is the act of giving a proper form; to give to an action or to a discourse a form recognized as convenient, legitimate, approved, by presenting it under the appearance of something universal.¹⁰⁶ The functioning of imperialism has been related not only to manifested violence but also to a violence of representation. Thus Edward Said has illustrated how the representation of the Orient by Europe was part of the project of domination by the West.¹⁰⁷ For

¹⁰⁵ I am referring to her concept of 'universe of political discourse'. Jane Jenson, "Gender and Reproduction: Or, Babies and the State", *Studies in Political Economy*, 20 (1986), 25 - 27.

¹⁰⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Choses Dites*, 103.

¹⁰⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

Gayatri Spivak 'epistemic violence' occurs in interested narratives aimed to subjugate the Other: clear examples are the constitution of the colonial subject, and of the Third World woman. 'Epistemic violence' is a form of historical narrative written from the perspective of the colonizer.¹⁰⁸ The organization of knowledge can also be included in the kind of epistemological violence which organizes knowledge in a way that "represents the world as it is for those who rule it, rather than as it is for those who are ruled".¹⁰⁹ Epistemic or symbolic violence is also present in Gramsci's ¹¹⁰ conceptualization of 'political struggle' as a relation where forces:

which are struggling to conserve and defend the existing structure itself are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them. These incessant and persistent efforts...form the terrain of the "conjunctural" and it is upon this terrain that the forces of opposition organize. These forces seek to demonstrate that the necessary and sufficient conditions already exist to make possible, and hence imperative, the accomplishment of certain historical tasks (imperative, because any falling short before an historical duty increases the necessary disorder, and prepares more serious catastrophes). (The demonstration in the last analysis only succeeds and is "true" it becomes a new reality, if the forces of opposition triumph; in the immediate it is developed in a series of ideological, religious, philosophical, political, juridical polemics, whose concreteness can be estimated by the extent to which they are convincing, and shift the previously existing disposition of social forces.

¹⁰⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur," *Europe and its Others*, ed. Francis Barker et al. 2 (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985).

¹⁰⁹ Dorothy Smith, "The Social Construction of Documentary Reality", *Sociological Inquiry*, 267.

¹¹⁰ See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, 178.

Second, diverse manifestations of violence are also related to the political economy of production and circulation of meanings. For example, in the *laissez-faire* period, violence is displaced from the productive to the political, the state. The relationship between the moments of violence and forms of representation appears clearly in Foucault's genealogy of discipline and punishment. In the history of western society he identifies three mechanisms for inflicting violence which varied according to broader systems of truth-power relations:

in monarchical law, punishment is a ceremonial of sovereignty; it uses the ritual marks of the vengeance that it applies to the body of the condemned man; and it deploys before the eyes of the spectators an effect of terror as intense as it is discontinuous, irregular and always above its own laws, the physical presence of the sovereign and its power. The reformer jurists, on the other hand, saw punishment as a procedure for re-qualifying individuals as subjects, as juridical subjects; it uses no marks, but signs, coded sets of representations, which would be given the most rapid circulation and the most general acceptance possible by citizens witnessing the scene of punishment. Lastly, in the project for a prison institution that was then developing, punishment was seen as a technique for the coercion of individuals; it operated methods of training the body -not signs- by the traces it leaves, in the form of habits, in behaviour; and it presupposed the setting up of a specific power for the administration of the penalty.¹¹¹

In *laissez-faire* the disciplinary techniques belong to:

a different economy: mechanisms of power which...are integrated into the productive efficiency of the apparatuses from within, into the growth of this efficiency and into the use of what it produces. For the old principle of 'levying-violence', which governed the economy of power, the disciplines substitute the principle of 'mildness-production-profit'. These are the techniques that make it

¹¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, 131.

possible to adjust the multiplicity of men and the multiplication of the apparatuses of production (and this means not only 'production' in the strict sense, but also the production of knowledge and skills in the school, the production of health in the hospitals, the production of destructive force in the army).¹¹²

As the previous passage suggests, in *laissez-faire* capitalism violence does not disappear: it is manifested in a different form and guided by a different economy. Violence is less spectacular than before, but is also more continuous. It is governed by the principle of 'mildness-production-profit', not terror as before. Violence is also of a less intense nature but is more disperse in multiple apparati: the factory, the school, the army, the hospital.

Third, the linkage between political economy and violence also happens in violence's third moment: the resolution. The monetary system is a kind of substitution of violence. Orléan illustrates the case of the origin of money as a substitute for the object of desire "the engendering of money...introduces a *morphogenesis*, a qualitative transformation of social relations. It is the emergence of a meaning, of a language, of a representation through which the community torn asunder constitutes itself as a social totality".¹¹³ With the introduction of money a new language is instituted, the discourse of prices. Money "engendered a sign radically distinct from all others".¹¹⁴ Substitute violence is also invested with a transcendental quality, legitimacy: "Only by opting for a sanctified,

¹¹² Ibid., 219.

¹¹³ André Orléan, "Money and Mimetic Speculation" in *Violence and Truth on the Work of René Girard*, ed. Paul Dumouchel (California: Stanford University Press, 1988), 111. See also Michel Aglietta and André Orléan, *La Violence de la monnaie*. (Paris: PUF, 1982).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 111.

legitimate form of violence and preventing it from becoming an object of disputes and recriminations can the system save itself from the vicious circle of revenge".¹¹⁵ Substitute violence is at the base of representation: "The origin of symbolic thought lies in the mechanisms of the surrogate victim".¹¹⁶

As it is illustrated in this dissertation, the political economy in mid-nineteenth century Colombia was centred in the will to civilization. Words became valuable commodities on whose production and circulation the process of accumulation was centred. Male Creole literati concentrated around them the power that money performs in those places where *laissez faire* capitalism prevails. The violence of representation which prevailed in the will to civilization was centred around the creation of a hierarchy of racial and gender differences. Violence was manifested in the form of civil wars among party leaders waged around the means to civilization: education and political participation of those occupying the low ladders of civilization: Indians, women and blacks. Violence became also manifested in the use of forced labour, overexploitation of land, and terror. Nineteenth century Colombians did not invent an nation, nor were they able to establish a pattern towards the accumulation of 'things'. Civilization was not able to fix a relative system of meaning.

¹¹⁵ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 24.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 235.

2.2.5 A Dialogical Method

The approach proposed is to reinstate the space where struggles for representation take place. To reinstate this space means to acknowledge the presence of 'other' interpretations and different motives which did not emanate solely from one single foundation, such as the ownership of the means of production or male Western knowledge, and whose motivations could diverge from the pursuit of egotistic rational interest. This space has been called the 'regime of representation', or the place of encounter of diverse meanings¹¹⁷. A regime of representation accounts for those local, gender and racial meanings accompanying forms of accumulation. In a regime of representation, manifestations of violence are linked with the representations supporting these forms of violence.

This dissertation proposes to follow a 'dialogic' method which emphasizes the formation of meanings and the struggles within which these meanings are formed. A 'dialogic' method, in opposition to a monological one, is a method open to representations. Borrowing Bakhtin's concept ¹¹⁸ a 'monological' method is one that "closes down the represented world and the represented persons". An essentialist understanding of political

¹¹⁷ Regime of representation resembles Jane Jenson's 'universe of political discourse' which is described as a space of confrontation, of conflict and of representation. Jane Jenson, "Gender and Reproduction: Or, Babies and the State", *Studies in Political Economy*, 20 (1986).

¹¹⁸ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 293.

economy which departs from fixed concepts to be applied from one place to the other, closes the capacity of those represented to express themselves, in their own categories. Once the 'economic' is stripped of any relation with its accompanying meanings the capacity to disentangle its relation with forms of violence, is lost.

Presentism, the interpretation of the past in terms of the present, is also a monological form of representation. Presentism forces the past to live into the categories of the present. Ethnocentrism and androcentrism are all monological interpretations. While in economism, a given order of thought is universalized - those of the 'rational' economic men - in ethnocentrism and androcentrism, the experience of Western men is provided a special status as compared to those of women or non-Western interpretations. All forms of dichotomous categories such as subjectivism/objectivism, individual/structure, are also ways of privileging one point of entry into reality as compared to alternatives and in that sense they are monological interpretations.

A regime of representation, on the contrary, emerges from the interaction (dialogue) of a diversity of authors (actors) and from the interaction between these authors and their context. The regime of representation supposes the presence of authors with different points of view. They result from the different positionalities of the authors involved and the capacity of certain authors to impose or to give salience to certain views over contending ones. Meanings attributed to events, the salience of certain representations,

the silence surrounding others, are the result of the interplay of unequal relations of power struggling for representation.

Thus, a dialogical method allows for the incorporation of the voice of the 'other'. The other's voice has the effect of de-naturalizing those practices that otherwise would be taken for granted. The pursuit of self-interest was questioned and became a point of resistance on the part of different groups of the population. Traditional political economy has long silenced those arguments and taken for granted the monological voice of the supporters of rational self-interest. The incorporation of the other's voice has also the effect of showing the relationship between economic practices and the construction of identities linked to them. The representation of gender, race and class identities was central to the generalization of wage/labour relations and to the manufacturing process. The struggle surrounding the winning over of each economic practice is only visible in the encounter which took place between both contenders.

The incorporation of these battles over meanings and practices calls forth an abandonment of the traditional method of political economy. A dialogical analysis means, in the first place, to acknowledge different encounters within a regime of representation. There were temporal exchanges between the colonial past and the possibility of constructing a free, independent republic. Spatial exchanges between representations coming from Europe and North America, and Indigenous representation coming from the recently independent countries. A dialogical analysis accounts for

exchanges taking place between groups of individuals endowed with different capacities to impose their representations. There was not a single source explaining the endowment of diverse capacities. They have to be brought into light following the meaning attributed by the local actors. As will appear in the following chapters, in nineteenth century Colombia the will to civilization preceded, and in most of the cases contradicted, *laissez-faire* main principles. A dialogic method, should allow us to examine the exchanges that take place between diverse representations. In the mid-nineteenth century, the 'will to civilization' encountered *laissez-faire* and the latter was subordinated to the former.

Last but not least, in order to incorporate the voice of the other, a dialogic method calls for the use of alter-native texts. Political economy ceases to be seen as the space where 'things' are produced, exchanged and accumulated, and becomes also the space of production, accumulation and exchange of meanings. Texts about political economy are but one of the spaces where meanings are produced and exchanged. As a general rule, however, political economy texts have already won at least one decisive battle: to adhere to the space defined as legitimate by the discipline's supporters. In order to incorporate other voices, this dissertation proposes the use of texts outside the mainstream discipline: novels, poems, popular songs and drawings. In addition to being an-other source, these texts provide, on most the occasions, the battlefield where struggles for representation are fought.

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Finally, the dialogical method also extends to the relations between the authors, and 'myself' as a participant in the dialogue, an interpretant. Gadamer proposes that 'Interpretation is probably, in a certain sense, re-creation, but this recreation does not follow the process of the creative act, but the lines of the created work which has to be brought to representation in accord with the meaning the interpreter finds in it.'¹¹⁹

It is the aim of this dissertation to illustrate how regimes of representation emerge, how they are able to gain some stability and remain, as well as to characterize what forms of accumulation develop within a given regime of representation. Regimes of representation diverge in the system of differences established, the relations among individuals and the institutionalization of diverse forms of controlling violence. I take mid-nineteenth century Colombia to illustrate the case. The central debates which took place during the period 1849 - 1878 is the material of analysis. During this period the will to civilization is the predominant representation, male Creole literati are the regime's main authors and words a crucial means of accumulation.

¹¹⁹ Hans George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 107. (emphasis added)

Chapter 3

The Will to Civilization

"If we succeed in the establishment of a political order whose result is the attainment of peace, all other problems would find an easy solution. The foundation of this order would demand sacrifices from men and political parties, and we must offer these sacrifices to the nation today. Let us face in a manly way this problem called Freedom and Order"

Miguel Samper, Colombian political economist, XIX Century

"There is hardly any form of violence that cannot be described in terms of sacrifice"

René Girard

Camino para Sibéria en la montaña de Tamand.

The mid-nineteenth century in Latin America has been commonly characterized as a period of economic liberalism; Colombia has not been an exception to this. However, three main paradoxes of the history of Colombia during this period challenge the view of an hegemony of *laissez-faire*: First, these were years of profound antagonisms among the Colombian elites, antagonisms not motivated by economic interests. In addition to nine civil wars, nearly 50 regional or local conflicts marred the attempt to consolidate the nation. The second paradox is that despite successful integration with the world market, exports did not stabilize nor was there an increase in productive investment. Export products, as in the case of tobacco, cinchona and tannin, after reaching an important place in the world economy, diminished in importance and disappeared a few years later. Third, efforts to consolidate a place in the international market were not matched by the adoption of free labour practices; on the contrary, the use of force intensified with the expansion of markets. Throughout the century, prosperity co-existed with violence and war. The period of 1849-1876 was a period of economic prosperity; in this period, political parties were consolidated, and constitutions were written, slaves were freed and state monopolies abolished. The same years were also characterized by impoverishment, exhaustion of natural resources, wars and crisis.

The review of the historiography produced about this period in Chapter 2, led to the conclusion that a restricted understanding of political economy and violence has hindered the ability to link events in what traditionally has been understood as the realm of the 'economy' and the 'political'. Here I call for an abandonment of a phenomenal definition

of both 'political economy', in the restricted sense of circulation of things, and 'violence', restricted to its 'observable interaction' dimension. A broader understanding of political economy and violence is suggested so as to consider alternative forms of accumulation.

This chapter brings these conceptualizations together in the analysis of the period 1849-1876. Instead of searching to find how one previously defined realm, named the economic or the political, had an effect on the other, the method to be followed is to concentrate on local forms of representations: What did mid-nineteenth century Colombians perceive to be their main form of accumulation? What were the sources of power that sustained these form of accumulation? Who were the main actors? Which identities supported or contradicted this drive to accumulation? How did violence originate?

Following this method will make evident the fact that in this period, the regime of representation based on the exchange of things as separated from the realm of individuals had not yet been universalized. In other words, the economic was not perceived as a realm separate from the political. Narratives of this period, described in Chapter 2, based on the existence of an hegemony of economic liberalism are misleading. The political economy was, instead, centred in the desire to reach civilization, the **will to civilization**. The will to civilization was the dominant regime of representation from 1849 until its crisis in 1878. The will to civilization was the unifying force in whose name the main

political reforms were made. The will to civilization was the place of encounter between a colonial past that must be superseded and the desire for an orderly society that must be constructed. It was also the place of encounter between the 'self' and the 'other' in the form of a barbarian-civilized dichotomy. It was the place where identities and differences were formed to secure forms of power and domination.

In the will to civilization there was a violence in the form of representation of identities and a violence in the acts of suppression of alternatives. The will to civilization established hierarchical identities and differences. Blacks, Indians and women were deprived of their alterity when compared to white males of European origin. In these acts violence was embodied (represented), later to be manifested.

The first part of this chapter describes the system of hierarchies between civilizers and those to be civilized which allowed the emergence of the will to civilization. The second part introduces the central actors of the will to civilization: male Creole literati. The literati became the architects of the civilizing project and the main builders of the regime of representation. The third part describes the emergence of the 'will to civilization' as the regime of representation. The desire for civilization centred on being like the European civilization. The two recently created political parties converged around the search for civilization, but they were profoundly divided about 'how' to embrace civilization. The fourth part describes the 'will to civilization' as a contradictory encounter between a colonial past and a free republic, on the one hand, and

between civilizers and barbarians, on the other. It depicts the tensions springing from this encounter and the violence of representation in the act of suppression of the history of the 'self' and in the embracing of the 'other' civilization. This violence is an originary violence, a violence of representation in which the indigenous content of civilization is disregarded in favour of an external, alien civilization. The fifth part illustrates how the process of differentiation is imprinted in the body: skin colour and gender are identified as the hierarchical criteria for establishing distances and exerting power relations. The will to civilization becomes the dream of a *civilization mestiza* in which all races are fused into one, the superior white one. The sixth part, enGENDERing civilization, points out the violence exerted on women. The gendered (male) character of a *civilización mestiza* refers to the exclusion of women, along with blacks and natives, from civilization.

3.1 Establishing hierarchies of civilizers/civilized

The construction of a regime of representation supposes the establishment of a system of hierarchical differences which governs action. The system of classification which prevailed in mid-nineteenth century Colombia did not parallel the social organization of production. The wealthiest members of the elite have been described as an 'indigent' class hardly differentiable by their location in the agrarian, merchant or financial ownership of capital.¹ If economic distinctions did not prevail, what system of

¹ See chapter 2, section 2.1.4.

differences existed and how did these differences influence the construction of the regime of representation?

To answer these questions one has to put on a stage local actors and to re-present the plot which allowed differences to be constructed and hierarchies to be arranged. José Maria Samper, a nineteenth century male Creole literati, drew a map of the "social condition of classes and crowds according to the degree of advancement in their relation with the external world and with the remaining Colombian cities."² Samper envisioned the differences among these groups in what he perceived to be the different roles actors played in the Independence revolution of 1810:

The *literati* (all Creoles) comprised of lawyers, medical doctors, literati, naturalists (like the scientist Caldas, the well-spoken Zea) and academics;

The low clergy, the enlightened ones, most of them born in the Hispanic-Colombian territory and belonging to poor and plebeian families;

Young soldiers that, in small numbers, enlisted in Spanish schools, in military districts or in engineering headquarters;

City artisans, with Colombian or Creole origin and small proprietors.

In addition, it must be clear that, as a general rule, urban populations were more accessible to revolution and the most enthusiastic in contrast with the rural population, who were more ignorant and subject to irresistible traditional influences. A difference was also noticeable by topography and climate: in the plains and warm lowlands, the revolutionary spark spread faster and stayed longer than in the cold mountain regions, isolated from contact with civilization, without communication with the social centres where relative enlightenment concentrated.

² José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las revoluciones políticas y la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, (París: Imprenta de E. Thunot y Ca, 1861), 158.

...The slaves, unable to understand the Revolution and oppressed by their condition, enlisted simultaneously in the two causes, according to the opinion of their owners or the resources of the enemy army...

Regarding the Indians, *mulattos* and remaining *mestizos*, it is evident that the first were always instruments of the enemy forces in the mountain region; free *mulattos* and *zambos* formed part of the revolutionary forces, and the *mestizo* of Spaniard and Indian descent were the most fierce contenders in both fields...

There is an additional factor which deserves mention: women's support for the Revolution. It is certain that when we want to know *a priori* the character or justice of a revolution or of a social event, or at least the degree of popular support of a similar event, it is enough to know where women stand.

From each hundred situations, women defend the right side in ninety nine of them. Why? the truth is that women do not understand the philosophy of revolutions, nor do they have the moral or intellectual strength to take care of political issues, in whose details they very often make mistakes. But instinct is more the base of their sense and insight to perceive justice, to have respectable feelings, and to exert piety.

In Samper's locational map, actors are positioned in a complex network which included education, occupation, race and gender. Creoles, whose parents were Spaniards but who were born in Colombian territory, are depicted superior to blacks, Indians or *mestizos*; literati are placed higher than priests, and both are in a better place than artisans or small proprietors; men are best placed than women and those living in the centre or urban areas enjoy an advantage over the warm lowlands. It is important to notice that despite the diversity of categories, there is a central plot which functions as the point of reference: groups are differentiated by their capacity to 'understand' the meaning of the Revolution; this capacity is graded according to what he perceives as the distance from civilization. Literati are located at the top of the classification. Literati are followed, in descending order, by priests, soldiers and artisans.

Several factors explain the preeminence and power of the Creole literati. These same factors explain the benefit, to them, of defining civilization as the foundation for the regime of representation in the second half of the nineteenth century. A first factor to be considered is the presence of institutions of higher education as early as the seventeenth century and the place that education had in the colonial period. The Jesuits founded in Bogotá the *Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé* in 1602, which, together with the *Colegio de Santo Tomás*, became a university in 1639. In the same year the Jesuits created the Universidad Javeriana, which was closed in 1767 when the Jesuits were expelled from the country. In 1810, the year of Independence, there were 3 universities, 5 colleges and 5 seminaries. Two *colegios* were in Bogotá, two in Quito and one in Caracas. Cuenca, Panamá, Cartagena, Santa Marta Popayán and Mérida all had *colegios-seminarios*. Bogotá, Quito and Caracas had universities.³ Education was almost entirely in religious hands. Primary schools, attached to parishes and convents, were private and restricted to the elite: only 1% of the school age population attended elementary school. The masses, specially Indians, blacks and mulattoes, were illiterate. Many observers estimated an illiteracy rate of 90%.⁴

During the Colonial period administrative posts were dominated by Spaniards, while Creoles entered the lower ranks of the priesthood. Towards the end of the eighteenth

³ Evelyn J.G. Ahern, "Desarrollo de la educación en Colombia, 1820-1850", *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, 22-23 (1991).

⁴ Jane Meyer Loy, "Primary Education during the Colombian Federation: The School Reform of 1870", *HAHR*, May (1971), 276. Meyer mentions that in 1870, of the nation's 563,000 children, only 32,000 children attended school of any kind.

century, bureaucratic opportunities became open to creoles, which explains their interest in education as a means of accessing positions of power ⁵ An example of the value attributed to enlightenment by young students from San Bartolomé is the letter sent to the Spanish Viceroy in the pre-independence year of 1791:

The students of the Colegio Mayor of San Bartolomé ask, at their own expense, for a professor to instruct them in modern philosophy and mathematics. We students of philosophy in the Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé, appearing in the presence of his excellency, declare that: the present academic board is at odds with the spirit of the century, public taste and the ideas learnt in our earlier education, we feel compelled to ask, from your excellency a grace difficult to reject. We ask for your approval so that at our own expense we can hire a philosophy professor to teach elements of physics and mathematics, botanics and natural history, in one word, a professor from whom we can learn about the land where we live and the wealth surrounding us. The present professor can continue teaching the old peripateticism to those willing to follow this doctrine. We are decided to avoid that nonsense philosophy which corrupts reason and emotions, destroys style and turns men into lovers of their own opinion...We opt for a solution: To pay among all of us for a good professor. To ensure the salary we have decided to give up the bread supplied for the school; the money previously given to the baker will be used as salary; the professor will be paid 572 pesos compared with the 200 currently paid by the school...We prefer to convict ourselves to the rigor of hunger and to give primacy to the nourishment of our souls over the one of our body.⁶

⁵ Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical. Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 7.

⁶ Renán Silva, "Presentación. El ámbito intelectual de la Expedición Botánica", *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, 11, (1983), 134-136. "Los colegiales de filosofía del San Bartolomé solicitan que se les conceda poner a sus expensas un catedrático que les enseñe filosofía moderna y principios de matemáticas. Los actuales cursantes de filosofía en el Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé, ante Vuestra Excelencia com más haya lugar en derecho parecemos y decimos que: siendo la disposición de la última junta de estudios poco conforme al espíritu del siglo, al gusto del público y a los bellas ideas que se nos inspiraron en las primeras clases, nos vemos precisados a solicitar de vuestra excelencia una gracia que atendidas las circunstancias parece imposible dejar de conseguir...Pretendemos que vuestra excelencia nos conceda la facultad de poner a nuestras expensas un profesor de filosofía que nos instruya en elementos de física y matemáticas, que nos dé algunas ideas de botánica e historia general, en una palabra, que nos haga conocer el suelo que habitamos y las riquezas que nos rodean. El catedrático del colegio podrá enseñar a los que quieren el rancio peripato, nosotros estamos resueltos a no dar entrada en nuestro espíritu a esa filosofía

The importance granted to Creole identity over alternative distinctions must be seen within the context of the Colonial experience. During the struggle for Independence, enlightened Creoles voiced their opposition to Spanish rule. Their pride in feeling equal with the Europeans coupled with the discrimination they experienced from them fostered the desire for emancipation. Depicted by Anderson as the 'fatality of trans-Atlantic birth', for the Creole "the accident of birth in the Americas consigned him to subordination - even though in terms of language, religion, ancestry, or manners he was largely indistinguishable from the Spain-born Spaniard."⁷ Bolivar's statement reflects the feeling of ambivalence regarding the Creole identity once the Independence was conquered:

...we, hardly preserving a vestige of our former state, neither Indians nor Europeans, but a race between the original natives and the Spanish usurpers; in short, being by birth Americans, and our rights those of Europe, we are obliged to dispute and combat for these rights against the original natives, and to persevere and maintain ourselves there in opposition to ours invaders, so we find ourselves placed in a most extraordinary and embarrassing dilemma.⁸

delirante que corrompe el entendimiento y el corazón, destruye la elocuencia y convierte a los hombres en fanáticos idólatras de su opinion...Desde luego no ocurre otra [solución] más racional que pagar entre todos un buen catedrático. Para asegurar la renta hemos resuelto ceder el pan que nos suministra el colegio, dándole al profesor el dinero que se da a la panadera por el pan que nos corresponde tendría 572 pesos de sueldo cuando el del colegio solo tiene doscientos".

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983), 58.

⁸ "...nosotros, que apenas conservamos vestigios de lo que en otro tiempo fue, y que por otra parte, no somos indios, ni europeos, sino una especie media entre los legítimos propietarios del país, y los usurpadores españoles; en suma, siendo nosotros americanos por nacimiento, y nuestros derechos los de Europa, tenemos que disputar estos a los del país, y que mantenernos en él contra la invasión de los invasores, así nos hallamos en el caso más extraordinario y complicado." Simon Bolívar, "Carta de Jamaica", in *Carta de Jamaica*, (Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1972), 94-95. The letter was written in Jamaica in 1815. The English translation is also from 1815.

This Creole sense of being equal with the European and different from Indians and blacks fundamentally marked the post-Independence years. The will to civilization became the predominant representation around which literati creoles constructed the independent Republic of Nueva Granada, later to be called Colombia. Male Creole literati enjoyed a privileged position to dictate the how, whom and what of civilization. Their power stemmed from being the owners of civilization in what they depicted as a barbarian society⁹.

The will to civilization did not empower all equally. On the one hand, the will to civilization affected differently several groups depending on where they were placed in the ladder of civilization: the higher the position in civilization, the more recognized was the capacity to act. The diversity of power applies not only in vertical relationship as between priest and Indian, but also horizontally. Even among male Creole literati power was not distributed evenly. It varied with the civilizing mechanisms available to them, as, for example, between priests and lawyers.

The unequal distribution of power between categories stems from an interconnection between location and the capacity to act which was accorded to the diverse groups. It

⁹ I owe the linkage between locational space and capacity to provide meaning to the analysis in Angel Rama's book, *La ciudad letrada*, (Hanover: Ediciones del Norte, 1984). According to Rama the colonial order was transposed on to the geometric distribution of cities. In order to accomplish their civilizing mission, cities demanded the presence of a power-group within them specialized in the civilizing mission. The *Ciudad Letrada* is another city within the 'pioneer city of the civilizing frontier' (24 and 25). Its carriers, the *letrados* were a "Pleiade of ecclesiastics, educators, administrators, professionals and many intellectuals, all of whom wielded both the pen and power in the bureaucracy" (25). This class acted like a sacred class. Its power came from being the "owners of writing in an illiterate society" (33).

becomes clear that Samper's classification is not innocent regarding each group's capacity for conducting the direction of history, that is, of being authors. There is, then, a relationship between the position occupied and the plot being told. In this case the fact that those conducting the Independence Revolution were defined as enlightened gave them power to construct its further development. Those who were entitled to the possession of the attributes of civilization had a priority in the building of the new Republic. Here is Samper's view of the relation between categories and the roles attributed subsequently:

Everywhere the Creole is the brain of the Revolution, without any economy of generosity and sacrifice, while the Indian, black, *mulatto* and the *mestizo* are the material instruments. The Creole is at the same time legislator, administrator, popular leader and chief... He is the one guiding the Revolution and the depository of the philosophy of the Revolution. The remaining races or castes, especially at the beginning, did not do anything other than to obey the impetus of those possessing the prestige of intelligence, intrepidity, and even the superiority of the white race.¹⁰

In this classification women disappear, and non-white races are granted a subordinated character. Florentino González ¹¹ a Liberal reformer was even more explicit in this regard:

We Creoles working for the progress [of Christian civilization] come from the European race...Africans, when slaves, were in contact with the white owner but did not acquire their qualities. Liberated, [blacks] had become what they were in Africa before.

¹⁰ Ibid., 186 - 187.

¹¹ Florentino Gonzalez, (1863); quoted in Laurence E. Prescott, *Candelario Obeso y la iniciación de la poesía negra en Colombia*, (Bogotá: Publicaciones del Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1985), 59.

If there is any hope for freedom in these countries, it has to come from the Creoles (including the *mestizos* with predominance of European blood). Creoles are the only ones who have manifested in favour of freedom and civilization; the only ones possessing qualifications which are a clear example of having aptitude for the public sphere.

White literati men concentrated around them the art of civilization, granting themselves a privileged place in the building of the emergent nation. Still, as mentioned in the following section, not all literati enjoyed the same ability nor had the same mechanisms to direct the masses within the road to civilization.

3.2 Literati as authors of representations

The mechanisms available to allow the group in power to impose their representations are vital to the maintenance of hierarchical relationships. While the establishment of hierarchical differences addresses the questions of 'who is civilized and who isn't' and 'who will be civilized by whom', the mechanisms address the issue of the disposition of 'the means to civilize others'. The importance of various mechanisms varies from one regime of representation to another. For example, the relative importance of the army, the state, the church or educational institutions were different in the mid-nineteenth century and one hundred years later, during *la violencia*.

The capacity to control the state apparatus has been traditionally seen as the preferred mechanism with which to direct a Republic's destiny. In nineteenth century Colombia, this is reflected in the continuous struggle between the two political parties for access to

the presidency. In the period under consideration, 1849-1878, an incipient electoral mechanism granted the presidential chair to the majority party, with two exceptions, in 1851 and 1861. However, while the control of state power was important, it was not the privileged mechanism in the will to civilization regime of representation. The attempts to reduce both the state and the size of the army to a minimum are clear illustrations of the lack of importance granted to the state in the civilizing mission. Rather the struggle was centered on the control of the apparatus considered crucial for the civilizing task. The decisive sites were those vital for the production and exchange of meanings, such as schools, churches, printed materials, laws, constitutions and even dress habits. The mechanisms controlling these everyday practices became the battleground where the struggle for civilization had to be won. Knowledge was a determining factor, both as a legitimizer for those in charge of the civilizing mission and as an instrument for the civilizing task. This explains why literati and not landowners, military or dictators, played the crucial role in the will to civilization. This also explains why the direction of education became the most contentious issue among leading figures of the Liberal and Conservative party.

Table 1 contains the names of the most important literati of the second half of the nineteenth century. All of them were born in the republican era, all but one were men, all but two were Creoles, only four did not share power in the central civilizing mechanisms and none of those four were Creole males.

TABLE 1. PROMINENT LITERATI, 1849 - 1900

NAME	ANTECEDENTS	LITERARY WORK	MAIN CIVIL POST
Manuel Ancizar (1812 - 1882) B. Fontibon	Father Basque Merchant and <i>Hacendado</i> E. Law, Havana	Journalist <i>Lecciones de Psicología</i> <i>Peregrinación de Alpha</i>	Chamber of Deputies, pres. Member of Rionegro Convention Rector, Universidad Nacional and Rosario
Soledad Acosta de Samper (1833 - 1903) B. Bogotá	Daughter of historian Joaquín de Acosta	Journalist <i>La Mujer en la Civilización</i> <i>Los Misioneros en el Nuevo Reino</i> <i>Novelas y Cuadros de Costumbres</i> <i>Dolores, Teresa la Limeña</i> <i>El Corazón de la Mujer</i>	
Rufino José Cuervo (1844 - 1911) B. Bogotá	Father Politician and Vicepresident of Colombia E. Law, San Bartolome	Journalist <i>Gramática Latina</i> <i>Apuntaciones críticas sobre el</i> <i>lenguaje Bogotano. Régimen de</i> <i>la lengua castellana, vida de Rufino</i> <i>Cuervo y noticias de su Epoca.</i>	Governor of Cundinamarca <i>Founder, Sociedad de</i> <i>Educación Primaria</i>
Eugenio Díaz (1804 - 1865) B. Soacha	Peasant Family E. Studied Law but did not finish	<i>Manuela, El Caney del Totumo,</i> <i>Bruna la Carbonera</i>	
Antón Galindo (1834 - 1901) B. Tolima (Bello)	E. Law, San Bartolome	<i>Historia Fiscal y Económica del</i> <i>País</i> <i>Batallas decisivas de la Libertad</i> <i>Anuario Estadístico de Colombia</i> <i>Estudios Económicos y Fiscales</i>	Governor of Cundinamarca Minister Director of Finance Director of the National Statistic Office

Florentino Gonzalez (1805 - 1874) B. Socorro	E. Law, San Bartolomé	Journalist <i>Ciencia Administrativa</i> <i>Ciencia Constitucional y Memorias</i>	Secretary of The Constituyente Assembly Governor of Bogotá Minister of Finance Rector of Universidad Nacional Liberal reformer Presented to Congress a project of constitution in 1851 and 1858
Salvador Camacho Roldán (1827?- 1900) B. Casanare	E. Law	<i>Escritos varios</i> Considered father of sociology	Secretary of Treasury
José Leocadio Camacho (1833 - 1914) B. Bogotá		Founder of Socialist news papers: <i>La Alianza, El Taller, El Grito del Pueblo</i> Writer of dramas	Founder of several societies of artisans. President of the union of workers Member of the assembly of Cundinamarca
José Eusebio Caro (1817 - 1853) B. Ocaña	Father military in Viceroyal govt. E. Law, San Bartolomé	Journalist, Founder of <i>La Civilización</i> <i>La Filosofía del Cristianismo</i>	Chamber of Representatives Secretary of Finance Chief Accountant
Miguel Antonio Caro (1843 - 1909) B. Bogotá	Son of José Eusebio Caro	Founder of the newspaper <i>El Tradicionalista</i> . <i>Gramática Latina, Estudios sobre el Utilitarismo, Tratado del Participio</i>	Vice-President and President of Colombia Author of the <i>Constitución de 1886</i>
Jorge Isaacs (1837 - 1895) B. Cali	Father English Jew from Jamaica <i>Hacienda</i> E. Law, San Bartolomé	<i>Maria</i>	Congress Deputy President of Antioquia

Jose Manuel Marroquín (1827 - 1908) B. Bogotá	National University	<i>Tratado de Ortografía</i> <i>Tratado de Urbanidad</i> <i>Blas Gil, El Moro, Entre Primos</i>	Vice-President and President of Colombia
Rafael Núñez (1825 - 1894) B. Cartagena		Journalist, University Professor <i>Ensayos de Crítica Social</i> <i>La Reforma Política en Colombia</i> <i>Crisis Económica</i>	President of Colombia Secretary of Treasury Congress Deputy Author of the <i>Constitución de 1886</i>
Candelario Obeso (1849 - 1884) B. Mompós	Black, born in a poor family E. Military School	<i>Secundino el zapatero</i> <i>Cantos populares de mi tierra</i> <i>Lecturas para ti</i> <i>Curso de lengua Italiana</i>	
Medardo Rivas (1825 - 1901) B. Bogotá	E. Law, National University	Educator University Professor <i>Los Trabajadores de tierra caliente</i> <i>Conversaciones sobre filosofía</i>	Secretary of the Senate Deputy Governor of Cundinamarca
Ezequiel Rojas (1803-1873) B. Miraflores, Boyacá	E. France and England	University professor <i>Filosofía de la moral</i>	Author of the Liberal party platform
Miguel Samper (1825 - 1899) B. Guaduas	E. Law, San Bartolomé	<i>Escritos Económico-políticos</i> <i>La miseria en Bogotá</i> <i>La protección</i>	Congress deputy Author of Laws abolishing slavery; <i>patronato, fuero eclesiástico</i> Candidate to the Presidency of Colombia
José María Samper (1828 - 1888) B. Honda	Miguel Samper, brother E. Law, San Bartolomé	<i>Apunamientos para la historia ...</i> <i>Ensayo sobre las revoluciones ...</i> <i>La Federación Colombiana</i> <i>Un Alcalde a la antigua ...</i>	Secretary of Chamber of Deputies Senator, member Assembly of Cundinamarca and Santander

These literati occupied the highest positions as novelists, grammarians, political economists, jurists and educators. Jorge Isaacs' *Maria* is considered the most popular nineteenth-century novel in Latin America; Eugenio Díaz' *Manuela* and José Manuel Marroquín's *El Moro* were well known novels; Manuel Ancizar's *Peregrinación de Alpha* and Felipe Pérez' *Geografía Física y Política de los Estados Unidos de Colombia* were written as part of their participation in the most important scientific mission, *La Comisión Corográfica*. The importance of mid-nineteenth century grammarians has been acknowledged.¹² Rufino J. Cuervo's *Apuntaciones Críticas sobre el Lenguaje Bogotano* reached its fourth edition by 1885; José Manuel Marroquín's *Tratado de ortología y ortografía Castellana* has been republished several times and, still in print, has been used by several generations to learn spelling. Marroquín's originality lies in the pedagogical method: words are presented in rhymes which must be memorized. Miguel Antonio Caro and Rufino Cuervo were both authors of a *Latin Grammar* which went through several editions. Caro's work has been compiled in eight volumes.

Mid-nineteenth century philosophical work was less known than the contributions in literature and grammar but, nonetheless, played an important role for the literati. Creole literati were open to the influence of Spanish, French and English philosophers such as Feijóo, Jovellanos, Montesquieu, Rousseau or Bentham. Bentham, for example,

¹² Malcolm Deas, "Miguel Antonio Caro and Friends: Grammar and Power in Colombia", *History Workshop Journal*, 34, (1992). The information of literati as grammarians is taken from Deas.

exchanged correspondence with Bolívar, Miranda and Santander.¹³ At the centre of the philosophical controversy was the introduction of Utilitarianism, considered at odds with the principles of the Catholic religion. Ezequiel Rojas, considered "the most conspicuous exponent of utilitarianism,"¹⁴ was a student of Jean Baptiste Say in France and Bentham in England. He had a definitive influence on the liberalism of the mid-nineteenth century. For forty years, he taught law, morality and political economy in the Law Department at San Bartolomé, where most of the literati received their education. José Eusebio Caro, on the contrary, was the first critic of Utilitarianism. His son, Miguel Antonio, continued to his attack on Utilitarianism based on its pernicious effect on morality and its contradictions with Catholic principles.

Political Economy and Sociology were other keystones of literati thought. The brothers Miguel and José María Samper, both students of Ezequiel Rojas, are considered the most distinguished representatives of *laissez-faire* principles in Colombia; both were also convinced of the superiority of British culture and were critical of Spanish institutions, seeing more as barriers in the road to progress.¹⁵ Miguel Samper has been considered

¹³ Among Bolívar's correspondence there are several letters from Bentham and two responses from Bolívar. In one of them, Bolívar mentioned that he ordered the translation and printing of his *Catecismo de Economía*, because it was "obra digna de conocerse". As it is mentioned later, in 1828 Bolívar forbade the use of Bentham's books. Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, *El Pensamiento Colombiano en el Siglo XIX*, (Bogotá: Editorial Temis, 1982), 341.

¹⁴ Ibid., 136.

¹⁵ The best example is José M. Samper *Ensayo Sobre las Revoluciones Políticas y la Condición Social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, (París: Imprenta de E. Thunot).

the father of Political Economy, a well-known defender of free trade, and a successful merchant. As a personal figure, he was considered the archetype of the Englishman.¹⁶

The literati played key political roles and these endeavors largely paralleled their activities as literati. Miguel Samper not only wrote about Political Economy but also wrote laws ending slavery, state monopolies and *patronato*. He opposed the economic measures of Rafael Nuñez during *La Regeneración* period, and became a candidate for the presidency of Colombia in 1897. As a journalist, José María Samper advocated the re-expulsion of Jesuits and as a legislator he presented to Congress several projects of Constitutional reform. Ezequiel Rojas' views on Utilitarianism were reflected also in the document which was considered the first platform of the Liberal party. In 'What does the Liberal Party Want?', he envisioned the Republic he would welcome in the future which embodied the principles he defended in the university classroom. José Eusebio Caro did the same as author of the Conservative party programme. Years later his son, Miguel Antonio Caro co-authored with Rafael Nuñez the Constitution of 1886, which dominated Colombian political life for one hundred and five years. Florentino González, Anibal Galindo and Manuel Murillo Toro revolutionized the economic system inherited from the colonial period and introduced important reforms in the communication and railroad systems. Several literati even occupied the presidency of Colombia as was the case of Miguel Antonio Caro, Rafael Nuñez and José Manuel Marroquín.

¹⁶ Carlos Martínez Silva, "El gran ciudadano", reprinted in *Escritos Varios*, (Bogotá: 1954), 173.

Still, not all literati were granted the same place in the front stage to participate in the construction of the regime of representation. A small group of them remained in the backstage, opposing and resisting the more 'authorized' voices. They gave voice to the artisans' world view (José Leocadio Camacho); the position of women, (Soledad Acosta de Samper); the life of blacks, (Candelario Obeso's novels), and peasants (in Eugenio Díaz' *Manuela*).

Thus, the linkage between the capacity for 'authoring' was linked to the identities favoured in the regime of representation. Male Creole literati adopted the role of primary authors of the civilizing project. Blacks, women and Indians were discussed and their incapacity for civilization was explained. The privileged space enjoyed by literati in the will to civilization empowered their vision of the world relative to that of other groups.

The will to civilization as a regime of representation does not correspond either to the visions invented by a group of literati or to a 'real' world waiting to be represented. To sustain the first causation would be to adopt a subjectivist position while to sustain the second would exemplify a deterministic fallacy. To avoid one or the other, is to pose the existence of an uninterrupted process of exchange between authors and their representations and between diverse representations as perceived from different places. The regime of representation is built out of a process of exchange, in time and space of several representations of the same events perceived by diverse author-creators. This process is central to Bakhtin's *dialogism*. For him the real and the represented world can

not be fused into one nor are they independent: "The real and the represented world resist fusion...they are nevertheless indissolubly tied up with each other and find themselves in continual mutual interaction; uninterrupted exchange goes on between them".¹⁷

The regime of representation which I call the will to civilization was built in an exchange of diverse views about how to forge civilization, and in an exchange between the 'self' and the 'other' identities. Literati diverged in their conception of how to reach civilization depending on where their location was relative to others (Europeans but also local groups), their race and place of birth (Creoles, Indians, mestizos or blacks) and their gender. Male Creole literati did not share the experiences of Creole women, blacks or Indian women or men. Religion was in a different location regarding the civilizing mission than was science or the law. The prevalent regime of representation was built out of the encounter of these multiple views. The interaction between the authors and their context is also key to understand the disagreements among literati about the control of those mechanisms crucial for the civilizing endeavor. At stake was the capacity of certain representations to define the path to civilization.

Defining the will to civilization and charting its path was a contradictory task for a divided post-colonial state. The explanation of this contradictory process is this

¹⁷ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 253-254.

dissertation main endeavor. A key component is the geographical context. Among the different cities, Bogotá was the privileged centre for literati, whose proliferation inspired Miguel Samper to label the city *ciudad parasita* (parasite city). According to his description, since the colonial period, Bogotá has been an "artificial centre of power, and of political, religious, commercial and industrial influence"; he also refers to Bogotá as the "residence of civil and military servants, job seekers, and unemployed, retired, lawyers, clients and knights-errant."¹⁸ The character of Bogotá as *Ciudad Letrada*, has several distinctive features when compared with other Latin American cities. First, the proportion of people living in the capital (40,000 people in 1871) when compared with the total population in the country (2.9 million) was the lowest of any urban centre-periphery within the Latin American region.¹⁹ Second, Bogotá was the only city within the Latin American region whose population had declined since the beginning of the century (the capital had 2.9% of the total population in 1808). Third, Colombia was the only country in the region with no single centre of power concentrated in the capital. Eight additional cities had more than 10 thousand people (Medellin, Cali, Pasto, Socorro, San Gil, Soatá, Velez and Barranquilla). It is in light of this fragmentation of power in relation to the total population and the competition of other centres of power, that the

¹⁸ Miguel Samper, "La Miseria en Bogotá", in *Escritos Político-Económico de Miguel Samper*, II (Bogotá: Editorial Cromos, 1986), 20-23.

¹⁹ In Colombia only 1.4% of the total population lived in the capital. By the same year in Uruguay, 25% of the national population was located in the capital; in Argentina's capital, 10.8%; in Paraguay's capital, 7.6%; Ecuador's capital, 7.1%; Peru's capital, 3.7%; Bolivia's capital, 3.5%; Venezuela's capital, 2.8%. Regarding the diversification of power, a similar situation existed also in Ecuador which had two centres of power, Quito and Guayaquil. See James R. Scobie, "The Growth of the Cities," in *Latin America Economy and Society, 1870 - 1930*, ed. Leslie Bethel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 149-181.

power of the literati has to be understood. One of the characteristics of the nineteenth century was the 'fragmentation of the dominant class' in local powers. This fragmentation provide a specific content to the political struggle (regional distribution of power) and to the lack of a hegemonizing project.²⁰

The division among literati is as important as their number. The census of 1871 estimated the existence of 6,181 literati, out of a population of almost 3 million people, distributed as follows:²¹

Educators	1 728
Priests	1 573
Lawyers	1 037
Nuns	767
Medical doctors	727
Engineers	275
Intellectuals	82

Compared with the total population, this means the existence of 2 literati per thousand people. In order of priority, priests, educators, and lawyers were the groups contending in the civilizing mission. That explains in part the disputes between Liberals and Conservatives with regard to the presence of priests in politics and the arguments about religious freedom in schools. Political power was restricted to a similarly narrow sample of the population. The low number corresponds to the requisites of citizenship

²⁰ Marco Palacios, "La Fragmentación regional de las Clases Dominantes en Colombia: Una Perspectiva Histórica," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 42 (1980). This aspect will be treated separately.

²¹ Felipe Perez, *Geografía General Física y Política de los Estados Unidos de Colombia y Geografía Particular de la Ciudad de Bogotá*, (Bogotá: Imprenta de Echeverría Hermanos, 1883).

established in the Constitution of 1843: to be a citizen one had to be at least 21 years of age, male owner of land valued at least \$300, or to have yearly rents of \$150, to know how to read and write, and to pay taxes.²² The proportion is even more revealing in a context where most of the population was illiterate. The power accrued to male literati was promoted by the low school attendance of women. Of the 30,000 students in basic education in 1847, less than 5,000, or 1 in 6, were girls.²³

The following sections illustrate the exchange of representations around the will to civilization through the authorship of two leading and representative male Creole literati, José Maria Samper and Miguel Antonio Caro. The aim is to illustrate through these two examples the patterns followed by two leading figures of the mid-nineteenth century. They had in common their position in the highest hierarchy, from which they interpreted the world. Originally, they diverged in their perception of how to reach civilization. Samper, militant in the Liberal party, was a strong supporter of the free circulation of words proclaiming individual sovereignty. Conservative Miguel Antonio Caro defended a limited production of words protecting their divine origin.

²² Ibid., 178-179.

²³ Felipe Perez, *Geografía General Física y Política de los Estados Unidos de Colombia y Geografía Particular de la Ciudad de Bogotá*. 281.

3.2.1 José Maria Samper

José María Samper is one of the most important architects of the 'will of civilization'. He symbolizes the power of words when pronounced by a Creole literati. When the Liberal regime began in 1849 he was only 21 years old, had already studied law in San Bartolomé, practised journalism and delivered public speeches. During the presidential period of 1849 he worked in the office of the Treasury, and was a part-time university professor. He joined the *Sociedad Democratica de Artesanos*, for what he called 'pedagogical' reasons, i.e. to gain the artisans to the Liberal side. Samper said of the power of words: "It was believed that the best way was to inflame their passions (because [artisans] did not have any ideas) by speaking to them of emancipation, equality and rights (never about obligations) and to inflame their self-esteem with the perspective of their transformation in a political and social power, through the unity of their dispersion." (Samper's own emphasis)²⁴

When the artisans expelled Samper from their society, he and other literati formed a parallel society, the *Escuela Republicana*, dedicated to politics, literature, philosophy and arts. Its members, literate men, are depicted by Samper as "all socialists, without knowing or understanding what socialism was, just in love with the word, its political

²⁴ José M. Samper, *Historia de un Alma*, vol 1 (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1848), 218. For a description of the relationship between literati and artisans, see chapter 5, section 5.7 "The encounter between civilizers and artisans".

novelty and the political eccentricity of French writers".²⁵ By this time he had his own bi-weekly journal, the *Sur-Americano*, from whose pages he mounted in 1850 a campaign to expel the Jesuits from the country. Once the decision to expatriate them was taken, he participated in its implementation.

Samper's book, *Apuntamientos para la Historia Política i Social de la Nueva Granada desde 1810 i especialmente de la administración del 7 de Marzo* (1853), is a tribute to the Liberal government in which he was an active participant. He equated the day the Liberals came to power to a revolution - the continuation of the 1810 struggle for Independence. For Samper, revolutions are conducive to freedom, civilization and progress. This march is halted when "*freedom* is substituted for the fallacy of *order*, when *patriotism* is named *dissolution*, when power is based on *authority* and not in *opinion*, in the people."²⁶

The tension around the self/other distinction became clear in his major political treatise *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas y la Condición Social de las Repúblicas Colombianas* (1861). This essay targets the European audience, in an attempt to change their ignorance with respect to New Granada (Colombia). The European, he said, "had more interest in the study of our volcanos than our societies, they know our insects better

²⁵ Ibid., 256.

²⁶ José M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia Política i Social de la Nueva Granada*, (Bogotá:Imprenta del Neo-Granadino, 1853), 576 - 577.

than our literature, our alligators better than the actions of our statesmen."²⁷ His argument was based on the belief that the feeling of hostility and disdain on the part of the European resulted from this ignorance. "they have disdained us, by dispensing with the obligation of understanding us."²⁸

Samper, like most Creole literati, practised politics, pedagogy, journalism and literature together with commerce and agricultural activities. Samper epitomized the tendency of the mid-nineteenth century elite to combine and move from one fraction of capital to the other. Samper was attracted by the prosperity of tobacco's exports and moved to Ambalema, the exporting centre. In Ambalema he was a lawyer, a merchant and an *hacendado*. Despite Samper's rhetorical defense of *laissez faire*, as *hacendado* he used the *arrendatario* system. He wrote: "while my *arrendatarios* produced tobacco, I continued with my historical and literary production, and was involved in the publication of my *Apuntamientos*."²⁹ During the coup of 1854 led by a faction of Liberals, *draconianos* supported by artisans, Samper enlisted in the army. One of Samper's missions was the elaboration of the map of the Magdalena River, its points of defense and offense and other strategic locations. On December the 4th, Samper's squadron took Bogotá and deposed General Melo. The artisans or *democraticos*, "most of them, almost

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 6.

²⁹ José M. Samper, *Historia de un Alma*, vol II, 285.

three hundred were sent to Panamá...where they perished due to the detrimental weather of the Panamanian Coast."³⁰

That literature and politics supported each other was not strange to Samper's thought. The years from 1855 to 1857 are described by him as ones of 'literary and political struggles' fought in the plot of one of his dramas³¹, or from the pages of the newspaper *El Neo-Granadino*. In 1858 Samper and his family travelled to the civilized (European) world for 'political and literary' reasons: "The political atmosphere [of New Granada] was suffocating and I wanted to know how to experience life in French, English, Italian and good Castilian languages..."³² During his encounter with the "old world" he began to reconsider some ideas that before seemed irreconcilable. In London he noticed that 'order' and 'freedom' were not severed one from the other, that an 'orderly freedom' is born from the Law.³³ In France he realized that "the democratic spirit exaggerated by the passion of equality" was leading the French people towards either communism or socialism.³⁴ By looking at democratic governments of England and America he

³⁰ Ibid., 94 - 95.

³¹ The following is the list of dramas written by Samper: *La Conspiracion de Septiembre, El Hijo del Pueblo, Dios corrige, no mata, Los Aguinaldos, Un Alcalde a la Antigua y dos primos a la Moderna, Percances de un empleo*. According to Samper's own description, some of his dramas captured historical and political events, others were attempted to change habits and behaviour, and others were inspired by the spirit of revenge against a main character or the political life.

³² José M. Samper, *Historia de un Alma*, vol II, 142. This thought reflects the tendency among literati to equate civilization and language. This idea will be developed in the next chapter.

³³ Ibid., 162.

³⁴ Ibid., 329.

concluded that democracy required an experienced government, and education of the masses.³⁵ By looking at the experience of Catholicism in France, Italy, Spain, he arrived at the conclusion that "the main accomplishments of civilization had their inspiration in the Catholic religion."³⁶ He concluded that only a mixture of liberalism and conservatism could be guarantees of stability.

His encounter with civilization, according to Samper's own description, resulted in a crisis not only in his political thought but also in his literary work. Now he noticed how his previous work was inappropriate from the point of view of correctness in the use of Castilian language and the exuberant expression of everything felt or thought. In 1864, Samper returned to Colombia as representative to the Congress of the province of Cundinamarca. He joined the Conservative party and was an active participant in the period of *La Regeneración*.

The life of Jose María Samper clearly illustrates the dialogic character of representations. First, he represents the presence of multiple voices within the same individual, often contradictory one to the other: as a Liberal he defends *laissez-faire* principles but as a landowner he is an *hacendado*. As a member of the ethnographic society of Paris he advocates the right to be known and understood by his European counterpart, but he denies the same right at home to Indians, blacks and artisans. Second, Samper epitomizes

³⁵ Ibid., 328.

³⁶ Ibid., 339.

the exchange that took place between actors and their context, without one being either determined by, or independent from, the other. As a Liberal engaged in the establishment of the individual sovereign as a condition preceding civilization, he argued against the Conservatives' defense of religion as the road to follow. However, Samper's encounter with the 'civilized' world indicated, to him, the opposite: that civilization and religion coincided. Samper's own crisis reflects as well the crisis of Liberal thought in the 1870s in which the religious question played an important role. Conservatives were defeated militarily in the war against the Liberal government. But the battle for representation around the will to civilization centred on the individual sovereign began to erode.

3.2.2 Miguel Antonio Caro

Caro was born in Bogotá in 1843. His father was Jose Eusebio Caro, a philosopher and poet, author, with Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, of the platform of the Conservative party. Jose Eusebio Caro's main solution to social problems was pedagogical - moral education, the inculcation of values and the formation of character.³⁷ Jose Eusebio Caro left the country in 1850, threatened by the Liberal government which had come to power in 1849. He died after three years of exile on the journey home, when Miguel Antonio was nine years old.³⁸ Miguel Antonio's education as a boy was provided by his

³⁷ Jaime Jaramillo, *El Pensamiento Colombiano en el Siglo XIX*, (Bogotá: Editorial Temis, 1982): 64 - 67 and chapter XII.

³⁸ Jose Eusebio Caro, poet and politician, mounted a severe opposition, from his newspaper *La Civilización*, to the Liberal government in power since 1849. In 1850 a judiciary process initiated by Samper against Caro ended in Caro's exile to New York.

grandfather who initiated him in the knowledge of Latin; he learned English with his grandfather's friend, a professor from Oxford. Miguel Antonio studied philosophy in the *Colegio de San Bartolomé* until 1861 when the Jesuits were expelled from the country and the school was turned into a military headquarters.

Miguel Antonio was a grammarian and a philologist, an opponent of utilitarianism, and a successful politician. Together with Rufino Jose Cuervo, he published the well known grammar *Gramatica de la lengua latina para el uso de los que hablan castellano*. He founded the Colombian Academy of Language and made translations of Virgil's Aeneid. At age 26, Caro published his essays against utilitarianism.³⁹ The motivation for the essays was his view that: "[i]n the world there is nothing more opposed to Christianity than utilitarianism; and as a consequence, there is nothing more unfavourable to society and more damaging to the young people". He named utilitarianism the school of *Satan* because it did not acknowledge divine law nor did it further a desire for God or being like God. Caro saw the Liberal period as the incarnation of utilitarianism in a political system.⁴⁰

Caro criticized the Constitutions of the Liberal era using grammatical and ideological arguments. Regarding article 7 of the Constitution of 1863 which declared "Freedom of expression of thoughts through the oral or written word *without any limit*", Caro based

³⁹ Miguel A. Caro, *Estudio sobre el Utilitarismo*, (Bogotá: Imprenta a cargo de Focion Mantilla, 1869). Reprinted in Miguel A. Caro, *Obras*, vol I (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1962).

⁴⁰ Ibid., 157 - 171. See specially the chapter "Extension del poder público. El Utilitarismo Liberal".

his opposition on two grounds, moral and grammatical: morally, because words could cause more moral damage and be more cruel than shots; grammatically, because the article contains a "coarse gallicism" improper of a founding law. Caro concluded that "our legislators are as negligent in moral matters as they are in grammar: Utilitarian in everything."⁴¹ The Liberal's disdain for the purity of language was openly stated in the preface to one book by a prominent Liberal: "Those pretending purity of language would criticize my language as disobedient of the rules of good speech: but I have never seen their authority as a lighthouse for avoiding collisions against the rocks. Those gentlemen have always been for me honest idiots."⁴²

1868 was the moment for Caro's appearance in the parliamentary debates. During this period the Congress and newspapers were Caro's main battlegrounds. In 1871, Miguel Antonio Caro published a weekly journal entitled *El Tradicionista*. The leaflet announcing its publication described the journal as an anonymous society organized by members of the Catholic party [Conservative party] with the intention to *imprint, import and spread* Catholic literature.

⁴¹ Ibid., 161.

⁴² Justo Arosema, *Apuntamientos para la Introducción a las Ciencias Morales y Políticas*, (Nueva York: Imprenta de don Juan de la Granja, 1840).

3.3 The 'will to civilization' as a regime of representation

The second half of the nineteenth century was a decisive period in Colombian history. Forty years had passed since Independence in 1810. The main actors, those who had struggled for independence and those forming part of the first generation born in the Republic, shared a feeling of the persistence of a colonial past that must still be superseded and the image of a future to be constructed. The years to come were years of reform endorsed to override the past or to precipitate the future. In the evocation of past and future are condensed images of 'who we were' and 'who we will be', power-images of who should carry the rite of passage from the past to the future and how it could be done, spatial-images of these sites where the transformation would take place.

Underneath these images there was a strong will on the part of the group that emerged with power in the post-colonial period. This will was stronger than the will to accumulation of wealth because it was considered a prerequisite to the latter. This was the **will to civilization**. The will to civilization preceded the struggle for accumulation of capital and entailed as much violence as the accumulation of wealth. To defend the cause of civilization, the recently born Conservative party created a newspaper named *La Civilización*. The aim was clear: 'With the publication of this paper our purpose is to promote and defend civilization in Nueva Granada and Spanish America.'⁴³ The political economy of civilization was also clearly stated: "We call civilization the means

⁴³ Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, "La Civilización se Define", *La Civilización*, No. 1, August 9 (1849). Reprinted in *Escritos sobre Economía Política*, (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia), 73.

accumulated by humanity in the search for perfection and happiness."⁴⁴ The desire for civilization and the formation of self/other distinctions appeared in the hierarchical character with which civilization was endowed:

We call a society civilized if it has an advantage over another in knowledge, morality and wealth. From the horde of savage nomads, without laws, authority, principles, almost without distinction from animals, to those nations admired by all because of their enlightened and material development, there is a vast hierarchy of nations, each one naming, as civilized, those with a better condition and, as barbarian, those behind.⁴⁵

The acquisition of knowledge and morality were seen as the means to accumulate civilization. Whereas in a regime centred on the accumulation of wealth, as in *laissez faire* capitalism, wealth becomes a realm separate from the individual, in the will to civilization the process of accumulation is internal to the individual mind. Accumulation is imposed within the individual's mind: 'We must look for the motor of civilization in men's interior...It is always a belief, an idea, knowledge, that pulls men out of barbarism and conducts them along the road to civilization.'⁴⁶ In the second issue the notion is broadened by José Eusebio Caro in an article entitled "The moral question":

We have expressed our commitment to defend the cause of civilization...we have demonstrated that the source of men's conduct is not external causes; men's actions obey internal causes acting over their spirit; as a consequence, good doctrines are the first motor of civilization, in the same way that bad doctrines are the force that brings him back to barbarity...We have demonstrated that morality is the first element, the mother-element of civilization; [morality] is the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 74.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 78.

essence of civilization. Who says immorality says barbarism. [Caro's own emphasis]⁴⁷

An interpretation based on the accumulation of wealth disregards this important aspect in whose name the main civil wars were fought and whose cause was an open contest between Liberals and Conservatives:

This question, the moral question, is the only one, the true question. This question explains the presence of the Conservative party and the red [Liberal] party. It could not be another. This question will be the last one. The day we can solve this question we would be independent, settled, free and moral...And this last question, the moral question, will be the longest, the fiercest and the most ferocious. It is more difficult to be moral than to be independent...⁴⁸

In the will to civilization lay the premises of the antagonisms and the numerous civil wars of the past century. The democratic system was embedded in the contest between the two parties over the route to civilization. From their beginnings the parties set up a choice between the two plans for achieving civilization. The day the Liberal party came to power was labelled the 'Revolution of March 7, 1849'. This revolution was presented as a continuation of the revolution for independence in 1810. In the words of Liberal José María Samper, "[the period] beginning March 7 1849, comprised the resurrection of freedom, the development of national prosperity, the progress of a republican civilization influencing the whole Colombian continent, and the real foundation of democracy as the

⁴⁷ José E. Caro, "La Cuestión Moral" in *La Civilización*, 2, August 16 (1849). Reprinted in *Antología Verso y Prosa*, ed. José E. Caro (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1951), 297.

⁴⁸ José E. Caro, "La libertad y el partido conservador", in *La Civilización*, 5 and 6, Septiembre (1849). Reprinted in *Escritos Histórico-Políticos*, ed. José E. Caro (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1981), 59.

government of the century."⁴⁹ The same date, "March 7, 1849", when published in a Conservative newspaper, evoked terror. José Eusebio Caro, in an article entitled "March 7, 1849", anticipated, in the following way, the expected reaction on the part of his readers: "Nothing appears more neutral than the title of this article; however, its reading would cause a tremor in more than one reader, like the reaction of an injured person at the contact of the cold scalpel over his wound."⁵⁰ Images of revolution used by the Liberal party in power served to reinforce a feeling of discontinuity with the colonial past and to propel programs of reform. For Liberals the revolution of 1810 appeared as an incomplete revolution: "Independence was an uncontested event; but it was necessary to build a nation, to inaugurate civil and political freedom, and to create a new society...among the rubbish of an arbitrary and antisocial regime."⁵¹ Images of terror on the part of the Conservative party were attached to the fear of losing the part of civilization already gained under the Spanish colonization.

Thus, Liberals and Conservatives struggled fundamentally over the route to civilization.

"The search for civilization against barbarism"⁵² is one the pillars of the Conservative

⁴⁹ José M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia Política i Social de la Nueva Granada desde 1810, i especialmente de la Administración del 7 de Marzo*, (Bogotá: Imprenta del Neo-Granadino, 1853), 13. The denomination Gran Colombia referred to the union of New Granada, Venezuela and Ecuador. Venezuela withdrew from the Gran Colombia in 1829 and Ecuador in 1830. In the Constitution of 1863 the New Granada name changed to Estados Unidos de Colombia, and later on Colombia.

⁵⁰ José Eusebio Caro, "El 7 de Marzo de 1850", *La Civilización*, 19 - 27, (1850); reprinted in *Escritos Histórico-Político de José Eusebio Caro*, ed. Simon Aljure Chalera (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1981), 197.

⁵¹ Jose M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia Política i Social de la Nueva Granada*, 37.

⁵² Quoted in José E. Caro, "Declaratoria Política"; reprinted in *Escritos Histórico-Políticos*, 183.

party's program and for Conservative Caro, civilization was a moral question. For the Liberal, Samper, civilization referred to the search for 'individual sovereignty'. According to Samper, the public spirit since Independence is a progression "along the road of civilization searching for the advent of individual sovereignty as the final aspiration of politics and philosophy."⁵³

3.4 The 'will to civilization' as a contradictory space

The 'will to civilization' entailed an assessment of the present in relation to the colonial past and a desired future. It also entailed an assessment of the images of the 'self' in relation to the 'civilized other'. Civilization appeared in a contradictory way: regarding the past, the War of Independence had emancipated the country from a colonial regime whose domination over 300 years had been exercised in the name of civilization. Regarding the future, the struggle around civilization meant a process of dis-encounter (*desencuentro*) and of encounter (*encuentro*) with the "civilized", European, culture. Unlike the European experience, where the paradigm of civilization arose in direct opposition to the barbarian character of the non-European world, in post-colonial Colombia, the regime of representation is caught between a desire and denial of civilization. The encounter between the colonial past, the civilized other, and the inner, heterogeneous world - a mixture of the barbarian and the civilized- was a violent encounter. In the European case, the forging of a civilized identity involved the

⁵³ Jose M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia Política i Social de la Nueva Granada*, 10.

encounter with an external other living outside the frontier of civilization. This external other was the barbarian, the outsider, the foreigner.⁵⁴ Civilization was then equated to European progress, and thus was provided with a 'universal' character.

A first contradiction of the will to civilization is the internal/external character of the civilizing process. The will to civilization appeared as both external and internal, geographically and in the sense of internalized in the body. Nueva Granada was a métis society. This heterogeneity defined the situation as it was lived and also structured the institutions dreamed of -which were both similar to and differentiable from, European ones. Once again Bolivar's words are enlightening:

The occurrences in *Terra Firma* have proved to us, that institutions purely representative, are not adequate to our character, customs and understandings...Until our patriots acquire those talents and political virtues which distinguish our North American brethren, I am very much afraid that our popular systems, far from being favorable to us, will occasion our ruin.⁵⁵

This situation is captured in a 19th century novel *Manuela*: "there [outside] you have seen the civilization we must emulate; here you have seen what vices we must amend."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ The problematic of self/other in the European identity appears in *Europe and its others*, Vol 1, eds. Frances Barker et al (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985).

⁵⁵ "Los acontecimientos de la Tierra Firme nos han probado que las instituciones perfectamente representativas no son adecuadas a nuestro carácter, costumbres y luces actuales...En tanto que nuestros compatriotas no adquieran los talentos y las virtudes políticas que distinguen a nuestros hermanos del Norte, los sistemas enteramente populares, lejos de sernos favorables, temo mucho que vengan a ser nuestra ruina." Simón Bolívar, "Carta de Jamaica", 112-114.

⁵⁶ Eugenio Díaz, *Manuela*, (Bogotá: Editorial Kelly,).436.

As will be elaborated later, in this contradiction lies one of the key aspects in the capacity to form a nation-state in the modern sense of the word: one in which the means of violence will be concentrated in the state, away from the relations of production.⁵⁷

The post-colonial character of the civilizing process constitutes another source of tension in this plurality of encounters: If colonialism was conducted in the name of civilization, how does one vindicate the search for civilization in a recently independent republic? and whose civilization, the one practised by Spaniards who were expelled in the recent struggle for independence, or that of the indigenous civilization? The colonial past exercised domination through a series of symbols, institutions and well established identities. Were these to be retained and thus establish a continuity with the new republic? What would happen to language and religion, the most important signifiers of civilization in colonial times, to the central state, the benchmark of colonial domination, or to racial and gender identities which had provided the mode of classification in the colonial past? Since the conquest and during the colonial period, 'civilization' brought with it an 'external' character, in the form of an opposition between the European colonizer and the savage, barbarian, character of the colonized population. With the Revolution of Independence, the external/internal distinction disappears. 'Civilization' and 'barbarian' met together within the same territorial space. Once the distinction has been lost, how does one proceed? By what means was civilization to be implemented?

⁵⁷ This subject appears in a more detailed way in the chapter 7.

A way to solve the impasse was to create a divide within the civilized world. This solution was proposed by Liberal Miguel Samper who distinguished a Northern and a Mediterranean world, attributing 'civilization' to the former.⁵⁸ The exclusion of Spain allowed them to solve the dilemma embracing the Anglo-Saxon civilization as the road to follow, rejecting the Spanish tradition. A different solution, associated with the Conservative party, was to establish a continuity between the colonial past and the new republic. The colonial world, independence and republic formed one and the same tradition. This thought is advocated by Conservative Miguel Antonio Caro: "1810 does not mark a division between our grandparents and us; the political emancipation does not assume the improvisation of a new civilization; we cannot invent civilizations. Religion, language, habits and traditions: we have not invented these things; we have received these things from generation to generation, from hand to hand, since the time of Conquest and they will be transmitted to our children and grandchildren as the legacy of a civilized race."⁵⁹

The 'barbarian' character of the colonized world offered another source of tension for the newly emancipated generation in power composed mainly of male Creoles. They could not entirely accept the 'barbarian' character of the Indigenous population. To accept this postulate would have meant to surrender to governance by the civilized

⁵⁸ This alternative was espoused by Jose Maria Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Politicas*, (Paris:Imprenta de E. Thunet y Ca., 1861).

⁵⁹ Miguel A. Caro "La Fundacion de Bogotá", quoted in Jaime Jaramillo, *El Pensamiento Colombiano en el Siglo XIX*, (Bogotá: Editorial Temis, 1982), 82. Jaramillo offers a broad vision of Caro's call for a return to the Spanish heritage.

nations. This dilemma appears clearly in Miguel Samper's rejection of Western interpretations of the Latin American region.⁶⁰ Samper reacts to the interpretation of Latin America by a certain British sociologist (Benjamin Kidd) in his book *Social Evolution*. According to Samper's own summary, Kidd acknowledged the richness in natural resources of the Central and South American continent but pointed to the danger of their possession by an inferior race. He wrote:

There is among us a belief that these countries are inhabited by the European race and that they belong to western civilization, given the fact that they are European colonies and have gained independence in a similar way to the United States. Nothing vindicates the way we see them. In all the territory mentioned above, more than three quarters of their inhabitants descend from Indians, imported blacks and a mixture of races... [these countries] have exhibited a general absence of the public and private feeling characteristic of the countries with highest social development... The lack of the most elementary qualities of social efficiency on the part of the races would lead to the waste of the natural resources of one of the wealthiest regions on earth. We can acknowledge the right of property, but not the right to impede [our] use of the vast amount of resources under their custody...⁶¹

To accept Kidd's premise about the barbarian character of the Indigenous people would mean to surrender to governance by the civilized countries, rendering the struggle for emancipation in 1810 superfluous.

The alternative, would be to favour the rescue of a local culture. This alternative was ruled out as a possibility by Liberals and Conservatives. The power of the lettered elite

⁶⁰ Miguel Samper, "Libertad y Orden" in *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, 9 - 10.

⁶¹ Ibid., 10. Quoted in Samper.

rested on their role in maintaining the continuity of the civilized. They embraced the 'other' civilization. By ensuring a place in the future structure of power for the past 'other' civilization they fostered a system of domination based on closeness to, or distance from, civilization. The following question as formulated by José Maria Samper illustrates this point: "Have the Granadine people been enlightened enough to be able to create a place for themselves in humanity, to search for the road to a new civilization?".⁶² The answer is no. "People have been isolated from the universal life, reduced to stupidity at the hands of the tyranny; they had been subjected to the pernicious influence of religion and slavery; without commerce, arts, schools, without habits and without a national character; these people are unable to produce a radical thought to guide their movements to a new social order".

Establishing a line of continuity between the civilization they received at the moment of conquest and the civilization to be followed in the new republic allowed them, Creole men, to be the legitimate carriers of the civilizing process. That was the feeling of Miguel Antonio Caro⁶³ when he declared that "[o]ur history from the moment of the Conquest until today is the history of the same people and of one and the same civilization". The Indigenous history was suppressed. The act of disregarding the local history is an act of violence, a **violence of representation** written within the post-colonial will to civilization.

⁶² José M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la historia política i social de la Nueva Granada*, 25.

⁶³ Miguel A. Caro *La Fundacion de Bogotá*. Quoted in Jaime Jaramillo, *El Pensamiento Colombiano en el Siglo XIX*, 82.

3.5 Violence and identity formation

In Colombia during the colonial period domination was exercised in such a way that power relations were institutionalized on the bases of certain identities: Peninsulars Spaniards, Creoles (*criollos*),⁶⁴ Indians, blacks, women. The political space was the exclusive privilege of the Spaniards who occupied important public jobs. Practices such as slavery and *resguardos* (Indian communal lands) were attached to black and Indian identities. Once the revolution of independence had disengaged New Granada from the colonial order, the establishment of a new system of differences became a central issue.

The establishment of a 'hierarchical system of distinction' was perhaps the most crucial issue for the reformers of the New Granada in their aim to end a form of domination (the colonial one) and to install a new civilizing order. The 'form of government' hinged on the identification of hierarchical differences separating governors and governed, those able to govern and those subject to be governed. The identification of differences is the signal of how to govern and what strategies must be followed to guarantee good government. The following question reflects this concern: "Can a person who is manumitted proceed suddenly out of the house of his owner to establish industries? Can

⁶⁴ The antagonism between Spaniard and *criollo* was central during the process of emancipation. *Criollos* were those children of Spanish parents born in the American territory. They were considered '*manchados de la tierra*', with an 'earth stigma'. See José A. Ocampo, "El Proceso político, militar y social de la Independencia" in *Nueva Historia de Colombia*, vol 2, (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 1989); and also Jaime Jaramillo, "Mestizaje y diferenciación social en el Nuevo Reino de Granada en la segunda mitad del Siglo XVII", in *La Nueva Historia de Colombia*, ed. Darío Jaramillo Agudelo (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1976).

we deposit in the hands of the student who is learning the alphabet, who just became literate, a treatise of geometry so that he can solve its problems?"⁶⁵ The answer to be provided presupposes a hierarchical difference between civilizers and those to become civilized, a differential capacity to know civilization's secrets, and a strategy to pursue the civilizing task.

The idea of a hierarchy of civilization according to fixed racial characteristics was formed during colonial domination. With the movement for independence the sense of a place of origin (race) and right of government is lost. What remains is the feeling of an incomplete task, the task of civilization, that demands its accomplishment. Gobineau had just published his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1855-1857) arguing that the fate of civilization is determined by racial composition. In Gobineau's view, personal freedom and motivation belonged to German people, while among Mediterranean, Greeks and Latins only collective action was known. Gobineau's racialism suited the Creoles' intention to assert their power in the completion of the civilizing task. Following Gobineau's racialist theory, José Maria Samper's *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas* (1861) provided a rationale for Spain's failure to accomplish civilization after four hundred years of domination. By establishing a difference between *colonization* and *conquest* as two innate characteristics of race, Samper is able to deny Spain the ability to colonize:

⁶⁵ Miguel Samper, "Libertad y Orden" in *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, vol II, 353.

In Europe we can see a curious contrast, that the passage of time has never denied. German races, or Northern races, are the only ones having the spirit of colonization, that is, the creation of civilized societies where it was barbaric before. On the contrary, the Latin race or Southern races, are the only ones with the spirit of conquest, that is, of domination (through assimilation) over already civilized people.⁶⁶

The situation in the Spanish colonies, according to Samper, was one of encounter, not with civilized people, but with an inferior race. That made it necessary to create a new society, 'an entire civilization'. Creating this civilization demanded 'infinite resources and immense efforts'. Spain was only an 'atom in the enormous new world...pretending to overwhelm everything, the colonizer empire drowned in the immensity of the colonized, and instead of a vigorous civilization, engendered a grotesque semi-barbaric fetus'.⁶⁷

As well as justifying more intervention to overcome the semi-barbarian stage, a racialist explanation allowed for the 'natural' selection of the agents in charge of the civilizing mission under the post-colonial situation. The linkage between civilization and race allowed Creoles, born in Nueva Granada of Spanish parents, to consolidate the power over the *mestizos*, blacks and Indians. A system of hierarchical differences based on the colour of the skin was established. The civilizing process was depicted as a process of whiteness, whose highest stage was the fusion of races, ending racial heterogeneity.

⁶⁶ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas i la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 32.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 24.

Samper's typology of Nueva Granada ⁶⁸ conforms to the evolutionary scheme, one in which intelligence and knowledge are attributes of the white colour, while ugliness, stupidity and malevolence are attributes of darker colours. The *Creole* from the highlands is depicted as handsome and distinguished, of Spanish descent, white, and possessing a natural ability for academia, arts and jobs. The Antioqueño is depicted as the most beautiful in the whole country, a mixture of Spaniard, Jew and Creole, a hard worker and a good businessman. In contrast, the Indian from the province of Pasto is depicted as half-savage, of primitive race, as living happily in the middle of affluence, without need of culture, as acting against civilization and passive toward progress. They are seen as easy to govern through religion but indomitable once in revolt. The mulatto (mixture of black and Spanish) is depicted as exuberant and tempestuous: if provided with education in freedom and democracy, mulatto could become a safe element of civilization. This was because his physiology was seen as being more black than white, but his moral qualities are more white than black. Posed at the other extreme of the ethnic composition were the *zambos* (mixture of Indian and black); they are depicted as "the worst race of the country", the "voluptuous prince of solitude, dreamer and indolent, free and savage as the shade of the tree where he is resting."⁶⁹ Samper believed that the *zambo*, aided by civilization and education, could progress.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 83 and passim.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 98.

Gobineau's racialist explanation, and his defence of the purity of race, was turned upside down in his encounter with the post-colonial world. Creoles saw in the mixture of races progress and civilization. Against a view in which races were distanced one from the other, Neo-Granadins put forward the practice of **miscegenation** as the road to progress and civilization.⁷⁰ The rationale appeared clearly in José Eusebio Caro's statement: "The human race conforms to the same laws as the other living species. Inferior races are destined to disappear in favour of superior races. Indians in America are almost extinguished. African and American blacks will disappear in the same way...It is the destiny of the white race to replace all human races. At the end, the white race will provide the most perfect attributes."⁷¹

The 'will to civilization' became the dream of a *civilización mestiza* (métis). The assimilation of inferior races by the white race nourished the dream of a '*civilización mestiza*': "A *civilización mestiza*, astoundingly, difficult to forge, turbulent and rough in its beginning, apparently contradictory, but whose destiny is to re-generate the world through the practice of the main principle of Christianity: fraternity"⁷² Civilization is embodied in a white 'civilizing' colour, being suppressed from history the bodies of Indians and blacks. The civilizing process appears as an evolutionary process of

⁷⁰ See Frank Safford, "Race, Integration and Progress: Elite Attitudes and the Indian in Colombia, 1750 - 1870" in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 71:1 (1991).

⁷¹ Quoted in Jaime Jaramillo, *El Pensamiento Colombiano en el Siglo XIX*, 180.

⁷² José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas i la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 79.

whitening. Race was seen "in terms of a colour spectrum made up of an almost infinite number of shades."⁷³

The process of miscegenation had both a progressive and a regressive character. Progress follows from mixture of white with an 'inferior' colour, while a regression occurs if a person with some white mixes again with a dark colour. Antonio J. Restrepo⁷⁴ summarizes in the following way the 'scientific conditions' in which this process takes place:

The first fusion, between a white man and a black or Indian woman, is called by him *mestizo*; the name *zambo* is reserved for the *mestizo* of a black man and Indian woman, or its opposite. The second fusion is the *mestizo* man with another black or pure Indian woman, the man is called *cuarterón* (quadroon), because in reality one fourth of white race remained; the *cuarterón* man bred with another black or pure Indian woman, becomes a *tente en el aire* (nebulous), not being a fish nor a frog, nor black nor white nor Indian, and the following fusion of a *tente en el aire* with a black or Indian woman, the pure black or pure Indian appears again, having wasted the half white of the first fusion; this is the reason why Gumilla call this backward motion *saltatrases* (jump-backwards).

Notwithstanding, the ordinary and most likely thing to happen is that this fusion would occur in the opposite way from that of the above description, and within a period of five generations the black or Indian disappears with only the white remaining.

What was seen in the colonial past as a hierarchical structure of colonizer/ colonized, in the post-colonial situation appeared as racial differences. Race became an historical

⁷³ David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay, *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 6.

⁷⁴ Antonio J. Restrepo, *El Cancionero de Antioquia*, (Barcelona: Editorial Lux, 1929), 177.

explanation and *mestizaje* its culmination. The demise of the colonial regime was explained by the impossibility of mixing races.⁷⁵ This mixture, however was not posed in an egalitarian but in a hierarchical order, following a 'natural' stratification: "It could be said that in the same way that mountains are from their base up to the summit natural thermometers, society forms a living stratification, whose layers are the diverse races or castes, resulting from complex mixtures, all located in the most convenient environment according to the convenience of blood, traditions, industry and energy of each one."⁷⁶

3.6 Engendering civilization

Since the time of conquest the process of *mestizaje* had a double hierarchical character: it was exercised in a hierarchical gradation in terms of superior (white) and inferior races (black and Indian); and it had a gendered character since the 'inferior' provided the subordinated women and Spaniards the conquering men.⁷⁷ During the conquest, Indian women were submitted to the rules of war and conquest and the *mestizaje* had what

⁷⁵ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas i la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 101.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁷ For an account of this process see Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda, *La Familia en Colombia. Estudio antropológico*, (Oficina Internacional de Investigaciones Sociales FERES, 1962); Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda, *La Familia en Colombia. Transfondo Histórico.*, vol 1, (Bogotá:Universidad Nacional: Facultad de Sociología, 1963).

Gutierrez de Pineda describes as an 'irregular character'. The white man exerted a direct power over the Indian women in a relationship of biological and economic exploitation. In a petition of chiefs of an Indian group against the behaviour of the Spanish mayor (*corregidor*) both elements appeared:

They complain that the *corregidor* in addition to forcing the Indians to provide free labour, coerced their women to work in pottery and the young daughters to their domestic service; having in their kitchen, four, six and eight, to make bad use of them, using force and robbing women of their virginity ...if they do not consent, our daughters are severely punished...if he does not want the women for himself 'he gives the women to his friends' and even more 'he does not allow our daughters to get married, only those designated by him can get married'.⁷⁸

During the colonial period, the possession of women changed from conquest to the concept of servitude (*servidumbre*). The system of servitude ⁷⁹ has been considered one of the causes of the disappearance of the Indian groups.⁸⁰ In the case of black women, the *mestizaje* was carried out also through 'irregular channels' (sporadic relationships, polygyny or concubinage) since legal marriage between whites and blacks was not allowed by the Spanish crown and, in addition, the union was surrounded by myths of

⁷⁸ Quoted in Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda, *La Familia en Colombia. Transfondo Histórico*, 187.

⁷⁹ One form of servitude during the Colonial period was the system of *naboria* described by Gutierrez de Pineda as a non-slave Indian (most of them women) who is compelled to work for the rest of her life in domestic service, *Ibid.*, 200. "The property right between the owner (*amo*) and the women was similar to the right that war gave on the Indian slave", *Ibid.*, 203.

⁸⁰ See German Colmenares, "La Sociedad indígena y su evolución posterior a la Conquista" in *La Nueva Historia de Colombia*, Dario Jaramillo Agudelo, (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1976), 167. The author mentions how at the beginning of the XVII century "the proportion of women working in the houses of Spaniards was so high that the Jesuit priest Diego de Torres, wrote with a big concern about the harm to the Indian society since in the towns there were no women to be married by the Indians".

curSED progeny, like the possibility of being born with a stigma of colour and other vices, that were often considered congenital or acquired in drinking the "breast milk" ⁸¹.

The Independence movement did not introduce changes in the condition of women. The partial abolition of slavery in 1821 did not include women, but on the contrary, the law declared only "freedom of wombs" (*libertad de vientres*). The law made obligatory the freedom of children born of slaves, and established that these children must work for the same proprietor as their mother until 18 years of age.⁸² If the change had any effect on violence against women, it was the lessening of corporal punishment as a result of the commodification of the female slave's womb as property of her owner. Thus on president General Mosquera's own estate, slaves were punished with 25 lashes for disciplinary faults, but "a pregnant women could only be punished using the stock for punishment".⁸³

During the 1840s, women were subjected to the same repressive measures as *libertos*. The law of vagabondage explicitly made reference to prostitution in the definition of who the vagrants were. The practice of exiling women is documented in one of the studies of

⁸¹ Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda, *La Familia en Colombia. Transfondo Histórico*, 193.

⁸² The disputes around the abolition of slavery at that time appear in Harold A. Bierck, Jr, "Las Pugnas por la abolición de la esclavitud en la Gran Colombia" in *El Siglo XIX visto por Historiadores Norteamericanos*, ed. Jesus A. Bejarano (Bogotá: Editorial la Carreta, 1977), 309 - 344.

⁸³ Quoted in Salomón Kalmanovitz, *Economía y Nación. Una Breve Historia de Colombia*, (Bogotá: Siglo XXI editores de Colombia, 1985), 156.

the *Comisión Corográfica*. Manuel Ancízar summarizes, in the following way, the situation of women in the City of El Socorro, in the province of Santander:

The population of the city is diminishing, as a definite result of the negligence regarding the condition of the poor people, but especially of women.

Most of them do not find within the city means to earn a salary to satisfy their needs, mainly because they do not have the knowledge of skills learned by rich women in special schools. Abandoned to their own destiny, without a pattern of good behaviour to follow, they end up living a disorderly life until they die in a premature way. Several attempts have been made to submit them to the harassment of police, and in groups of ten or more, they had been sent to the jungle of Chucurí to die of misery and high fever, but this has not made things better. To kill is not a way to increase morality.

There is no evidence of legislation intended to improve the condition of women as a specific goal of the mid-century Liberals reforms. On the contrary, some scattered evidence suggests that women were not only excluded from the civilizing project, but their subordination made part of a project aimed to ensure the dominance of a group of male Creoles. For example, the assembly of the province of Santander proposed to abolish crimes of rape in a woman older than 12 years, or of a woman less than 12 years if rape was committed by one man.⁸⁴

The abolition of *resguardos* (Indian communal land) conducted by Liberals in the name of miscegenation, progress, and equality, had detrimental effects on Indians in general and women in particular. During the 19th century, Indians organized protest movements

⁸⁴ This history appear in Jesus C. Torres Almeida, *Manuel Murillo Toro, Caudillo radical y reformador social*, (Bogotá: Ediciones El Tiempo, 1984), 210.

against the division of Indian lands. The protesters complained that they were losing their land to 'whites'.⁸⁵ The effect on women is indicated in the following description by a witness: "The *hacendados* profited from public misery, having the immoral behaviour of buying cows for 20 *reales* from wretched women."⁸⁶ Salvador Camacho Roldán saw the effect of Liberal reforms on the situation of women this way: "They [Liberal reforms] ended the feudal period, but most of the feudal habits still persist, among them the prostitution of the peasant's daughters at the desires of the proprietor, the despising of women's modesty within the organization of labour, their submission to degrading jobs".⁸⁷ He added that "the Revolution of Independence removed the domination of an alien power and the exploitation by a distant enemy; blacks, Indians, *mestizos*, and *Creoles* were made citizens; but neither institutions nor habits have made the first step to end the humiliation of the daughters of the nation. Women's abuse on the part of the

⁸⁵ On this movements see Frank Safford, "Race, Integration, and Progress: Elite Attitudes and the Indian in Colombia" in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 1 - 33. Safford mentions how in the case of Indians of Guane in the Province of Socorro the "Indian community turned the rhetoric of civil equality against the creole legislators...[they] argued that taking the land for the colonists without any kind of compensation was 'contrary to our Constitution and to the right of equality that it concedes to the Indians'" (pg. 14). In the Cauca region protests became violent and furthered an alliance of both landless peasants and artisans. A description of what happened in this region appears in J. Leon Helguera, "Antecedentes sociales de la revolución de 1851 en el sur de Colombia (1848 - 1849), in *Anuario Colombiano de Historia General y de la Cultura*, No. 5 (1970).

⁸⁶ Quoted in Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, *El Proceso de Mosquera ante el Senado*, (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1968), 30.

⁸⁷ Salvador Camacho Roldán, "Preface" to Eugenio Díaz first edition of the novel *Manuela*, (1889). Reprinted in Salvador Camacho Roldán, *Escritos Varios*, tomo 2, (Bogotá: Editorial Incunables, 1983), 506.

landlord, the *gamonal*, the soldier, the *tinterillo*, do not have any legal consequence for the abuser in the penal or civil code."⁸⁸

The history of women's struggles, along with that of the Indian and the black population, was not only ignored but also suppressed as part of the project to provide meaning to the constitution of the new republic and the civilizing project. Women fought side by side with men in the struggle for independence, as we can infer from the following passage: "The collaboration of women was invaluable during the Revolution and Independence struggle...Some of them carried their dedication unto heroism and martyrdom; most of them were distinguished by their masculine energy and greatness of spirit, taking with them the pain of exile and impoverishment, of widowhood and helplessness, and verifying the highest obligation of maternity as the sacrifice of their children when the nation needed them for their services."⁸⁹ The participation of women is represented using masculine attributes when the actions demand recognition. At the same time, their participation is denied meaning. It is depicted as an attribute solely of the men making the revolution⁹⁰

Hierarchical differences along ethnic and gender identities were crucial to the construction of a regime of representation along the will to civilization. Creole men took

⁸⁸ Ibid., 513.

⁸⁹ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas i la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 160.

⁹⁰ See quote 1 in this chapter.

for themselves the right to civilize those placed in a lesser category. Miscegenation became a part of the strategy aimed to whiten and then to civilize the other segment of the population. Politics was embodied in the racial and gender struggle for civilization. But they were not the only ones. A most valuable commodity, words, reinforced the role played by physiological attributes.

3.7 Conclusion

The 'will to civilization' as a place of encounter between the colonial past and the imagined future, as a passage between barbarism and civilization, was a violent encounter. A violence of representation rested on acts of suppression of history: native, local and female histories did not find a place in the civilizing project. Violence rested also in the establishment of differential hierarchies and strategies of civilization, imprinted in the bodies of Creoles, mulattos, zambos, blacks, Indians, men and women.

The violence of representation was by no means the only violence to emerge. The 'will to civilization' begat more violence in the form of civil wars among the members of the leading classes about 'how' to forge civilization. The 'will to civilization' engendered violence against women, blacks and Indians, as well as, against the poorest sector of the population. The 'will to civilization' empowered some actors and forms of organization of politics; it sanctioned only certain forms of organization of economic activities and expelled with violence other ones.

The 'will to civilization' did not lessen violence by presenting a legitimated alternative. Around 1878, the 'will to civilization' carried out under the banner of the Liberal party fell into a crisis and distinctions between proper and non-proper forms were lost and new forms of violence were generated.

It has been the aim of this chapter to illustrate how a narrow understanding of political economy, focused on the accumulation of capital, has suppressed an important part of history, and by arguing that this silencing has itself multiplied the original violence. The following chapter deals with the political economy of civilization: how the establishment of distinctions were related to the ownership of civilization, how 'words' occupied the place that 'money' had in a *laissez-faire* regime of representation, and how battles between Liberals and Conservatives centred on the control of the means of production and circulation of knowledge.

Chapter 4

The Political Economy of Civilization

The passion for literary competition was so high that in the streets everybody signalled victors and defeated. The victor had ensured a place in the most distinguished families, and praised by everyone, entered in the aristocracy of talent, by then superior to the aristocracy of wealth, and a successful public career was open to him.

Rufino José Cuervo, *Vida de Rufino Cuervo y Noticias de su época*, 1892

This analysis of political economy focuses on the processes of production, transformation and exchange of meanings, specifically, on regimes of representation. The **will to civilization** was the predominant regime of representation in mid-nineteenth century Colombia. A system of identities/distinctions based on racial and gender distinction was put into place supporting the idea of a hierarchy of civilization according to racial and gender characteristics. This chapter will now concentrate on the political economy of civilization -how diverse forms of production and circulation (that is, political economies) supported the regime of representation. The first part shows how **words** were central to the process of production, exchange and circulation. Literati aimed to control the production and circulation of words (*palabras*) as valuable commodities. Words established the link between the regime of representation, the will to civilization, and its authors, the literati. The second part considers the construction of the political space. Forms of circulation of words and their diverse forms of legitimation became the main referent from which authors defined their positions and struggled. Conservatives favoured a restricted circulation of words and saw Christian religion as the source from which to legitimate claims to truth. Liberals, on the contrary, made freedom of the press and constitutional law the foundation of their power struggles and the site from which their power emerged. Some words were more valuable than others and some voices were more authorized than others. The capacity to control the circulation and legitimation of words defined the location from which power could be exerted. Wherever the legitimacy of words was menaced, actors were ready to fight in wars; wherever words needed to be protected, legislators issued laws to guarantee their proper value. In the building of the

regime of representation words and civilization were linked together as parts and whole. The third section of this chapter re-constructs the strategies deployed so that some words were more authorized than others, and illustrates the ways in which words empowered certain authors and not others. Grammar and education formed elements of the struggle for control of the production, circulation and empowerment of words. In the fourth part, the problem of the other's voice is posed. It shows how the production, exchange and circulation of meanings, embodied in self/other distinctions, varied along race, gender and class standpoints.

4.1 The struggle about the circulation of words

The capacity to circulate, generate and legitimate words became the most important contest between Liberals and Conservatives. The battle to generalize the use of the Spanish language had already been won during the colonial period:

Some time elapsed before Spanish became a generalized language; but in the end it achieved victory, and became the unique, sovereign and dominant language (*lenguaje dominador*). The conquered languages were not strong enough to leave even a trace; there was only the provincial use of some native words to designate Indian objects, otherwise, the Spanish sentence did not suffer in its construction or its expressions".¹

¹ José María Vergara y Vergara, *Historia de la Literatura en Nueva Granada desde la Conquista hasta la Independencia (1538 - 1820)*, (Bogotá: Librería Americana, 1905), 31.

With the generalization of Spanish won, the battle centred on the empowerment of words. The struggle for words was embedded in the often contradictory aim of spreading civilization while guaranteeing a privileged place to those possessing the art of the circulation of words. Contradictory positions over the monopoly of knowledge exemplify this tension. In 1850, Liberals, in their urge to abolish monopolies, decreed freedom of instruction and removed the requirement for a university degree for all professions. Later, this decree was overturned and the importance of keeping a small number of professionals was acknowledged. As Miguel Samper ² stated:

The scientist, chemist, engineer have access to education in order to exercise domination over nature; priests and lawyers go to the university to exercise a dominion over people. If both professions are contained within the limits established by the satisfaction of certain needs, they are both useful to society; but in excess number they become oppressive and detrimental.

Liberals and Conservatives struggled at length, and verbally, over the extent of freedom and privilege to be accorded to the circulation of printed words. They held different positions as to the relationship between freedom of the press and civilization. The advent of Liberals in 1849 was celebrated as the 'all-powerful era of the leaflet'.³ Liberals exalted the written word irrespective of content, style or form. In 1850, they proposed

² Miguel Samper, "La Miseria en Bogotá," in *Escritos Político-Económico de Miguel Samper*, in Miguel Samper, 27. An excellent description of the struggles about the intellectual formation in diverse professions and the divergences between Liberals and Conservatives, appears in Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite*, (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1976).

³ José M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia Política i Social de la Nueva Granada*, 476.

that the Congress legislate freedom of the press. The secretary of the government used as his main arguments: i) the benefits that the press has brought to the world; ii) the fact that the offences occasioned by the use of printed paper do not cause damage, because a printed paper can be responded to with another printed paper; iii) the difficulty of qualifying this offence, without running the risk that the press will be subjected to arbitrariness. Before the Congress he argued:

A free press is the universal of the political body, the true democracy of thought...Nothing must impede its illimitable dominion, because the press is the light and life of a republican society. Everything related to happiness or unhappiness of the social, belongs to [the press]'s dominion. To the press belongs the criticism and the praise of habits, laws, institutions: To the press must be accountable the exercise of power, political debates, the decision of tribunals, citizens' claims, the requirements of an era, people's problems, programmes of political parties and religious feeling.⁴

The project was rejected in the Senate when the Conservatives unanimously voted against it.⁵

In 1851, however, a decree guaranteeing press freedom was introduced. The constitution of 1853 endorsed the reform of 1851. The Constitution of 1863 guaranteed absolute press freedom without limits by declaring, in the 6th article, "*La libertad absoluta de imprenta y circulación de impresos*" (the absolute freedom of press and press circulation) and in

⁴ Ibid., 496.

⁵ Miguel A. Caro, "Libertad y Orden," in *Estudios Jurídicos y Constitucionales*, (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1986), 208.

the 7th, "*La libertad de expresar sus pensamientos de palabra o por escrito sin limitacion alguna*" (the freedom to express thoughts using oral or printed words without any limits).

Conservatives on the contrary were distrustful of the free circulation of words as a means to foster civilization.⁶ For Conservatives 'absolute freedom' of the press was equated with 'absolute freedom and irresponsibility'. Conservative Caro summarized, as follows, the attempt by Liberals to establish press freedom:

By the year 1849 [when Liberals gained the presidency]...instead of asking for more morality, more order, more efficacy in the intervention of authority regarding the press and elsewhere, [Liberals] began to implore loudly as a satisfaction of all that was needed, as a supreme good, more freedom in everything, and with a special eagerness more and more freedom of the press!⁷

Caro considered Zaldua's arguments favouring freedom of the press a barbarism not proper for rational men. For him, press freedom acted as an engine of revolutions.⁸ On many occasions Caro made reference to words as being as dangerous as the use of arms. In an article published in 1888, he referred to the story of one of the 'several victims' of the 1863 Constitution, a priest "who died as a consequence of a defamation, made on the basis of two false witnesses, who later died in the hospital of a despicable illness,

⁶ An overview of the opposition between Liberals and Conservatives with respect to press freedom appears in *Ibid.* These articles were published originally in several issues of the newspaper *La Nación*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 199 - 200.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

after having confessed their false testimony".⁹ Caro looked with terror at the Russian example where all publications were allowed and read equally by men and women:

It is in this country where communist and materialist theories are going to occasion more damage...Public libraries, filled with all kind of dangerous novelties, are visited by all kind of male readers, and specially women readers. It is there, in the reading allowed and encouraged by the government, where lies the main source of nihilism, nourished by erudite men and women.¹⁰

4.2 The political space granted to words

The struggle about the free or restricted circulation of words was not the only one being waged in nineteenth century Colombia. A most profound tension arose among the literati about the legitimate source of words and the definition of their value. This polemic comprised two fundamental issues: who were the most legitimate authors of the civilizing process? What was the 'political' space granted to words? Two groups contested for the position of supreme authority over the civilizing process: Those who claimed to derive the authority of their words from a divine mandate, Christianity, and those claiming the legitimacy of the 'written word' in the name of law. The strength of the former is related to the role of the Church in the process of colonization and the power invested in the church to accomplish the civilizing mission. During the period of Spanish rule, the

⁹ Miguel A. Caro, "¡Ni en Rusia", *El Orden*, (Bogotá: April 12, 1887), 18, reprinted in Miguel A. Caro, *Escritos Políticos*, ed. Miguel A. Caro, tomo I (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1990), 161.

¹⁰ Ibid., 159.

church, under the figure of *patronato*,¹¹ enjoyed a monopoly in the process of cultural formation. This power was consolidated during independence.¹²

The antagonism between those who based the legitimacy of words in the law and those favouring a divine origin was funnelled into the partisan division between Conservatives and Liberals. Since the moment of their formation in 1848, the two programmes diverged concerning the religious question. The program of the Conservative party stated as one of its main principles, "Christian morality and its civilizing principles against the immorality and corruption common to materialistic and atheistic principles" (original emphasis).¹³ In contrast, according to the Liberal program, religion should not be used as an instrument of government: "the two powers must revolve independently, each one in its own orbit, so that each one has its own object and different ends".

With the ascendancy of Liberals to power, the conflicts with the church intensified taking the form of a state-church antagonism. Although this antagonism existed from

¹¹ The *patronato* refers to the special power conceded by the Pope to the Spanish crown. The Spanish crown had the jurisdiction to orient Christian evangelization. Religion was used as the main instrument to bring Indians and blacks under the Spanish domination. Clerics were part of the royal administration, deriving their income as a nomination from the Spanish crown. With the independence movement and during the Republic the *patronato* was not abolished but was incorporated into the structure of the state, i.e. the state retained the right to control clerical appointments.

¹² Villegas mentions that one third of the signatures in the Act of Independence are clerics; in 1823 clerics were one third of the Representative Legislature. With the independence the church power was strengthened: "In the new Republic the power of the church continues and becomes stronger. The passage of the Spanish domination to the new republican order did not weaken its power. On the contrary, the church sustained its economic power and reinforced its political one". Jorge Villegas, *Colombia: Enfrentamiento Iglesia Estado 1819 - 1887*, (Bogotá: Editorial La Carreta, 1981), 22.

¹³ José Eusebio Caro, "Declaratoria Política", in *Escritos Histórico-Políticos*, 183.

Independence, by 1849 it appeared under a new form.¹⁴ The appropriation by the Conservative party of the power to exert the civilizing mission in the name of God posed a serious threat to the space from which Liberals exerted their power. Liberals claimed a separation of the political space from the religious one, centering the debate on the restriction of clerics to the private realm of the family:

I have proof that by proceeding in this way [intervention of clerics in politics] religion is deprived of its natural character, the morale of clerics diminishes, and the [morality] of believers is corrupted. The government has turned bishops and priests into political agents, by employing them in electoral matters, mixing them in partisan questions, sharing partisan passions, making them instruments of annoyance and oppression, and denuding religion of its character of family counselling and guardian of morality (emphasis added).¹⁵

At the time of this statement, the author, Florentino Gonzalez, did not see in clerics the 'assistants' of government. Gonzalez, like many of his Liberal peers, exerted pressure so as to subordinate divine law to state law. Several measures taken by the Liberals reflect this tendency.¹⁶ In 1851, the *fuero ecclesiastico* (ecclesiastical court) was abolished, meaning that clerics and bishops had to be judged by the Supreme Court of

¹⁴ During the period 1810 - 1848, the clash between the state and the church took the form of a desire on the part of the former to appropriate the control of the *patronato* that the Spaniards had exercised over the church. At this time the church was still considered an auxiliary of the state in the civilizing mission, as the following statement on the part of the Secretary of the Treasury Florentino Gonzalez makes clear: "The nation must take in its hand the livelihood of the ministers of church, who are keepers of good morals, so we can infer that they must be considered assistants of public authority, in a religious civilized society". Quoted in Jorge Villegas, *Colombia: Enfrentamiento Iglesia Estado 1819 - 1887*, 33. The state also claimed an increased participation on the proportion of taxes (*diezmos*) and a more equal participation on the part of the population in paying these taxes. The *diezmos* were collected mainly from agriculture and 4/5 of its benefits went to the church to sustain priests.

¹⁵ Florentino Gonzalez, *El Neo Granadino*, (March 25, 1853). Quoted in Ibid., 43.

¹⁶ These measures are a summary of Villegas. Ibid.

Justice and not by special courts belonging to the church. The same year, Jesuit priests were expelled from the country, and the Congress issued laws abolishing the *diezmos* and other taxes benefiting the church. A decree asked for elections of clerics in the municipal *cabildos*. In 1853 the church was officially separated from the state. Priests were declared enemies of constitutional order: "Most of the clerics had been involved in revolution, taking advantage of their pastoral position to invite the masses to rebellion against the constitutional government of the provinces; some of them have taken arms, reaching the scandalous situation of a priest being killed as the head of a *guerrilla* movement."¹⁷ A decree was issued on "*tuición de cultos*" (tutelage of cult) asking the priests to swear obedience to state laws, or they would be expelled from the national territory.

The passage by Eugenio Diaz ¹⁸ (box in page 142), summarizes the kind of antagonism between Priests and Liberals regarding their power to civilize, where one group used religion as the main instrument, and the other proposed the spread of *laissez-faire* principles. The dialogue takes place between *el señor cura* (the priest [P]) and the Liberal [L] Don Demostenes. If politics and religion share the same aim, to achieve civilization, the question to be asked is why not cooperate? The priest offers what could be a reason impeding cooperation, the advantage what it already holds by the clergy's long exercise

¹⁷ Letter of the president of Colombia, Tomas Cipriano de Mosquera, to Pope Pious IX in 1862 explaining the reasons for the Liberal reforms. The Pope in response excommunicated the president and also those priests that obeyed the government laws. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁸ Eugenio Diaz, *Manuela*, 24 -26.

of power and the advantage of the priest's control over everyday life. Liberals were at a disadvantage: priests outnumbered Liberal literati, and priests used oral communication to reach an illiterate population, whereas the Liberals sought to spread their message through the written word.

While the Conservative's strategy was to embed the power of their words in the divine domain, Liberals sought to empower words in the Constitution.¹⁹ Once Liberals were installed in power they wrote the Constitution of 1853 to displace the older Constitution issued ten years earlier. The new Constitution allowed each province to dictate its own Constitution, in an attempt to counterbalance the centralist character of previous constitutional arrangements. Between 1853 and 1856, 61 constitutions were issued.²⁰ The coup d'etat in 1854 attempted, among other things, to revive the Constitution of 1843. In 1858, the Congress approved the *Confederacion Granadina* Constitution, with the declaration: "Today is the end of the Revolution of 1810: Our civic virtues have won."²¹ In 1863, another Constitution was born, *La Constitución de Rionegro*, which was considered the most liberal of the constitutions: It delegated to the provinces all

¹⁹ The importance given to constitutions have occasioned what a Colombian author calls "The Constitutional battle". Hernando Valencia Villa, *Cartas de Batalla. Una Critica del constitucionalismo colombiano*, (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987).

²⁰ This figure appears in Alvaro Tirado Mejía, *Descentralización y Centralismo en Colombia*, (Bogotá: Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1983), 47.

²¹ Quoted in Hernando Valencia Villa, *Cartas de Batalla. Una Critica del constitucionalismo colombiano*, 136.

- P** *Sir, if politics do not encompass morality, and if morality could take roots without religious instruction; if politics were not concerned with happiness or unhappiness of men, then the priest should abstain from politics. But wherever men coexist, there is misery...For these reasons the presence of priests is necessary, relieving pain, providing advice, teaching and preventing errors and crimes. Is it not necessary for the priest to do politics? In this parish where no one is able to read, where nobody provides explanations and nobody remembers the written law, where no one provides schools, who is going to teach the route of goodness? who is going to prevent robbery of the landowner? who is going to preserve and encourage marriage, the base of political society?*
- L** Society has always tended to perfection; and instinctively the people know what is better if we do not place obstacles in their way. The *laissez-faire* principles are worth more than all the regulations in the world.
- P** *Sir, I will believe in your theory, if I did not know (because I have been in the Indian territory) that neither the Caribbean, nor the Tunebos, nor the Guaque Indians, have advanced by themselves anything in civilization in three hundred years, while other evangelized people have gone further.*
- L** Have they gone further than our liberal school? You must wait until our social principles are disseminated, and you will see that it is not the case.
- P** *The socialist of my school had already spread our message*
- L** When? Who? How?
- P** *Have not Catholic priests crossed deserts defying arrows, animals, hunger, and infinite plagues, in order to accomplish their civilizing mission? Have they not suffered the odour of the hospital to alleviate suffering? Have they not dedicated their life to confession and preaching reform? Is not civilizing, feeding and reforming to work in order to make society better?*
- L** We write and deliver speeches.
- P** *How many listen to your speeches? How often are those speeches delivered? Among the poor people, how many read what you have written? and, how many are convinced and take profit...? They listen to us each week, and without being pretentious, they believe what we say...Are you still uncertain about our initiative and our good results?*
- L** At least we pursue the same goal, to make society better; the difference is that your method is very slow; it has passed almost two thousand years, while with our method we conceive a reform, we publish it, and *zis! zas!* we go forward if our apponents do not bend it. From this discussion we must conclude that *Golgotas* [Liberals] and Catholic priests are similar.

- C** *Señor, si la política no abrazara la moral, y si la moral se pudiera, en nuestra tierra, cimentar sin la instrucción evangélica; más, todavía: si no versara la política sobre las dichas y desdichas del hombre, entonces sí se debería abstener el sacerdote cristiano de ella; pero como donde está el hombre, allí está la miseria..., es preciso también que allí este el sacerdote, aliviando, aconsejando, educando el corazón, y previniendo el error y el crimen. ¿No tiene que hacer la política con el sacerdocio?... Y en una parroquia de estas donde nadie lee, donde nadie explica ni recuerda la ley escrita, donde nadie se apura porque haya escuela ¿quien señala el camino del deber? ¿quien recuerda el respeto a los padres? ¿quien contiene el robo que pudiera hacerse al hacendado? ¿quien lucha a favor de la institución del matrimonio, base de la sociedad política?*
- L** Es que la sociedad tiene su tendencia irresistible a perfeccionarse; y el pueblo tiene su instinto sobre lo que le conviene, dejándolo sin trabas. El principio "Dejad hacer" vale más que todas las leyes del mundo.
- C** *Señor, si yo no supiera (porque fui cura en los Llanos), que ni los tunebos, ni los caribes, ni los guaques han adelantado nada en la civilización en trescientos años, por sus esfuerzos, mientras otros pueblos bajo la enseñanza evangélica han ido más adelante, le concedería su teoría.*
- L** ¿Más adelante que nuestra escuela?... pues deje usted que se difundan nuestras doctrinas sociales, y verá que no.
- C** *Pero ya los socialistas de mi escuela han llevado muy adelante la bandera.*
- L** ¿Cuando? ¿quienes? ¿de que modo?
- C** *No ha cruzado el sacerdote católico los desiertos del Meta, arrastrando las flechas, las garras de las fieras, y el hambre, y las infinitas plagas, por cumplir su misión civilizadora? ¿No ha soportado la pestilencia de los hospitales por aliviar? ¿No ha consagrado su vida al confesionario y al púlpito por corregir? ¿Civilizar, aliviar, y corregir no es trabajar por la mejora de la sociedad?*
- L** Nosotros escribimos y peroramos.
- S** *¿Y cuantos oyen las peroratas? y ¿cada cuando hay una perorata? y entre la gente del pueblo, ¿quien lee lo que ustedes escriben? y ¿cuantos se convencen y se aprovechan...? A nosotros nos oyen cada ocho días y, se lo diré sin vanidad, nos creen... ¿Le queda a usted duda de que nosotros hemos tomado la iniciativa, y de que hemos conseguido mucho?*
- L** Por lo menos nuestro fin es el mismo, la mejora de la sociedad; no hay sino que el método de ustedes es tan sumamente lento; pues llevan cerca de dos mil años, y nosotros concebimos una reforma, y *zis! zas!* la publicamos, y la planteamos, si no nos tuercen nuestros contrarios. De todo esto deberíamos deducir que gólgotas y sacerdotes católicos somos una cosa parecida.

those things not explicitly conceded to the federal government.²² Under this constitution each province could enact its own legislation and provide a definition of who was considered to be a citizen. The country's name was changed from Nueva Granada to Estados Unidos de Colombia. The Federal Constitution guaranteed freedom of individuals, freedom of the press and speech, the right to possess arms and munitions and to traffic with them in peacetime. It abolished the death penalty and incarceration longer than ten years. One of the authors of the constitution expressed some years later that "this constitution organized the central power as a simple host in the constitutional house."²³ The Constitution of 1863 was officially declared dead and a new constitution was issued in 1886.

The substitutability of religion and law was depicted by one historian in this way: "For Liberals the real ambition was to install in the place previously occupied by moral-religious consensus, a system of loyalty based on an abstract deification of law."²⁴ A similar impression of the ideological force of law for Colombian Liberals is indicated in

²² The powers delegated to the federal government were jurisdiction over foreign affairs, national defence, the monetary system and the regulation of interoceanic and river routes. The federal government shared with the provinces control over the postal service and public education.

²³ Justo Arosemena, *Constituciones Políticas*, quoted in Miguel Samper, *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, vol 2, 351.

²⁴ German Colmenares, "La Ley y el Orden Social: Fundamento Profano y Fundamento Divino", *Cahiers des Ameriques Latines*, 10 (1992), 60. Historian Gerardo Molina also identifies the 'kingdom of the law' as a main characteristic of mid-nineteenth century Liberals. He attributes to this belief one of the main failures of liberalism "Its adherents to the principle that written texts had a magical power, they based their strategy on the belief that a perfect Constitution will ensure collective happiness. They did not realize that the social constitution is more important, the amalgam of habits, beliefs, material realizations, structures and everyday life." Gerardo Molina, *Las Ideas Liberales en Colombia 1849 -1914*, (Bogotá: Editorial Tercer Mundo, 1970), 122.

Justo Arosemena's, *Principios de Moral Política Redactados en un Catecismo* (Principles of Political Morality written in the form of a Catechism).²⁵

The coming to power of the Liberals was in the name of freedom of the press and in the name of popular tribunals. At the beginning of the Liberal revolution,²⁶ José María Samper praised them as follows:

The press and popular tribunals are going to appropriate the moment in order to inaugurate the kingdom of rationality and free intelligence. The power of the pamphlet will be installed, and the constructive storm of popular participation and electoral cycles will begin. Politics, preparing the future, will prepare the field where legislation will make real the revolution of ideas and popular life.

According to Samper, popular tribunals and writers "were the owners of the moment because they were the interpreters" for the masses.²⁷

4.3 Words as the means to bring power into being: Grammar and Education

Words were pivotal elements in the power strategy deployed by mid-nineteenth century literati in the disputes over civilization. In regard to the circulation of words, their origin,

²⁵ Justo Arosema was one of the authors of the Constitution of 1853. He also wrote a treatise on the Colombian constitutions in the nineteenth century.

²⁶ Miguel Samper, *Apuntamientos para la historia política i social de la Nueva Granada*, 476.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 485.

and the best strategy for disseminating words, Conservatives and Liberals diverged.²⁸ For the former, the emphasis was on the correct use of language (grammar) and religion, while for Liberals, it was the spread of enlightenment through universal education.

"Speaking well" (*el bien hablar*) was one strategy deployed by Conservatives to consolidate their power. "Speaking well" was an element in establishing hierarchical differences among racial and social groups. Speaking well was, like the colour of skin, something given by birth. "Speaking well is like good breeding, those who had sucked from the mother's milk and had enriched its use with their contact with polished people (*gente fina*), know how to obey the rules of language even in the most difficult circumstances..."²⁹

The art of grammar was an exclusivistic project dividing rulers and ruled, "Obviously, the oddness of ordinary people who write compelled by their need is easier to forgive, but it is not easy to be tolerant in this regard with those who pretend to order the

²⁸ British historian Malcom Deas has recently published an article where he illustrates how close were grammar and the affiliation to the Conservative party. Malcom Deas, "Miguel Antonio Caro y Amigos: Gramática y Poder en Colombia," in *Del Poder Y La gramática*, (Santa Fé de Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1993). The article appeared in English as "Miguel Antonio Caro and Friends: Grammar and Power in Colombia", in *History Workshop Journal*, 34, (1992). My overall argument differs from the one sustained by Deas. In his view Conservatives concern with grammar did not form part of a project of domination, nor was it explained by nationalist interests. He explains the interest for grammar in the linkage that the language established with the Spanish past, which provided the model for the kind of republic they wanted for Colombia.

²⁹ Rufino J. Cuervo, "Apuntaciones críticas sobre el Lenguaje Bogotano,". Quoted in Deas, *idem*, 9.

world."³⁰ The art of grammar was written for those who ruled. Cuervo introduced his treatise on grammar with the following statement:

Speaking well is one of the clearest signs of cultivation and good birth, and an indispensable condition of those who wish to use in favour of their equals, through speech or through writing, the talents which nature has given them: this is the reason for the insistence with which people recommend the study of grammar.³¹

Grammar was seen as a project to be defended if the rulers were to keep their differences, endangered by contemporary events as grammarian Cuervo³² reveals:

No one doubts that in the matter of principle the crowd cannot claim pre-eminence over the educated; all the same, something of the crowd can penetrate their sphere, in certain places and under special circumstances. Thus, isolation from other brother peoples, which is the cause of forgetting many pure locutions and of the consequent inequality of language, rubbing shoulders with uncouth people, as for example children do with servants, and the disorders and dislocations of the social strata caused by revolutionary uprisings, which raise even to the highest posts, ignorant and uncivil people, can vulgarize (*aplebeyar*) the language, bringing into general use antigrammatical terms and low words.

Grammar was not the sole strategy deployed as power; education served this objective as well. The passage from a barbarian to a civilized country became one of the central concerns for Liberals as well as for their Conservative opponents. Liberals and

³⁰ R. J. Cuervo, "Apuntaciones críticas sobre el lenguaje Bogotano"

³¹ Rufino J. Cuervo, "Apuntaciones críticas sobre el lenguaje Bogotano," quoted in Malcom Deas, "Miguel Antonio Caro And Friends: Grammar and Power in Colombia", *History Workshop Journal*, 34 (1992), 5. I used Deas' translation.

³² Ibid., 11. [Deas' translation].

Conservatives agreed that education was the port of entry to reach civilization. They agreed that only education could transform the brutalized masses into thoughtful, productive people.³³ This consensus did not extend to the strategy to be implemented if education was to guarantee this valuable end. On the contrary, the battle over education was as fierce as the contest for the constitutions.

The priority given to education is evident as early as 1821 when the Congress of Cucuta issued the first general education law, under the presidency of Santander. Public primary education was seen as necessary for Colombians to learn the "sacred obligations imposed upon them by religion and Christian morality...[and] the rights and duties of man in social life"³⁴. In 1826 the government of Santander issued the *Plan de Estudios* which established that every parish in the country, no matter its size, was to have a primary school. The plan also made compulsory the use of Bentham's principles for the students of Law and introduced the study of English and French in high schools. These reforms were seen as being in contradiction with the principles of the Catholic religion. The controversy was centred on the use of Bentham's principles and on the 'Protestant'

³³ *Diario de Cundinamarca*, Bogotá, III, # 732, (may 31, 1872) . Quoted in Jane Meyer Loy, "Primary Education during the Colombian Federation: The School Reform of 1870", *Hispanic American Historical Review* (May 1971), pg. 277. Jane Meyer's study fully supports the view of education as part of the quest for civilization. She mentions how the newspapers identified education with 'civilization'. According to Meyer this linkage was strengthened as a result of Prussia's victory over France in 1870 which was interpreted by local newspaper as a result of Prussia's policy of educating the masses.

³⁴ Quoted in Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical*, 50. See also David Bushnell, *El Régimen de Santander en la Gran Colombia*, (Bogotá: El Ancora Editores, 1985).

orientation of several books recommended in the *Plan de Estudios*.³⁵ A priest in Bogotá asked the parents of his parish not to send their children to San Bartolomé, where Bentham was taught. Vicente Azuero, a politician and literati, undertook Bentham's defense arguing that if his texts were considered harmful because they were written by a Protestant, the Colombian Constitution and laws should also be banned because they followed the constitutions of England, France and the United States, countries where most of the people were 'heretics'.³⁶

The debate on education continued in the following decades. This debate illustrates the ambivalence ensuing from the adoption of European principles. These principles entered into contradiction not only with the indigenous culture but with the colonial past inherited from Spanish Catholic tradition. Although Neo-Granadins embraced the idea of modernity coming from England, Germany or France they rejected its connection with Protestantism. The controversy about Bentham appeared on several occasions and the tension between Liberals and the Church persisted during the time when the Liberals were in power. The tension reached a peak in the 1870 when the Liberals issued the Organic Decree of Public Primary Education, summarizing their views on education. This decree so heightened the disagreements between the two parties that the Conservatives decided to go to war in 1876. In this war the Conservatives were defeated

³⁵ The criticism included not only Bentham but also the protestant Wattel, an authority in International Law. Bushnell, 235. See also section 5.3. of this dissertation regarding the controversy on Bentham's texts.

³⁶ Evelyn J. G. Abern, "El Desarrollo de la Educación en Colombia: 1820-1850", 51

militarily, but they won the battle over representation: the will to civilization as a regime of representation entered into crisis.

A main issue at stake in this contest was the Liberals' attempt to undermine the Church's privileged role in the definition and diffusion of truth. The position of the Conservatives regarding the linkages between civilization through religion appear in these excerpts from a public letter written by Rufino Cuervo:

We support the [Catholic religion] because it is the only and most powerful element of morality and civilization for our ignorant and heterogenous popular masses, dispersed in vast and harsh regions; we support [Catholic religion] because it is the true principle to conserve social order, seriously menaced by the divisions and sectors in struggle for power in our beloved country. To exert, conserve and defend our magnificent religion, is more than a right, it is a faculty like thinking; and it is even more than a faculty, it is a duty, a sacred duty...If we are wrong, in our beliefs and decisions, our mistake will be common to two hundred and fifty million Catholics scattered in the civilized world in which we live.

The Christian religion is only distant from those countries captured by tyrannic governments or by the licentiousness of the masses, when the corruption of habits, vices, crimes and the forgetfulness of religious duties, foretell the transition or the reversal of the social to the savage life. Religion emigrates carrying with it the true civilization, its undetached companion.

The beneficial influence of religion in the social order, base of all political order, does not depend on the temporal power, in the same way that the influence of the sun in the natural phenomena and the exuberance of crops, is not submitted to the will of the farmer [emphasis in the original].³⁷

For Liberals, what was at stake in the contest with Conservatives was precisely the right to govern. As succinctly stated by Liberal Camacho Roldan, "on the part of the

³⁷ Quoted in Angel y Rufino José Cuervo, "La vida de Rufino Cuervo y noticias de su época", (1892), in *Obras*, ed. Rufino José Cuervo, tomo II, (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1954), 1411 - 1416.

government, it is a question of to be or not to be."³⁸ In his view, the dominance of religion should end so that governors would be able to exert their functions. He summarized as follows the Liberal position:

The Catholic priests want to exert an absolute dominance on all aspects of human thought, to draw limits to the unlimited activity of the human mind, and to be the only depositary of truth and the only force in charge of spreading [the truth] to the people. Since the *Index*, in Rome, whose pretension is to declare which are the only books allowed to be read, on whose criteria very few would have been admitted, until the remotest priest that condemns everyday the most simple scientific thought, Catholic religion has always been in antagonism and open struggle with freedom of thought and belief.³⁹

The Organic Decree of 1870 defined education as a function of the federal government (article 1), and at the same time prohibited the government from intervening in religious education (article 36). As a result of Liberal policies there was an increase in the school enrolment, a school census was implemented, and more attention was paid to school methodology. The Liberal government incorporated the German pedagogical mission which was the subject of a strong controversy with the Catholic church.⁴⁰ As a result of German assistance, 20 centres for teacher training (*Escuelas Normales*) were created following a methodology close to the Prussian schools. The knowledge that several

³⁸ Salvador Camacho Roldán (1881), "Punto Negro en el Horizonte," *La Unión*, Septiembre 27. Reprinted in Salvador Camacho Roldán, *Escritos Varios*, tomo 2, (Bogotá: Editorial Incunables, 1983), 98.

³⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁴⁰ An historian of education mentions some of the reasons which could explain the German origin of the mission: the importance of some German pedagogues, the increasing importance of tobacco exports to Germany, and the importance given by the local press to the German victory over France, attributed to education. Aline Helg, *La Educación en Colombia 1918 - 1957*, (Bogotá: Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1987), 25.

members of the German mission were Protestants renewed the opposition to the Liberal reform.

The educational strategy was centred on the school teacher. The *escuelas normales* were established as centres to learn an occupation, an art. Pedagogy became the discipline in charge of the art of teaching. The "teacher" drew public attention given the difficult task assigned to them, the task of civilization:

We must centre our attention in the public and private life, and in the behaviour of teachers; we must eliminate those bad teachers as rotten fruit in the basket where we collect gifts for the children; we must only call good teachers to exert the sacred art of teaching, [we must] support them in their civilizing mission.⁴¹

What was at stake in the war of 1876 was the quest for civilization and the power struggle on the part of Liberals and Conservatives to control the schools. The war has been termed a 'war against schools'. Meyer summarizes the situation in the most active province during the war:

In Cauca the war displayed overtones of a religious crusade. Crying "Down with the schools!" the insurgents carried the white and yellow flag of the Papal States and the standard of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. One banner bore the legend: "Liberty of Conscience, Toleration of all Cults, Christian Education, Respect for the Beliefs of the Majority!"⁴²

⁴¹ Quoted in Alejandro Alvarez Gallego, "El Maestro Historia de un oficio" en *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, 22 - 23 (Bogotá: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 1991), 147.

⁴² Jane Meyer Loy, "Primary Education during the Colombian Federation: The School Reform of 1870", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 290.

As a consequence of the war, the laws funding education were abolished, school rooms were converted into barracks, books were destroyed and buildings were burned.

4.4 The others' voice

The will to civilization as a regime of representation was built not only in a process of exchange between a colonial past and a civilized future, but it emerged as well from the process of exchange between 'self' and 'other' identities. Nonetheless, the 'others', those located in the lower ranks of civilization - Indians, artisans, women, blacks - were not the creation of male Creole literati's views. They, the 'others', had a voice and a view from which they contested the monological representation of the world.⁴³ This section illustrates the challenges posed to the exclusionary character of the civilizing process emerging from other's voices. The first one is a the popular song entitled "Indian ignoring his history", which refers to the suppression of Indian's history. The second and third part analyse the work of two literati whose voice 'represent' those excluded from the civilization process: Soledad Acosta de Samper, a female writer, and Candelario Obeso, a black poet.

⁴³ Monological representations "close down the represented world and the represented persons". Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 293.

The popular song "Indian who doesn't know his distant origin" ⁴⁴ provides an illustration of what I have termed the 'violence of representation' or originary violence. Violence lies in the suppression of the self.

ROMANCE DEL INDIO QUE
DESCONOCE SU ORIGEN REMOTO

*Soy gajo de árbol caído
que no sé donde cayó.
Dónde estarán mis raíces?
De qué árbol soy gajo yo?*

*Yo no sé donde nací
ni sé tampoco quién soy;
no sé de donde he venido,
ni sé para donde voy.*

SONG OF THE INDIAN WHO DOESN'T
KNOW HIS DISTANT ORIGIN

*Branch of a fallen tree I am
that does not know where it fell.
Where could my roots be?
Of which tree am I a branch?*

*I do not know where I was born,
nor know who I am;
I do not know where I come from,
nor know where I am going.*

This lack of presence made representation, the linkage between the past and the future, an impossibility. By ignoring the 'roots', the link between the past and the future is broken. The violence of representation, seen as an act of suppression, has another effect as well -the inability to 'heal' resulting from the lack of representation. The possibility of healing depends on a symbolic presence. Without knowing the 'roots' of his suffering, the Indian is unable to heal the scars.

⁴⁴ The song is composed of two parts: the first part, a popular song of an unknown author; the second part, is a commentary by Quiñones' father or grandfather. The original popular song appear in italics. Octavio Quiñones Pardo collected and commented these songs in his book *Interpretación de la Poesía Popular*, (Bogotá: Editorial Centro, 1945): 40 - 41.

El Indio ignora la historia
pero su alma la presiente,
porque ama la libertad
y al amarla se enaltece.

Sabe que su corazón
hondas cicatrices tiene;
sabe que nació con ellas;
sabe que con ellas muere,
y que ha querido borrarlas,
y que borrarlas no puede.

La historia que el Indio ignora
muchos crímenes envuelve;
es la historia de su estirpe
sacrificada vilmente.

La historia de la conquista
sobre cuyo horror se extiende
un manto de indiferencia
que mil delitos protege;
la oprobiosa destrucción
del país de Nemequene

The Indian does not know his history
but his soul anticipates his history
in the love of freedom
and the praise he has in this love.

The Indian knows that his heart
a deep scar has;
He knows that he was born with scars;
and with scars he is going to die;
and he knows he has to try to heal them;
and that healing had not been possible.

The history that the Indian ignores
is the history of many crimes;
is not other than his own history
sacrificed villainously.

The history of the Conquest
on whose horror has been extended
a layer of indifference
covering many crimes;
the opprobrious destruction
of the nation of Nemequene.

There is also in the song an explicit reference to the relation between knowledge and the power exercised on the Indian, or more accurately, between lack of knowledge and the domination exercised over the Indian.

Por qué se le niega al Indio
que su historia lo consuele?
Por qué se calla esa historia
que a los patriotas ofrece
ejemplos de dignidad
y de heroísmos alegres,
de valor ante el verdugo,
ante el bárbaro inclemente?

Why is the comfort of his history
denied to the Indian?
Why is that history silenced,
which, to the patriot, offers
examples of dignity,
and of joyful heroism,
of courage when facing the executioner,
in front of the ruthless barbarian?

...Tal vez se calla esa historia
porque la reacción se teme.
Si conociera algún día
la estirpe a que pertenece,
el Indio sentiría orgullo
de su origen, que se pierde
en un pasado glorioso
que por glorioso no vuelve.

Que el Indio ignore su historia
a sus verdugos conviene,
porque así su explotación
a nadie aflige ni ofende.

...Maybe the history is silenced
because of the reaction they fear.
If some day he would know
his own lineage,
the Indian would be proud
of his origin, lost
in a glorious past
never to come again.

That the Indian does not know his history
benefits his executioners,
so that the Indian's exploitation
is not to anyone offensive.

Finally, the commentary to the Indian songs explicitly states the relationship between the violence of representation, in this case the suppression of history, and the manifestation of violence, that is, the capacity to exploit the Indian.

4.4.1 Soledad Acosta de Samper

Soledad, a Creole women literati, received her early education in Halifax (Canada) while living with her English grandmother, and completed her education in Paris, thus becoming fluent in English and French. Soledad Acosta is considered one of the most prolific writers in the 19th century, competing with writers like José María Samper, her husband. She published 48 short histories and 21 novels.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Monserrat Ordoñez, "Introducción" *Soledad Acosta de Samper. Una Nueva Lectura*, (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1988).

An analysis of Soledad's biography allows us to grasp the tensions between gender and the capacity for authoring. Soledad's writings were disempowered by her belonging to the category of women. Her first publication appeared in 1869 in Belgium, *Novelas y Cuadros de la Vida Suramericana*. It is a selection of essays written in the previous years, generally in the form of leaflets using a pseudonym. The disempowered character of the female writer is evident not only in the use of another's name, but also in the presence of a mediator between her writings and the readers: It is José María Samper, who presents Soledad's collection of essays. In José María's prologue to Soledad's book, he qualifies her writings and designates a 'proper' place from which the reader has to engage with her words: "For my part, it was my will that my wife made a contribution with her efforts, even as modest as it is, to the common construction of the literature developing in our young Republic."⁴⁶

José María's self-inflicted duties included assigning a 'proper' place and a boundary to his wife's influence as literati. Soledad is presented as daughter, wife and mother; she is the daughter of an eminent historian and general who fought in the battle for independence; she must honour his name, not from her own place but from the private realm of her home as a mother and in the condition of daughter of Colombia.

Daughter of one of the most helpful and prominent man, general Joaquín Acosta, well known in Colombia as an army and state man, learned, writer and professor, my wife's strong desire is to honour as much as possible the name she had, not only as mother of a family but also as daughter of Colombia's fatherland. Since

⁴⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, 13.

her sex does not allow her to serve the country in a different manner, she has found in literary activity, for more than fourteen years, a means of cooperation and action.⁴⁷

Soledad's writings, however, are not a product of the place assigned to her. The dialogic character of her literary production is evident in her reflections about the condition of women in the nineteenth century. Women perform roles assigned to them, but at the same time women appear as subverting these roles, they become able to overturn imposed, even natural, categories and to be themselves. She describes a woman's heart as a mixture of contradictory forces leading to pain and happiness; the heart of a woman follows a natural pattern but also transgresses this pattern:

[Woman's heart] has four different stages in her life: a child lives instinctively and suffers; when adolescent dreams and suffers; when young loves and suffer; when old understand and suffers. The life of a woman is a daily unhappiness; but this suffering is balanced during childhood by the candor which leads to forgiveness; during adolescence by poetry which makes everything more beautiful; a young person balances suffering with love; a mature person, with resignation. But it can also happen that the laws of nature are transgressed, and girls are able to understand, adolescents able to love, youth living instinctively; and mature women dreaming.⁴⁸

Soledad transgresses masculine representations by relying in her own spatial and temporal categories. In Soledad's account, "a man feels, feels sorrow and understands love; the

⁴⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, 355.

⁴⁸ "[El corazón de la mujer] tiene cuatro épocas en su vida: en la niñez vegeta y sufre; en la adolescencia sueña y sufre; en la juventud ama y sufre; en la vejez comprende y sufre. La vida de la mujer es un sufrimiento diario; pero éste se compensa en la niñez con el candor que hace olvidar; en la adolescencia con la poesía que todo lo embellece; en la juventud con el amor que consuela; en la vejez con la resignación. Mas sucede que la naturaleza invierte sus leyes, y se ven niñas que comprenden, adolescentes que aman, jóvenes que vegetan y ancianas que sueñan." Soledad Acosta de Samper, "El corazón de la Mujer", in *Ibid.*, 128 -129.

heart of a woman anticipates before understanding love."⁴⁹ A woman's strength relies in the capacity to foretell before understanding.

Soledad is also aware of the relationship between the changes of women's closed space and the effect of changes occurred in the name of civilization. In her short essay, *The Nun*,⁵⁰ she presents the consequences for women of the law which closed the convents in the name of civilization. Irrespective of their religious content, convents were women's spaces where they could go in search of protection and relief of pain. Soledad introduced to the reader several stories of women who had arrived at the convent for different reasons. Soledad's conclusion is that each case

...shows clearly that to seize the convents from these miserable women to whom *ambition, vocation, remorse, sorrow, disgrace, need or faith* had compelled them in search of asylum, is the greatest cruelty ever done. Yet, the expulsion of the nuns from their convents has been done in the name of civilization, that is, in the name of humanity, and in the name of progress, that is, [in the name] of individual freedom!.⁵¹

Soledad's perspective is a woman's standpoint. She founded the bi-weekly journal *La Mujer* (Woman) in 1878 written by women on women's subjects. In this journal she published her own historical essays on 'The Role of Woman in Civilization' (*La mujer*

⁴⁹ Ibid., 128.

⁵⁰ Soledad Acosta de Samper, "La Monja", in Ibid.

⁵¹ "Cada uno de estos tipos demuestra claramente que el quitarles sus conventos a esas infelices a quienes la *ambición, la vocación, el remordimiento, la desgracia, o la devoción*, han hecho buscar allí asilo, es la crueldad más grande que se pueda cometer. Sin embargo, la expulsión de las monjas de sus conventos ha sido ejecutada en nombre de la civilización, es decir, de la humanidad, y en nombre del progreso, es decir, ¡de la libertad individual!" Ibid., 96.

en la civilización), 'French women writers' (*Literatas Francesas*), 'Gallery of Virtuous Women' (*Galeria de Mujeres Virtuosas*) 'Aurora's misfortune' (*Las Desdichas de Aurora*). These women's narratives are mixed with political events, as in the case of the short novel *La Monja*. The collection on women's feeling, her 'psychological essays', are about changes in women's lives that parallel historical transformation. In these essays Soledad interrogates the gendered character of history. In her essay, *Mercedes*⁵² she depicts the story of a Creole woman who took the Spanish side during the struggle for independence. In addition to the multiple contradictory forces exerting pressure on Mercedes' life, a constant theme is male violence exerted on her, a situation which did not change with the Revolution of Independence.

The contradictory encounter between freedom and oppression, between the present condition and the past, as it pertains to the situation of women in the post-Independence world appears clearly in the essay named *Un Chistoso de Aldea* (The City's joker). The sub-title of the essay is 'novel-like passages of the fatherland's history'. As the title suggests, history and novel mix together to denounce the gendered character of the struggle for independence. This essay depicts the sense of contradiction and ambiguity of women's experience in relation to the concept of *patria* (father land): On the one hand, there is the feeling shared by most of Creoles against the Spanish domination, but, on the other, the women's experience of male domination. To give expression to this

⁵² Soledad Acosta de Samper, "Mercedes", in *ibid.*

contradictory situation, Soledad uses a figure of carnival.⁵³ The hero is a man who transgresses the behaviour of ordinary men: a juggler. Named Justo, the Spanish equivalent of Justice, he is the son of a poor woman nicknamed *la guacharaca*,⁵⁴ living in a small city during the Independence period. Justo is the main figure in the town's carnival. Politically, Justo is a patriot, an independence fighter, but his main cause is to protect women. The passage chosen by Soledad is Justo's intervention to protect the life of the Spanish Vice-Queen, menaced the day of Independence. This act was interpreted as favouring the Spaniards, named *Chapetones*. To the accusation of patriot Creoles, Justo replied:

- Am I a patriot? yes, I am, and I am a strong enemy of the *chapetones*, but I can not stand bad behaviour against women. This is my way of being, and I can not proceed otherwise.⁵⁵

⁵³ The importance of the use of carnival figures has been stressed by Bakhtin. For him "The rogue, the clown and the fool create around themselves their own spacial little world, their own chronotope...Essential to these three figures is a distinctive feature that is as well a privilege -the 'right' to be the other in this world, the right not to make common cause with any single one of the existing categories quite suits them, they see the underside and the falseness of every situation. Therefore, they can exploit any position they choose, but only as a mask". Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, (Austin:University of Texas Press, 1981), 159.

⁵⁴ *Guacharacas* are birds of certain regions whose main characteristic is the noise they made.

⁵⁵ "- Me alegro que no seas patriota, dijo la señora sonriendo...

-En eso sí se equiva la patrona, dijo Justo.

-En que?

-En que no sea patriota; lo soy, si señora, y muy enemigo de los chapetones, pero me cargan los malos tratamientos que hacen a las mujeres; soy así y no lo puede remediar." Soledad Acosta de Samper, "Episodios Novelescos de la historia Patria. Un Chistoso de Aldea", in *ibid.*, 267.

In Soledad's perspective, the independence struggle was fought against Spanish domination but not against women's oppression. Yet Soledad's views and her capacity to construct the new Republic remained marginal when compared to the work of Jose María Samper or Miguel Antonio Caro. Colombian historiography scarcely mentions the name of Soledad Acosta, "she is often named only as daughter and wife of two prominent politicians and writers, her work is very seldom mentioned... is not reprinted, and never read."⁵⁶

4.4.2 Candelario Obeso

Obeso shares with Soledad Acosta the minor status attributed to their work. A black poet, Obeso was born in Mompox 1849,⁵⁷ the year proclaimed by José María Samper as the beginning of the 'pamphlet' revolution. Obeso attended school in Mompox, distanced from the centre of power, but a mid-way passage between the capital and the outside world. In 1866 he came to Bogotá where he gained a scholarship in the military school founded by Mosquera. On the occasion of the coup of 1867 the school was closed and he went to the National University where he studied language, literature and law. Obeso,

⁵⁶ Montserrat Ordoñez, "Introducción", *Soledad Acosta de Samper. Una Nueva Lectura*, 11.

⁵⁷ Obeso published several works: *Curso de lengua italiana*; *Orden Público*; *Las cosas del Mundo*; *Lecturas para ti*;...*Nociones de Táctica de Infantería, de Caballería, de Artillería*, translated into Spanish, *Secundino el Zapatero* (comedy in three parts); *Cantos Populares de mi Tierra* (collection of poetry). The data about Obeso's life are from Joaquín Ospina, *Diccionario Biográfico y Bibliográfico de Colombia*, (Bogotá: Editorial Aguila, 1929), 117.

like most Creole literati, was a student of Ezequiel Rojas, prominent lawyer and intellectual author of the Liberal program.

Contrary to Samper's or Caro's praise for European civilization, Obeso defended local knowledge as opposed to European rationality. His poems are a continuous questioning of the rationality brought from the European world and of its status as the privileged entry to the world of knowledge. Obeso published in 1877 his book *Cantos Populares de mi Tierra* without any "editorial success."⁵⁸ In this book Obeso uses 'authentic black talk', which he considered the "true, positive literature" of Colombia.⁵⁹ The book opens with a poem entitled "The Pigeon" in which Obeso advanced the notion that the conduct of these animals could be a source of knowledge. The author confesses that although pigeons are poor animals he has learned more from them than in the school:⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See Laurence E. Prescott, *Candelario Obeso y la Iniciación de la Poesía Negra en Colombia*; (Bogotá: Publicaciones del Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1985), 64. Prescott sees in Obeso a forerunner of black poetry in Colombia. According to Prescott, Obeso's work "celebrates and even vindicates the black population of the Coast, modest and hard worker, whose values, virtues and habits are extolled in front of the major white society which did not look at them with sympathy or respect", 72.

⁵⁹ Richard Prescott considers Obeso as a precursor of *poesía negra*. According to Jackson in *Cantos Populares de mi Tierra*, published in 1977, Obeso consciously used 'authentic black talk' as a way to accord "dignity to his black fellow countrymen while advising the local *literati* that a truly national literary identity could be found only in local popular poetry and song". Richard L. Jackson, *Black Writers in Latin America*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 53 - 54.

⁶⁰ The poem appeared in *Ibid.*, 78 - 79. The translation of the second verse is from R. L. Jackson, *ibid.*, 56.

LOS PALOMOS

Siendo probe alimanes lo palomos,
A la jente a sé jente noj enseñan;
E su conduct la mejó cactilla;
Hai en us moros ejertiva cencia!

Siendo probe alimales lo palomos,
Se aprende en ello má que en la
j'ecuela;
Yo, poc lo meno, en su cocto libro
Eturio re la vira la maneras...

THE PIGEONS

Even though pigeons are poor animals
they teach humans how to be more humane;
their conduct is the best manual;
there is in their habits useful knowledge.

Even tough pigeons are just poor animals
One can learn more from them more than at
school;
I, for one, in their learned book
Study the ways of life.

His drama *Secundino el Zapatero*,⁶¹ openly criticized the literati's adoption of foreign doctrines, and the will to civilization's rejection of artisans in favour of literature and grammar. The drama depicts the story of an artisan shoemaker who abandoned the profession to become a Liberal politician defender of the doctrines of Bentham and Tracy. Marta, Secundino's wife, represents the sense of reality which artisans posed to the Liberals in power. She exhorts him to go back to the office of artisan: "Come back to your molds, and forget about elections and that showy life". Saturnino rejects Marta's advice because of her ignorance about economic doctrines: "How stupid you are! It is clear that you have not read the books of Tracy and Bentham ...The power of knowledge!...".⁶² He also mentions Martha's senselessness as a result of her ignorance of grammar: "You are foolish! This is the behaviour proper to those who ignore

⁶¹ Candelario Obeso (1880), *Secundino el Zapatero*, reprinted in *Teatro Colombiano del Siglo XIX De Costumbres y Comedias*, ed., Carlos Nicolás Hernández, (Colombia: Tres Culturas Editores, 1989).

⁶² Candelario Obeso (1880), *Secundino el Zapatero*, reprinted in *Teatro Colombiano del Siglo XIX De Costumbres y Comedias*, 302.

grammar".⁶³ Secundino is rejected from the world of politics due to his class and racial (*mestizo*) origin and he ends poorer than before. The drama ends when Secundino recovers the sense of reality: "You have won, dear Marta; I will be a shoemaker again"; and to his artisan friend: "My only advice to you is never to forget my history in your condition of worker".⁶⁴

Obeso also was critical of the privilege granted to law and lawyers. In the poem written in 1877, *Epropiación re uno córigos* (expropriation of certain legal codes), Obeso depicted the situation of a man who asked to bring a congressman legal codes from the Congress; in the middle of the way, the man decided to sell the books and buy materials to fix his hut. He parallels the value of the books to the amount of paper invested in them. In the poem the value of books is also valued according to the amount of material he is able to buy: half a pound of glue ⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid., 303.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 363 - 364.

⁶⁵ Candelario Obeso (1877), "Epropiación re uno córigos", printed in *Candelario Obeso, la iniciación de la poesía negra en Colombia*, Laurence E. Prescott, 91.

Ayer tuve en er Congreso
I me rió er dotó Ecamilla,
Sei volume pa que a uté
Se los trujera ensegufa,
Maj apena lo cojí
Compré acmirón (meria libra),
i vine a tapá é mi choza
Lo juraco i la j'endijas,
Si eto le parece má,
Iré luego ar dotó Ancíza;
Er tiene er papé a montone
Si uté papé necesita.

I went yesterday to the Congress
And honorable Ecamilla gave me
Six codes of law to bring
right away to you,
but as soon as I took them
I bought starch (half pound),
and came to fix my hunt
the holes and the cracks.
If you think this is wrong doing,
I will go back to honorable Ancizar;
he has paper by tons,
if all you need is paper.

Obeso, like Soledad Acosta, had contradictory feelings regarding the post-Independence situation. He gave voice to the situation of blacks upon which civilization was being imposed in both an emancipate and oppressive manner. Obeso stood for the democratic system and the freedom granted to blacks and Indians: in his poem *Epresión re mi amitá* (Expression of friendship) ⁶⁶ he asked expatriated Spaniards to tell how "blacks, whites and Indians are citizens". At the same time, he expressed the oppressive character that post-colonial institutions had for blacks. He praised the freedom of those living outside civilization: "Here (in the mountain) no one oppressed me; the Governor and the army live far away."⁶⁷ At the same time he complained about the disregard of local culture and the inability of whites to understand blacks' culture. He expressed the hope that

⁶⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 85.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

someday, white man will visit a black locale; then he will realize how black women also have 'good manners'⁶⁸

Ojalá que alguna vé
Le mire a uté entre lo mío,
Verá bien cuanto mi negra
Tiene tratamiento fino...

I wish that some day
I can see you among my people,
then you would realize that my black women
had good manners too...

The opposite situation does not occur on the part of blacks. They are able to differentiate the 'Other':

Cuando soi un probe negro
Sin más ciencia que mi oficio,
No ignoro quién merece
Actún repeto i cariño...

Although I am a poor black
without more knowledge than my work,
I do not ignore who must be endorsed
with respect and friendship

Last, but not the least important, Obeso saw the nineteenth century wars as a battle between literati in whose ends they used black people in the name of civilization. Blacks are depicted as a step ladder in the *cachaco* battle. In his poem *Serenata* he made clear that if a war broke out, he did not want to leave his hut:

Quieren la guerra
con los cachacos?
Yo no me muevo
Re aquí e mi rancho;...
Si alguno intenta
Subí a lo arto,
Buque ejcalera,
Poc otro lao!

Do they want war
with the *cachacos*?
I will not move
from my hut...
If someone attempts
To go up,
Look for a ladder,
In other place!

⁶⁸ Ibid., 128.

Notwithstanding Obeso's will, when war began in 1884, he was called to serve in the army. A few months later, Obeso died from a gunshot wound.

4.5 Conclusion

The Colombian elite which emerged after the Independence was small and relatively poor, when compared with those in other Latin American countries, and was located in dispersed cities spread over a vast territory. Notwithstanding their limited economic power, this small proportion of the population (6 thousand out of 3 million habitants) concentrated characteristics allowing them to establish strong boundaries with respect to the rest of the population: they were literati in a country where 90% of the population was illiterate; they were Creole, descendent of Spanish parents, where the majority of the people were *mestizo*, Indians and blacks; most of them were male where the educational and legal system was largely restricted to men.

In mid-nineteenth century Colombia, political economy was not centred in the accumulation of wealth; it was centred in the accumulation of words and cultural capital. The will to civilization became the prevalent regime of representation. Power was concentrated in those possessing Western civilization's secrets: male Creole literati. They reserved their own place in the regime of representation, as the ones knowledgeable enough to direct the New Republic in the proper road. They reserved their own place by holding the civilized place in society: literati became prestigious politicians, and politics

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enjoyed high status. Literati were the architects of civilization, and their power stemmed from their capacity to produce, circulate and value their most precious commodity: words.

The definition of how free the circulation of words should be, what was the veritable source of words' legitimacy, who were the most authorized voices, and from where their power was to be exerted, were contentious issues among mid-nineteenth century literati. The most important constitutional battles, and the civil wars between Liberals and Conservatives took place around the issue of how words were to be employed to forge the civilizing mission. Those triumphs gained during the will to civilization regime disappeared later. Freedom of the press, defended by Liberals and recognized in the Constitution of 1851 and 1863, was restricted in the Constitution of 1886. Whether the legitimacy of words derived from a divine authority or from the character of law, one of the most contentious issues during the will to civilization regime was resolved in favour of God's authority in the Constitution of 1886. Priests, schools and teachers, valuable instruments in the civilizing mission, were also the source of strong debates during the period, debates that often ended in civil wars. Priests were subjected to special legislation restricting the power of their voice, their messages were submitted to strong vigilance, and they were, on occasion, even banned or expelled. Schools, teachers and university textbooks became a central part of congressional debates. The Organic Decree of Public Primary Education occasioned a civil war in 1886 thus signalling an end to the

will to civilization regime. The concept of citizenship linked to literacy (and indirectly to class, race and gender) also disappeared when suffrage was extended to all male individuals living in the national territory.

Chapter 5

The 'Will to Civilization'

and its encounter

with *laissez-faire*

"The political doctrine of laissez-faire is absurd, mistaken, utopian... Absolute tolerance, laissez-faire, is utopian nonsense".

Miguel Antonio Caro, Conservative, (1869).

*"The selfish and regrettable doctrine praised by Jean Baptiste Say and his school synthesized in the formulation *dejad hacer*, or allow robbery, allow oppression, allow the wolf to eat the lamb"*

Manuel Murillo Toro, Liberal. (1853)

"Contrary to Mr. Murillo's opinion, capital accumulation, far from being evil, is precisely a source of wealth, and one of the most powerful elements of civilization."

Ricardo Vanegas, Liberal Parliamentarian (1853).

A main argument of this chapter is that the process of development of capitalism is embedded in symbolic representations. In the places where capitalism developed first, this process was linked to changes in self/other perception which equated 'interests' and 'civilization' and isolated the economic world of rational interest from the political world of passions. The economic historian, Albert Hirschman, has emphasized the importance of the notion of interest in the emergence of capitalism. For him, its appearance is an unintended consequence which flows "from human thought (and from the shape it is given through language)."¹ Hirschman argues that early debates about *laissez-faire* were accompanied by changes in conceptions about individuals. From a vision of individuals as guided by passions in need of restraint, Smith equated passions to interests. Interests became *positive* and *curative*. In Hirschman's view, the paradigmatic transformation marked by the legacy of Adam Smith was his insistence on isolating the economic sphere: "economics can go it alone". This change, then, was associated with a narrowing of interest to the pursuit of economic advantage and the separation of economic interest from political passions. Politics continued to be the province of the "folly of men."² This change in individuals' orientation was accompanied by the 'universalization' of the concept of interests to all spheres of society: 'Interests govern the world'.³ Gramsci also

¹ Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 41. See also J.A. W. Gunn, *Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

² Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph*, 104.

³ *Ibid.*, 43.

According to Gramsci the moment in which one becomes aware that one's corporate interests, and become the interests of other subordinate, this is the political phase. At this moment "the development and expansion of the particular are conceived of, and presented, as being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all 'national' energies."⁴

This chapter argues that in Colombia *laissez-faire* principles, based on premises that equated economic activities and interest, entered into contradiction with the will to civilization as the predominant regime of representation. The former was subordinated to the latter. What is suggested is that the uneven development of capitalism which occurred in mid-nineteenth century Colombia was the result of the contradictory encounter between the *will to civilization* and *laissez-faire* capitalism as conceived in Europe. In this encounter a contradictory exchange of representations took place: the Colombians passionate and ignorant artisans were contrasted with English workers; morality was compared with rationality; theory was preferred to reality; coarse textiles were paralleled to imported ones; the representation of female bodies supported the desirability for imported textiles. In this exchange, not all representations were possible.⁵ Some representations were suppressed and violence engendered. In nineteenth

⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 181.

⁵ The notion of a contradictory space of representation comes from Jane Jenson, "Gender and Reproduction: Or, Babies and the State," *Studies in Political Economy*, 20 (1986).

century Colombia those representations voiced in the name of civilization and enlightenment silenced local claims. The violence of representation in the construction of identities along the hierarchy civilization-barbarism was an important factor in the displacement of local manufactures in favour of European ones. The construction of hierarchical identities also explained the absence of a regime of representation in which the economy could 'go it alone' and interests were universalized. Not only were blacks, Indians and local artisans seen as barbarians needing the employment of force, but also the pursuit of self-interest was seen as contrary to the principles of morality and civilization.

5.1 Free Trade? Yes, but without *laissez-faire* capitalism

Colombia nicely illustrates the contradictory relationship between *laissez-faire* capitalism and 'civilization'. That the adoption of free trade did not divide the groups in power seems to confirm the consolidation of *laissez-faire* principles. The Liberal and Conservative parties each adopted free trade as part of their platform. From 1848 onwards the Liberal party in power intensified its open commitment to free trade principles. Free trade was defined in the Conservative program as "legal freedom of movement, import and export, without prohibitions and without other rights than fiscal needs."⁶ The Liberals stated that "Laws should guarantee freedom and security and

⁶ José E. Caro (1849), "La libertad y el partido Conservador" in *La Civilización*, 5 and 6; reprinted in *Escritos Historico-políticos*, ed. José E. Caro (Bogotá: Ediciones Fondo Cultural Cafetero, (1980), 61.

should not obstruct the production and the circulation of property for any reason; private individuals will do the rest, because the will for wealth does not need inspiration."⁷

Colombia, like most of Latin America, lowered tariffs and adopted other policies said to favour free trade. Colombians anticipated a future in which *laissez-faire* principles entailing an international division of labour in which the country would produce agricultural commodities while European manufactured goods would yield mutual benefits. Colombia's exports of tropical products was to pay for the importation of goods from Europe. Merchants and optimistic (but not necessarily wealthy) visionaries from the main cities moved to the inhospitable lowland to cultivate first tobacco, then quinine and indigo. The power of the state was reduced and kept away from productive activities.

Violence was implicated in the failures as well as the progress of Colombia's economy. Export activity, with the interesting exception of the manufacture of hats by women, was characterized by the direct exercise of violence in the process of surplus extraction. A study of tobacco production depicts the regions dedicated to the crop as 'lands of brigandage and fear', caused by the presence of private armed guards to force 'vagrants' to work in the *haciendas*.⁸ The methods used for quinine extraction were even more

⁷ Ezequiel Rojas (1848), *El Aviso*, Bogotá; reprinted in Gerardo Molina, *Las ideas Liberales en Colombia-1849-1914*, 23.

⁸ John P. Harrison, "The Evolution of the Colombian Tobacco Trade," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXXII, 2 (1952), 172.

violent.⁹ Commercialization was implemented by private companies (national and international) which bought the product from *cascarilleros*, Indians exploiting their communal lands or working on public lands on concession. Private armies were involved in violence intended to control production and exchange; they fought each other; and they provoked violent resistance on the part of the suppliers. The failure of the export sector is related to violence in the relations of production and to the violent forms of the exploitation of nature. The decline in tobacco exports was linked to a decrease in the international price of Colombian tobacco which was precipitated by a decrease in the quality of tobacco. The violent methods of production were an obstacle to the exercise of any kind of quality control of the tobacco exported and also contributed to over-exploitation of the land.¹⁰ Quinine production led to brief booms followed by a decline which coincided with the exhaustion of the forest. Once the jungles of Pitayo (Cauca) were depleted, the production shifted to San Sebastián (Huila); after this source dried up, extraction began in Santander. The cities nearest to the extraction centres "experienced an ephemeral golden age, to be forgotten a few years later."¹¹

Thus, two contradictory tendencies coexisted while free trade policies were being adopted. First, despite the broad consensus around these policies, the nineteenth century

⁹ This process is depicted in Jose A. Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial*, 294 - 300.

¹⁰ Ocampo mentions as one of the key explanations to the lack of competitiveness of Colombian tobacco in the external market, the inefficient system of production, procession and packaging of tobacco. Colombian tobacco was replaced by exports from Sumatra whose better quality displaced Colombia from the market. This decrease in quality was intensified by a disease named *amulatamiento*. Ibid., chapter 5.

¹¹ Ibid., 295.

witnessed a profound division between the newly emergent political parties. The conflict, labelled the '*moral question*' by one of the main participants, appeared to be an insuperable barrier to the building of alliances between Liberals and Conservatives. The bone of contention was none other than *laissez-faire* principles. The question to be asked is why the agreement about free trade did not extend to *laissez-faire* as well? The second contradictory tendency is that in Colombia the introduction of *laissez-faire* principles coexisted with the endurance of pre-capitalist relations regulating labour, property and social relations. During the nineteenth century the *hacienda* system and the use of non-paid labour (*arrendatarios*) predominated over free labour.¹² *Hacendados* were very often political economists who, while endorsing *laissez-faire* principles, used semi-servile labour in the production of agricultural exports for the world economy. Why is it that production was not improved, technology was not bettered, land was exhausted, and resources depleted?

5.2 The 'will to civilization'

As chapter 3 and 4 have illustrated, the regime of representation in post-colonial Colombia was organized around the will to civilization. The quest for accumulation of

¹² This situation has been a main characteristic of the development of capitalism in the Third World. For the Colombian case the debate about the characterization of the XIX century as capitalist or feudal is an example of the contradictory nature of capitalism. Some authors have depicted the situation as one of *enfeudamiento*. See Salomon Kalmanovitz, "El Regimen Agrario durante el siglo XIX en Colombia", in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, (Bogotá: Circulo de Lectores, 1982). For others, the process of accumulation has been characterized as entirely capitalist although of a different kind, one of 'speculative' nature using elementary conditions of production in order to profit at a maximum. See José A. Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial 1830 - 1910*, (Bogotá: Siglo XXI editores, 1984).

wealth was centred around the mimetic desire to be like the European 'other'. The dichotomy '*civilización o barbarie*', common throughout the Latin American continent, remained at the centre of the post-colonial project, not as two mutually exclusive worlds but in a contradictory synthesis. On the one hand, for the group who had gained independence and had remained in power, namely male Creoles, the encounter with the barbarian character attributed by Europeans to the non-Western world, entered into contradiction with their desire for self-government, as proclaimed during the struggles for independence. On the other hand, the recognition of barbarism suited well the Creoles in power. The double characteristic which came from being born of Spanish parents and having a knowledge of Western civilization made them the 'legitimate' pillars of civilization. The accumulation process was centred primarily in the 'will' to civilize. Nonetheless the desire for capitalist accumulation thorough *laissez-faire* practices was not foreign to creole literati. Their encounter was also a contradictory one.

5.3 The encounter with *laissez-faire*

Creoles in Nueva Granada had been familiar with *laissez-faire* principles since the early post-colonial period. In 1825, thirteen years after independence, political economy was included in the Law curriculum at the *Colegio San Bartolomé*, using Jean Baptiste Say as the prescribed text. The importance attributed to this event merited a special comment

in the *Gaceta Oficial* "From the moment of Conquest to the present the words political economy, values, productive and non-productive capital have not even been heard in our universities".¹³ Santander, then President of the country, issued a decree ordering that the Law was to be taught according to Bentham's utilitarian principles. These principles were also part of his educational reform (*Plan de Estudios*).

From that point Bentham's utilitarianism became the centre of an important debate.¹⁴ Bentham's moral doctrine was considered to be opposed to the Catholic religion and was thought to incite mischief in the young. When Simón Bolívar regained power in 1828 he issued a decree which banned Bentham's books in schools and universities. The controversy attained such relevance, that an attempt against Bolívar's life in September 1828, which included the participation of some students of San Bartolomé, was attributed to the pernicious influence of Bentham's principles. After the attempt against Bolívar's life, J. M. Restrepo, one of the authors of Santander's plan, reconsidered, in the following terms, the benevolence of Bentham's doctrine:

An examination of the philosophy of educational reform brings me to the conclusion that the origin of the wrong behaviour lies in the political science taught to students by professors without enough judgment to modify the principles according to each nation's circumstances. The wrong behaviour increases when

¹³ Quoted in David Bushnell, *El Regimen de Santander en la Gran Colombia*, (Bogotá: El Ancora editores, 1985), 233.

¹⁴ The debate in the first half of the nineteenth century appears in Evelyn J. G. Ahern, "El Desarrollo de la Educación en Colombia: 1820 - 1850," in *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, 22 - 23 (1991). See also *Ibid.*

certain authors are chosen for the study of the Law, such as of Bentham et al, since besides enlightened principles, their doctrine contains principles opposed to people's religion, morality and peace.¹⁵

From this moment on, the debate surrounding Bentham's doctrine took a partisan form: Liberals took Bentham's side, while Conservatives became Bentham's main opponents.¹⁶ In 1842 José Eusebio Caro, who in 1848 would author the Conservative party's ideological programme, published a series of anti-utilitarianism articles in the newspaper *El Neo-Granadino*. The same year, Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, Minister of the Interior, issued another educational reform. The main emphasis of his plan was the attainment of science, morality and discipline.¹⁷ Ospina again forbade the use of Bentham in universities.

5.4 The encounter between *laissez-faire* and the will to civilization

The contradictory encounter of *laissez-faire* and the 'will to civilization' appears clearly in the main polemic between Liberals and Conservatives, as well as in the debates between Liberals and artisans. In 1849, the year that the Liberal party assumed power,

¹⁵ J. M. Restrepo (1828) quoted in Rufino J. Cuervo (1892), "Vida de Rufino J. Cuervo y Noticias de su Epoca" *Obras*, ed. Rufino J. Cuervo, II (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1954), 1278.

¹⁶ See Evelyn J. G. Ahern, "El Desarrollo de la Educación en Colombia: 1820 - 1850," in *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, 53.

¹⁷ Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, "El Proceso de la Educación, del Virreinato a la época contemporánea," in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, III, (Bogotá: Circulo de Lectores, 1982).

the Conservatives published a newspaper entitled *La Civilización*. The newspaper was edited by Conservatives Mariano Ospina Rodríguez and José Eusebio Caro. According to the editors, the newspaper's aim was "to promote and defend civilization in Nueva Granada and in Spanish America".¹⁸ The editorial in the first issue, entitled *La Civilización se Define* (The Meaning of Civilization), defined civilization as the accumulation of the means to reach perfection: in their respective order they were **enlightenment, morality and wealth**. **Security** was identified as the reason for the creation of civilization and **violence** as the main cause for the destruction of civilization. What is important is that behind the attainment of both security and violence, according to the author, there is another cause namely a good or a bad doctrine: "A belief, idea, doctrine can pull [men] out from barbarism, and guide them along the road to civilization: A belief, idea or doctrine is able also to detain or reverse the march of civilization".¹⁹

According to Ospina, a doctrine proclaiming interest as its main principle destroys civilization and causes barbarism:

A doctrine that humiliates men by comparing them to beasts whose only function is to eat, enjoy pleasure and then to perish; [a doctrine] which establishes **interest** as the point of departure of all actions, makes egoism the regulation of all actions and dries all the seeds of virtue; [a doctrine] where justice and law have as their only foundation selfish **rational calculation**, never right, deprives property and

¹⁸ Mariano Ospina Rodríguez (1849), "La Civilización se define", *La Civilización*, 1 (August 9, 1849). Reprinted in *Escritos sobre Economía Política*, ed. Mariano O. Rodríguez (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1969), 73.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

security of their base; as a consequence [property and security] are left either to the mercy of the free will of a mass without a restraining force or in the hands of a tyrant, equally unrestrained and volatile; in other words, **violence** becomes a substitute for **justice**, and **force** replaces **reason**. This doctrine ruins intelligence, isolates and divides men, destroys the principles of property and welfare, and destroys morality: all this is the same as saying that this doctrine **barbarizes** men.²⁰

For Conservatives what was at stake through the adoption of a bad doctrine (*laissez-faire*) was the future of civilization. The principles of 'interest' and 'rational calculation' were linked to violence, force and barbarism. This conception is the opposite to the one sustained in early arguments favouring liberalism.

5.5 *Laissez-faire* as a form of government of individuals

Laissez-faire, unlike the situation in early arguments about capitalism, was not represented as applying to an isolated realm, the economy, or the independent realm of the exchange of things. Liberals and Conservatives held a view of *laissez-faire* as it applied to all aspects of social life, well beyond exchange in the market. What becomes clear in the most important debates held on the improvement of the species, the manumission of slaves, the search for the causes of poverty and even free trade, is that *laissez-faire* was applied to the conduct of individuals (sexual, moral, political) and not to an independent sphere of the government of things.

²⁰ Ibid., 79. (emphasis added).

The need to improve the human species was used as an argument against *laissez-faire* in an article published by Conservative José Eusebio Caro entitled the "The Falsity of *laissez-faire*". Caro, for whom society is not the individual but the species, contended that in matters related to the species *laissez-faire* was not applicable: it is inapplicable to the institution of marriage and sexual relations "*Laissez-faire* will lead to marriage among the immature, bigamy, polygamy and concubinage".²¹ It is also not applicable to those acts which lead to the destruction of the species such as consumption of alcohol, gambling, bullfights, hunting and deforestation.

The debate on the freedom of slaves was raised in the context of the relations of property. The debate was not argued along partisan lines. Rather factions of both parties supported or opposed the manumission of slaves. The discussion centred on human freedom as an act against property. The abolition of slavery was seen by some as an assault on property rights. J. M. Samper,²² who favoured abolition, summarized as follows the two positions:

It has been argued on the part of those opposing the law of manumission of slaves, that their freedom will be an attack on property. Why must property be respected when it is an attack on freedom? Answer this question. The property of the slave-owner is an assault on freedom, and the freedom of the slave is an assault on property. Which one is more violent, more harmful and inexcusable, the one that moves more social interests? The first one without any doubt. The

²¹ José E. Caro (1849), "La Falsedad del *laissez faire*," reprinted in *Antología verso y prosa*, ed. José E. Caro (Bogotá: Biblioteca popular de cultura Colombiana, 1951), 386.

²² Quoted in Geraldo Molina, *Las ideas Liberales en Colombia-1849-1914*, 54.

Liberal party is divided on this question, and one side supports the most important right, while another faction favours the less important one.

The Liberals abolished slavery and the Conservatives went to war (1851) to protest the decree, but were defeated by their Liberal opponents.

Despite the Liberals' support of *laissez-faire* principles, the debates among Liberal factions also reveal the use of the concept in a sense not restricted to exchange in the market or property relations. The opposition of Liberal Murillo Toro to the reforms inspired by *laissez-faire* principles is enlightening. Manuel Murillo Toro, considered the most radical Liberal,²³ opposed the adoption of *laissez-faire* because he saw in its principles a political and not an economic agenda. In a letter sent to Liberal economist Miguel Samper, he denounced *laissez-faire* (*dejad hacer*) as a selfish and pernicious doctrine. According to him *laissez-faire* signified a rule of conduct which "allows robbery, allows oppression, allows the wolf to eat the lambs".²⁴ In his eyes the Liberal reforms were political reforms and destined to failure if they were not accompanied by economic reforms. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* was unable to achieve what he conceived as the two most important goals: the first of which was to be an 'agricultural nation (*pueblo*) and nothing else'. This aim, in his view, required property over the land; the

²³ Murillo's radicalism is reflected in the Constitution of the province of Santander, authored by him. In Murillo's own words "The Constitution of Santander has abolished, as was supposed to be the case, the government". Quoted in Jesus C. Torres Almeida, *Manuel Murillo Toro. Caudillo radical y reformador social*. (Bogota: Ediciones El Tiempo, 1984), 210.

²⁴ Manuel Murillo (1853) "Dejad Hacer" *El Neo-Granadino*, published in *Las Ideas Liberales en Colombia 1848-1914*, Geraldo Molina, (Bogota: Tercer Mundo, 1970), 319 - 333.

second goal was the 'desire to live in democracy'; this mission required 'freedom of standing as a precondition of freedom of character'.²⁵ *Dejad haced*, according to him, provided neither.

Miguel Samper, the addressee of Murillo's letter, was considered also a fervent advocate of *laissez-faire* and the most prestigious Colombian political economist.²⁶ If the ideal country for Murillo was one without government, Samper's ideal was one without trade barriers. In his opposition to the protectionist measures demanded by the artisans, Samper suggested that a better solution "would be to assign to each artisan a rent of one thousand pesos each year".²⁷ Despite Miguel Samper's commitment to economic liberalism, his major theoretical works also point to the lack of belief in the self-regulatory capacity of the market. His well known study on 'Poverty in Bogotá'²⁸ is a clear indication of this tendency. The causes of poverty, he said, are moral, social and political. Superseding these causes is a precondition for peace and progress. In Samper's view morality was the precondition for liberty: "To maintain that a nation is free when it can do whatever it wants and avoid what is unpleasant, is an incomplete assertion. If

²⁵ Ibid., 321.

²⁶ Historian Delpar refers to Samper as 'the most articulate and consistent exponent of classical economic liberalism'. Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics, 1863 - 1899*, (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1981), 72. The two main historians of ideas in Colombia, Geraldo Molina, *Las ideas Liberales en Colombia-1849-1914* and Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, "El Proceso de la Educación, del Virreinato a la época contemporánea", in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, III, also believe that Samper is the clearest representative of economic liberalism in Colombia.

²⁷ Miguel Samper (1867), "La miseria en Bogota" in *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, ed. Miguel Samper, vol 1 (Bogotá: Editorial Cromos, 1925), 94.

²⁸ Ibid.

habits are immoral, beliefs are mistaken or superstitious, desires are immoderate, the freedom of this nation will be similar to the freedom of cannibals".²⁹

When the government attempted to introduce protectionist measures, Miguel Samper became their fiercest opponent. His solution to the problem of an imbalance in trade (the country's imports exceeding its exports) was of a moral nature:

The problem that we have at hand is not economic, but moral. To establish the equilibrium between appetites and their satisfaction is more urgent than the problem of reaching equilibrium between what we buy and what we sell in the external market. Unfortunately, the social facts are subject to laws whose action is too complex and hard to fight. Priests, parents and schools are the most suitable to counter these kinds of bad habits.³⁰

Samper attributed the backward situation of Latin American republics to the lack of political order. The series of articles on Freedom and Order were an attempt to discern the causes of political disorder. "The day", he said, "in which we lay the foundations of a political order which results in the establishment of peace, the solution of the remaining problems would be easy".³¹ The basis of Samper's thought was the belief that the spirit of freedom was lacking in the Latin American republics. Political institutions clashed with a tradition in which there were no moral habits. "Independence took us by surprise

²⁹ Ibid., 77.

³⁰ This was Samper's reaction to Núñez's attempt to introduce measures limiting imports. Miguel Samper, (1880) "La Protección", in *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, ed. Miguel Samper, 213.

³¹ Miguel Samper (1895), "Libertad y Order", reprinted in *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, ed. Miguel Samper, Vol II, 10 and 11.

without freedom emanating from the social condition, at the same time that the authority used to impose obedience was collapsing".³² He compared this situation to the one in the United States, where there was already an orderly freedom and the institutions did not clash with the people. Samper did not see in *laissez-faire* the principle of order; he expounded against the dangers of *laissez-faire* both in the economic and the political realm "in the political a literal application of this principle [*laissez-faire*] would be the refusal of order, and in the economic, it is the negation of the good things that a community can provide under the leadership and the action of government".³³

From the above mentioned debates emerges the importance of the isolation of the notion of the 'economy' in order for *laissez-faire* principles to become the guiding representation. Liberal and Conservative alike thought of *laissez-faire* as a principle governing the relations among individuals. This explains why a consensus about lessening trade barriers existed between Liberals and Conservatives, at the same time as there was paradoxically strong opposition to *laissez-faire* doctrines.

5.6 *Laissez-faire* and the partisan divide

The extent of this paradox is illustrated by the occurrence of four major civil wars and multiple regional conflicts in the 30 years of Liberal rule and open commitment to free

³² Ibid., 259.

³³ Ibid., 81.

trade. In post-colonial Nueva Granada both parties agreed with the need for civilization. The argument between Liberals and Conservatives was about 'how to foster' civilization. While Liberals claimed that the best means to reach civilization was to make each individual free, Conservatives believed that the best way was through governance and morality. While the Liberal claim did not collide with *laissez-faire* praise for self-government, it was at odds with the Conservative call for government.

Liberal thought is well expressed in Jose Maria Samper's writing about Colombian history.³⁴ For him, what the revolution of Independence and the Liberal revolution of 1849 had in common was that both were part of a social revolution aimed at installing the individual as sovereign. The spirit of civilization is defined as "the search for the individual as sovereign as the ultimate goal of the political and philosophical spirit".³⁵ The individual as sovereign became the condition for political freedom: " [p]olitical freedom is possible only when everyone is free".³⁶ Samper regarded the 'Revolution of March the 7th, 1849', the day the Liberal party gained power, as a transformation in the government of individuals. He defined the Revolution as a profound change in ideas and political habits, the end of the oligarchical system based on clericalism, authoritarianism

³⁴ José M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia de Colombia*, (Bogota: Imprenta del Neo-Granadino, 1853), 5. See also José M. Samper, *Ensayos sobre las Revoluciones Políticas*, (Paris: Imprenta de E. Thunot Y , 1861).

³⁵ José M. Samper, *Apuntamientos para la Historia de Colombia*, 10.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

and state monopolies. People, science and freedom replaced oligarchy, sophistry and immobility.

For the Conservatives, however, good government was central to their plan for civilization. In their opinion, *laissez-faire* implied that there was no need for a government to accomplish the civilizing task. Conservative José Eusebio Caro asked the following question: "How is it possible to educate and to civilize men without an excess in government? Those individuals, families and nations who attained civilization were submitted in an intense manner to the influence of a civilizing power."³⁷ Morality and knowledge are cited as prerequisites to the accumulation of wealth: "What comes first, morality, instruction, or wealth? Is it possible that the attainment of one guarantees the rest? The answer is in the New Testament: 'Look first to God's kingdom and justice, and everything else would be provided...Instruction and wealth alone do not form civilization. The true character of civilization appears only in morality" (Caro's emphasis).³⁸

Miguel Antonio Caro, José Eusebio's son, also voiced what he saw as the open contradiction between governance and *laissez-faire*: it is "entirely at odds with the mission of government".³⁹ He saw *laissez-faire* as "absolute permissiveness" resulting

³⁷ José E. Caro, "La Cuestión Moral", reprinted in *Antología, verso y prosa*, ed. José E. Caro, 304.

³⁸ *ibid.*, 298 - 299.

³⁹ Miguel A. Caro (1869), "Estudios sobre el Utilitarismo," reprinted in Miguel A. Caro, *Obras Completas*, (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1962), 159.

either in anarchy or despotism. Despotism happens when the sovereign applies the principle of pleasure to himself; anarchy occurs when the governed apply the principle to themselves.⁴⁰ The roots of both anarchism and despotism according to Caro are *laissez-faire* based on utilitarianism.⁴¹

Miguel Antonio Caro was opposed to the utilitarian principle of interest because, in his view, interest contradicted the Christian principle of charity: "[i]nterest, the utilitarian feeling, has moved people to enslave other people in the search for wealth. Interest has traded human beings, and this reiterates what freedom can expect from interest, or from the utilitarian principle, which are the same".⁴² The utilitarian principle is depicted by Caro as a Satanic principle, opposed to Catholicism: "There are only two masters: Satan and Jesus....Satan who tells us 'be like god', and Jesus who tells us 'be like children'. The school of Satan here and everywhere else is entitled **utilitarianism**. The school of Christ is named here as everywhere else **Catholicism**. Those are the concepts, the true formulation of the moral question as debated in the world".⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 166.

⁴¹ Miguel A. Caro (1868), "Carta al Doctor Ezequiel Rojas", in *Obras*, ed., Miguel A. Caro, I (Bogota: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1968), 390.

⁴² Miguel A. Caro (1869), "Estudios sobre el Utilitarismo," reprinted in Miguel A. Caro, *Obras Completas*.

⁴³ Ibid., 270.

5.7 The encounter between civilizers and artisans ⁴⁴

The production of textiles, the heart of the English industrial revolution, declined drastically in post-Independence Colombia.⁴⁵ This situation has traditionally been explained by productivity increases in the textile industries of the more advanced countries, and by the lack of local innovation: "[in Colombia] production took place in the family, using mainly women and children. Women performed all domestic labour. There was no division of labour: the production units performed all the labour of spinning, tinting, weaving and marketing. The production was oriented to ordinary textiles...The production technology was primitive and did not experience any important transformation during the XIX century".⁴⁶

There is no doubt that the decrease in international prices played an important role in the increased demand for imported textiles. The gap in technology, however, is not enough

⁴⁴ According to the 1870 census, the labour force was 1.5 million people (over half of its 2.9 million total population). Artisans were the second group in importance after those employed in the agricultural sector. There were 350 thousand artisans (23 % of the labour force). A high proportion of artisans were women, 249 thousand (71 %). For some regions, like the province of Santander, the proportion of women working in the artisanal sector was as high as 88% of the labour force. The main activities carried out by women were textiles and hat manufacture. Hats accounted for 9.5 % of the total exports, a proportion not surpassed by current manufactured exports.

⁴⁵ During the colonial period the country was self-sufficient in cotton and wool textiles. At the beginning of the XIX century, the national production of textiles balanced the amount of imports. The production of textiles lost its importance and experienced a decay during the 19th century: by mid-century the local production represented 40% of the internal demand; by 1880, the local production only coped with one fourth of the total demand. José O. Melo, "La evolución económica de Colombia, 1830 - 1900", in *Nueva Historia de Colombia*, (Bogotá: Planeta Colombiana Editorial, 1989). José A. Ocampo, "Comerciantes, Artesanos y Política Económica en Colombia, 1830 - 1880" in *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico*, Vol. 27, 2 (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1990), 43 - 45.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

to explain the lack of innovation. In the case of textile production the gap between Europe and the post-colonial world was not very profound at that time.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the lack of technological innovation is the key issue that needs to be explained: why was the drive to transform production, to become more efficient and competitive, absent in the minds of mid-nineteenth century Colombian entrepreneurs?

The answer is related to the 'uncivilized' character attributed to those engaged in textile and manual production: *mestizos*, Indians, blacks and women. Their identities were defined in terms of 'passionate' attributes which precluded a channelling of resources that would increase their productive capacities. They were perceived as 'barbarians' in need of civilization before they could be incorporated into the productive world. In nineteenth century Colombia, interests and civilization were perceived as European characteristics, which deserved to be adopted locally. The international division of labour wherein Europe and North America specialized in manufacturing and Nueva Granada in agriculture furthered the belief in the 'uncivilized' local character of Neo-Granadins. Florentino Gonzalez,⁴⁸ a leading figure in the Liberal reforms, asserted:

Granadins cannot compete in manufacturing with Europeans and Americans. Any directive aimed to increase manufacturing, despising the resources of agriculture, has no place in a Government inclined for the

⁴⁷ According to the historian Ospina Vasquez, hand weaving was also common in Europe until the beginning of the 20th century. The gap was mainly in the mechanization of cotton spinning. The mechanization of wool took place even later than that of cotton. This technology began in Europe in 1820 and spread 40 or 50 years later. See Luis Ospina Vasquez, *Industria y Protección en Colombia 1810 - 1930*, (Medellín: FAES, Biblioteca Colombiana de Ciencias Sociales, 1987), 159 - 160.

⁴⁸ Florentino González, *Memoria de Hacienda de 1847*, quoted in Luis Ospina Vasquez, *Industria Protección y en Colombia*, (Medellín: Santa Fe, 1955), 208.

well being of the nation, of which it is in charge. Europe, with an intelligent population, possessing steam technology, already skilful in the art of manufacturing, achieves the mission of transforming raw materials within the industrial world. We must accomplish our mission, and we cannot have doubts about it, when we look at the prodigality of natural resources with which Providence has endowed our land.

The polemic at the time illustrates the self-defeating character of this regime of representation. The decline of manufacturing was justified by the absence of 'interest' on the part of 'ignorant' male and female artisans. The accumulation process was centred primarily in the will to civilize them. The abandonment of manufacturing as a pattern of development was more the result of the will to civilize than any other reason: the will to civilize hindered any will to increase efficiency and hence productivity.

As the following passage illustrates, Colombian followers of *laissez-faire* doctrines were aware of the importance of 'interests' in the process of accumulation and civilization, but the contradictions ensued from the identification of these characteristics with Europeans and the considered need to create those same characteristics at home. In a letter from Europe, Florentino Gonzalez, stated

The best way to guarantee peace is through the creation of general interests. Big commercial companies are natural allies of government because interests cannot be maintained without order and public security, and [interests] halt foolish political projects given the influence of the social position of its members, always in harmony with the general interest. We can say that Rothschild, Parning and all European bankers are the ones in charge of European peace; they are the guarantee of freedom and individual security. Because the government needs them for public credit and finance, [the bankers] exert surveillance to avoid measures that could cause revolts which would lead to financial paralysis; [the bankers] also let the governments know that their resources would not be available in the case

of senseless wars...In this way, interests have solved the problem of peace and social guarantees. Proletarian classes could protest but they are limited in their protest since their subsistence depends on the jobs provided by the proprietor classes; [proletarians] cannot be involved in risky initiatives leaving the secure though poor position provided by big interests.⁴⁹

'Interests', in Nueva Granada, were not universalized; they were particularized to certain nations (Western Europe and North America) and to those who knew the secrets of civilization: enlightened Creoles. Property by itself, however, was not enough guide to run the nation's interest; property must be accompanied by enlightenment. According to Creole literati, the world of artisans embodied the lack of enlightenment: their world was represented as guided by ignorance and passions. The main debate between Liberals and artisans centred on the polemic between 'enlightened' political economists and 'ignorant' artisans.⁵⁰ The political economist's side of the debate is narrated by José María Samper

One day there was an extraordinary session in the democratic society whose aim was to decide the signature of a petition to Congress asking for a strong increase in their rights. I attended. There were more than 300 members at the meeting, and I suddenly realized that the artisans were guided by their emotions and did not understand a word about the whole subject. I asked permission to address the auditorium, then I went to the gallery, and very clearly I lectured about the reciprocity linking the production and consumption of wealth. I made them see that each individual produces just one thing and consumes a lot of them, and that in some occasions the individuals are subject to the inevitable law of competence. I proved that given the existence of several manufactured

⁴⁹ This letter was published by other liberal contenders to prove Gonzalez' rejection of purely *laissez-faire* principles. See Geraldo Molina, *Las ideas Liberales en Colombia-1849-1914*, 56.

⁵⁰ Artisans had been mobilized as a group since 1831 when they requested the full prohibition of competitive goods. In 1846 the organization was known as the 'society of artisans'; in 1849 the society's name was changed to the 'Democratic society of artisans' or 'democratic society'. The history of the artisanal movement appears in David Sowell, "La teoría y la realidad": The Democratic Society of Artisans of Bogotá, 1847 - 1854", in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 67:4 (1987).

products, such as blankets, cloths, *ruanas*, and other fabrics, hats, tanned skins, alcoholic beverages, etc., it would be extraordinary unjust not to extend to everyone the protection asked by the petition regarding simple "devices", such as shoes, dresses, saddles, carpentry and iron works. I finally proved that in order to protect everyone, according to equal justice, all consumption articles under protection will necessarily increase their price. The result would be an artificial increase in price for everyone, and the artisans formerly favoured in their profits would lose all their profits and even more, as a result of the increase in price of all consumption.

But, how can these economic and ethical arguments have any effect on the spirit of the artisans, who although good men and loyal to the country, were almost all of them ignorant, especially in scientific matters? Instead of being grateful for my interest in the well-being of artisans, almost all of them were angry with my reasoning, and one of them - an ironworker, Miguel Leon, well known for his harangues about "tiraniberia" - asked me to step down from the gallery.⁵¹

This 'dialogue' is illustrative of the encounter that took place between the two contending representations: political economists represented the artisans' world as guided by emotions, in contrast to their world of rationality. The contest between artisans and Liberals is an unequal relationship based on the possession of knowledge: artisans' words are worthless and given the connotation of "harangues" (*peroratas*). Samper, on the contrary, describes himself as a speaker whose authority comes from the knowledge of the scientific principles of the *laissez-faire* doctrine. The artisan's barbarian character is exposed in Samper's mockery of Leon's improper use of language. According to Samper "tiraniberia" was a noun invented by Leon and used instead of the correct expression

⁵¹ José M. Samper, *Historia de un Alma 1834 a 1881*, vol 1 (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1946), 237 - 239.

"tyranny". "The poor man had heard the expression "Tirana Iberia" (Iberian Tyranny), and he created a strange noun to refer to "Tyranny" in general."⁵²

The encounter of artisans and *laissez-faire*, represented by political economists as an opposition between enlightenment and ignorance, was perceived by artisans as a contradictory encounter between 'theory and reality'.⁵³ In a leaflet entitled "*La teoría i la realidad*" artisan Cruz Ballesteros branded Liberals "speech makers". Ballesteros foresees this art as a political economy of discourse. Speech making, according to him, is the "most economical of all systems; a speech does not cost anything and benefits the orator, who possessing a frugal table is the more interested in the promotion of lust."⁵⁴

Leaflets, letters and street protests were not the only testimonies of the struggle for representation among different world visions. Poems, novels and drama became part of the contest. The opposition between 'theory and reality' is the main argument of Candelario Obeso's drama "Secundino, the shoemaker"⁵⁵ which tells the story of Secundino, an artisan who despises his occupation and ventures into the world of theory

⁵² Ibidem

⁵³ Cruz Ballesteros (1851) "La teoría i la realidad", reprinted in Carmen Escobar, *La Revolución Liberal y la Protesta del Artesanado*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Fondo Editorial Suramérica, 1990), 351 - 356. For a view of the struggle between artisans and Liberals see David Sowell, "'La teoría y la realidad: The Democratic Society of Artisans of Bogota: 1847 - 1854", in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 611 - 630.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 355.

⁵⁵ Candelario Obeso, *Secundino el Zapatero*, (Bogotá: Imprenta de Zalamea, 1880). Reprinted in *Teatro Colombiano del Siglo XIX de Costumbres y Comedias*, ed. Carlos Nicolás Hernández (Bogotá: Tres Culturas Editores, 1989). See chapter 3, section 3.6.2. for a full description of Obeso and his work.

and politics. Impoverished in the process, his wife, Marta, (representing reality) tries to convince him to go back to shoemaking:

Doña Marta Go back to your moulds
and forget about elections
and this showy life
Nothing remains of our scarce property

Doña Marta Vuelve a tus hormas,
y déjate de sufragios
y de esta vida ostentosa.
De nuestra humilde fortuna
nada nos queda...

Don Secundino How silly!
it is evident that you have not read
Tracey and Bentham's works...
Power of knowledge!...⁵⁶

Don Secundino ¡Tan boba!
Mas ya se ve, no has leído,
Tracey y Benthán en sus obras...
¡Poder del saber!...

Secundino attributes the stupidity of his wife to her ignorance of the main political economists, Bentham and Tracey. He identifies the knowledge of political economy as "the power of knowledge". The drama ends when Secundino, abandoned by politicians because of his artisan's status, is about to lose his house to the local authorities. Marta's savings and the money of Felix, a hard working and honest artisan in love with Secundino's daughter, guarantee Secundino's debts, thereby preventing the family's ruin.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 301 - 302.

The debate between José María's brother, Miguel Samper, and the artisan Leocadio Camacho is even more interesting since it allows one to appreciate the struggle between both 'theory' and 'reality'. Miguel Samper's study of poverty in Bogotá had identified artisans as one of the causes of poverty.⁵⁷ Artisans are depicted as assistants of insecurity who are moved by passions, not by interests. In Samper's view the hatred artisans feel towards the rich hinders progress, "if the rich person feels threatened by hatred or resentment of the poor, he restricts consumption and hides or exports his capital...Rich men's consumption is the fuel of the poor's industry."⁵⁸ The artisans' laziness, passions, gambling, drinking, and political disputes are seen as the main cause of poverty and misery.

José Leocadio Camacho, an artisan from Bogotá, replied to Samper's study.⁵⁹ Artisans, according to Camacho, are far from being the cause of poverty:

...for some time we have noticed with sorrow a decay in the guilds of artisans: some workshops that before had 14 artisans, today employ only four. The owners were not gamblers, nor drunks, nor did sensual passions exert a noxious influence on them; none of them had been *guerrilleros* because they did not belong to those engaged in small wars. Notwithstanding their struggle against poverty, it is

⁵⁷ Miguel Samper (1867), "La Miseria en Bogotá", in *Escritos Economico-Políticos de Miguel Samper*, ed. Miguel Samper, 89 *passim*. According to Samper artisans were both victims and cause of Bogotá's poverty.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁹ These letters were published in the newspaper *La Republica* the 2nd, 16th and 30th of October 1867.

poverty which was victorious. We can conclude that the cause of poverty is elsewhere.⁶⁰

Like Camacho, other artisans had voiced their resistance to *laissez-faire* principles. In the artisans' petition to Congress in 1850, *laissez-faire* ideas were called the 'vanity of theoreticians and the greed of speculators.'⁶¹ Artisans felt that "manual labour was seen as a despicable occupation". Contrary to the political economists' picture, artisans thought that the hatred for manual work was at odds with civilization. "How is an advancement of civilization possible" they asked, "in a country where manual occupations are dishonoured?...The hatred for manual work would only lead to those who are less able doing manual work, and in these circumstances the craft industry will not benefit from human intelligence. The result will be barbarism and generalized poverty; a tendency to laziness, massive greed..."⁶²

Samper's study also criticized the inefficiency of artisans: "In Bogotá, workshops are too small and use foreign raw materials. The lower quality of the materials result in inferior products; the amount bought is too small and the price too high...". Contrary to Samper's opinion, Camacho imputes these problems not to the artisans but to political economists:

⁶⁰ José Leocadio Camacho, "Al Señor doctor Miguel Samper, carta primer, " *La Republica*, (October 16, 1867), 55.

⁶¹ Quoted in David Sowell, "'La teoría y la realidad': The Democratic Society of Artisans of Bogotá, 1847 - 1854", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 620. According to Sowell "The artisans stressed that their petition was based on social reality not economic theory".

⁶² José Leocadio Camacho, "Al Señor doctor Miguel Samper, carta cuarta," *La República*, (October 30, 1867).

The best instrument against foreign competence is to establish workshops and factories with the capacity to supply raw materials of good quality. But answer my question, who is in a position to establish these factories you mentioned? Are the poor artisans, whose income only covers their daily maintenance? Or, are the capitalists, who instead of using the money for imports... should use their money to build the factories we need?

Did you remember the glass, paper and cloth factories? Why have these factories declined? The reason lies in the predilection for foreign products and the hatred of national products, like the scorn you have manifested for ponchos and shoddy shawls (*manto chileno de frisa y a la levita de manta*). If France had the same hatred for its infant products, it would have become a political country, like ours, slave of England or the United States.

You have argued that the protection of national industry is socialism's daughter. I do not oppose your ideas because I do not know about economics; but what I know is that twenty gentlemen, using political economy concepts, and with government support, have little by little been the cause of poverty, whose cause has been the origin of your own research.⁶³

Probably, Camacho was referring to Samper's argument against protectionism based on a disdain of domestic textiles compared to those imported from Europe: "Maybe this action [protectionism] has a nationalistic character, but we must agree that the result would not be at odds with good taste. A coarse poncho? A shoddy shawl? Tailors will be the first to be upset. And what about the feelings of carpenters, not hurt by foreign houses or doors, but harmed by protectionism since they would be deprived of wearing a calico shirt, and their wife or daughter will be deprived of wearing a scarf made of silk or cotton?."⁶⁴

⁶³ José Leocadio Camacho, "Al Señor doctor Miguel Samper, carta tercera," *La Republica*, (October 16 1867). (emphasis added).

⁶⁴ Miguel Samper, "La Miseria en Bogotá", in *Escritos Político-Económicos de Miguel Samper*, ed. Miguel Samper, 95.

The opposition between 'theory' and 'reality', the struggle between civilizers and artisans also took place around the representation of the body. It was a struggle embodied in dress habits and ways of looking. The difference in appearance between literati and lower classes is illustrated in the watercolor (figure 2) by Manuel María Paz (1855). The scenery is a picnic near Bogotá. The Bogotanos are wearing English style suits and according to the painter's description "the *tiple*, *bandola* (musical instruments), poetry books and good food were required elements in picnics."⁶⁵ In the back there are lower class people wearing ponchos and shawls.

⁶⁵ *Acuarelas de la Comisión Corográfica. Colombia 1850-1859*, (Bogotá: Litografía Arco, 1986).

Paseo de una familia a los alrededores de Bogotá.

Dress habits divided the Liberal party followers into *guaches* (derisive expression denoting artisans wearing *ruana*) and *cachacos* (name applied to *laissez-faire* Liberals wearing the European style coat). According to an artisan's description "...in this corner of Spanish America, the man wearing a *ruana* is named *democratico*...Proletarians, that is, the people of *ruana* and *alpargate*, are a majority. There are 2 million *ruanas*, and a few thousand *casacas*. The presidency, provincial assemblies, governorships, treasury boards are reserved for those wearing *casacas*. For those wearing *ruana* are bullets, lances, nakedness, hunger and death."⁶⁶

Antonio José Restrepo describes how dress habits which differentiated poor from rich were enforced - the infringement of these distinctions was subject to public sanction, either in the form of offensive nicknames, popular songs or even physical punishment.⁶⁷ This was the case of a miner in Antioquia nicknamed the "*cachaco de las vetas*" because he abandoned the *ruana* (Colombian poncho) for the American jacket. Restrepo also told the story of a lawsuit in the city of Cali as to whether a head of family was allowed to wear the Spanish coat (*capa*). Although the individual won the dispute, he could not afford the coat because he was impoverished after the law suit. Restrepo also refers to the story of an artisan elected to the municipal assembly in Medellin. Following the rules, the artisan attended the meeting wearing a frock coat. Not only was the artisan

⁶⁶ "Los Democráticos", Bogotá, August 6, 1854. Reprinted in Carmen Escobar, *La revolución liberal y la protesta del artesanado*, (Bogotá: Fundación Universitaria Autónoma de Colombia, 1990), 357 - 358.

⁶⁷ Antonio José Restrepo, *El Cancionero de Antioquia*, (Barcelona: Editorial Lux, 1929), 252 - 253.

humiliated during the meeting, but at night he was beaten badly, and given notice that he would be beaten again if he did not wear his *ruana*.

One point of contention concerning dress habits involved the opposition between local and foreign textiles. Here women were subject to control both as producers of textiles and as the place of encounter of the desire of male Creoles. The following passage illustrates the latter position represented by José María Samper:

The Indian man is always ugly and his features are rough and abject; but not rarely we find in the other sex graceful and even pretty young Indians, with rosy and round cheeks, lovely and well-formed bodies. Nonetheless, what diminishes their gracefulness is the ugly dress they wear, made of an ordinary straw hat, a black blanket made of ordinary wool...and a poor shirt of local cloth...in some places, distant from Bogotá, the Indians use a repulsive skirt called a *chircate* (considered an opprobrious dress); it is a black rag of wool, of a gloomy colour, covering the whole body. The female Indian looks like a walking mummy."⁶⁸

Samper's depiction of the Indian dress contradict the gracefulness of the female figure draw by Mark (figure 3).⁶⁹ Male Indians, for their part, were happy with their own dress practices and were distrustful of Indian women changing their fashions to the Creole style. The importance of local clothes appear in these two songs of the Boyacá region.⁷⁰ The first one, entitled "Song of the Happy City" (*Cancion de la ciudad*

⁶⁸ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas i la Condición Social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*: 318 - 319.

⁶⁹ *Acuarelas de Mark. Colombia 1843 - 1856*, Joaquín Piñeros Corpas, ed., (Santafé de Bogotá: Litografía Arco, 1992), 145.

⁷⁰ Octavio Quiñones Pardo, *Interpretación de la Poesía Popular*, (Bogotá: Editorial Centro, 1947), 102, 131.

Regocijada) narrates the dress habits during a religious festivity in the city of Chiquinquirá. The quotation marks around the compliment shows that the poet probably was a Creole:

Los indios están muy 'majos',
y muy 'lujosas' las indias;
ellos estrenando ruana,
y ellas, enagua y mantilla.
Todos, sombrero, alpargatas,
'rabuegallos' y camisa.

Male Indians are 'good-looking'
and women Indians very 'elegant'
males with a new poncho,
women with skirts and shawls.
All with hats, *alpargatas*,
rabuegallos and shirts.

The other song, probably by an Indian, foresees a sad destiny for those women changing their fashions to the creole style. The title is "Song to female lover who will end badly" ("*Canción a la amada que va a tener mal fin*"). It refers to the negative consequences for a woman who has changed her dress habits:

Eran una maravilla
tu pantorrilla y tu pié;
pero ahora, con los zapatos
nadita de eso se vé.

They were marvelous
your feet and ankles;
but now with these shoes
they can not be seen any more.

Ya no te vistes como antes,
con carolina y olán;
ni te pones alpargates
ni quimbas de cordobán.

You don't dress like before,
with *carolina* and *olán*;
neither do you wear *alpargates*
nor *quimbas* of *cordobán*.

Ya no te llamas María,
sino Maruja, ay de mí!
No decís 'pa vos' como antes;
hora decís: 'para tí'

Your name is not María any more,
but Maruja, oh poor me.
You do not say 'for you' like before,
but: 'for thou n'.

Sabes más cosas ahora
que cuando eras querubín;
tanto sabes, Marujita,
que vas a tener mal fin.

You have more knowledge
than when you were a little girl;
you know so much, Marujita,
that you will end badly.

The embodied encounter between female producers of textiles and male merchants is explicitly narrated in the following passage by Manuel Ancizar, a member of a government mission - *Comisión Corográfica*- in charge of depicting local habits of the population. In his description the market appears as a scene where the main contenders are male merchant and female weavers. Women and men used body language as the carrier of market messages:

Saturday is a day of almost no sales because the female weaver goes to explore the market, assess the demand and foil the merchant's intention to pay only the minimum. The woman weaver is not fooled by her opponent's indifference: she knows that he must fill the order for hats demanded by the merchant in Cúcuta [the big city] and she counters the hilarious stoicism of the merchant with an infinity of feminine artifices. At a certain moment the merchant is nervous, he calls the weaver, smiles at her, whispers, and by Sunday the merchant has surrendered: he has forgotten the previous offer and takes as many hats as possible. Victorious, as always happens when it is in their interest, the daughters of Eve return to their homes with the *nacuma* ⁷¹ needed to accomplish the next job, forming happy groups, walking around and at night they begin the hats for the next week...⁷²

These passages suggest the complex process of exchange which took place between *laissez-faire* political economists and artisans, between theory and reality, between male merchants and female weavers. Different systems of exchange (gender, prestige, trade) circulated in the post-colonial regime of representation. This system of exchange captured also the attention of artist Carmelo Fernández (figure 4).⁷³ The painting illustrates not

⁷¹ Plant used to manufacture the hat.

⁷² Manuel Ancizar, *Peregrinación de Alpha*, (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular, 1942), 443.

⁷³ *Acuarelas de la Comisión Corográfica. Colombia 1850 - 1859*.

only the local dress of artisans but also their racial mixture and the defiant attitudes of male and female in the process of exchange.

Despite the preceding passage about the triumph of artisans when they fooled the merchant, towards the end of the century artisanal production of textiles disappeared from the market.⁷⁴ Today the decline is still attributed to the women's incapacity to transform the old forms of production.

It is hard to see what the ladies engaged in cottage weaving have to do with the development of mechanical skills in the modern sector. Might these women, if through economic autarky somehow maintained in their late colonial prosperity, have been the progenitors of a new army of ironworkers and machinists? More likely they represented an economic dead-end and thus irrelevance to technological modernization [emphasis added].⁷⁵

Contrary to Safford's statement, what this chapter has illustrated is that manufactures were represented as a dead-end for nineteenth century Colombia. Women embodied the production of textiles, as artisans and as textile users, so that the representation of women and women's bodies supported the import of textiles and the displacement of local manufacturing in favor of European ones.

⁷⁴ According to some data, in the city of Bucaramanga the number of artisans dedicated to the production of hats diminished from 3,000 in 1850, to 1,600 in 1878; in the province of Soto production diminished from 360,000 hats in 1873 to 120,000 in 1878. The amount continued to diminish thorough 1880. David Church Johnson, *Santander. Siglo XIX -Cambios Socioeconómicos*, (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1984), 279.

⁷⁵ Frank Safford, "On Paradigms and the Pursuit of the Practical: a Response", in *Latin America Research Review*, 13:2 (1978), 253.

Tejedoras y mercaderes de sombreros nicos en Bucaramanga. Tiso blanco, mestizo y jambo

5.8 Conclusion

Economic growth through a process of accumulation of capital did not materialize in mid-nineteenth century Colombia, despite the country's openness to the external market, and a growth of exports to levels not known before. Tobacco, indigo and quinine, the agricultural exports which had positioned the country among the main suppliers of the world market, disappeared as a consequence of land depletion and poor quality control. Despite the adoption of *laissez-faire* principles, and the unfettering of land and labour, a relationship based on labour contract or free circulation of land did not materialize either; on the contrary, coercive use of labour prevailed in the system known as *la hacienda*. By the end of the century imported textiles had replaced national production, and the country was immersed in a situation of poverty and civil war.

Explanations based on the kinds of products exchanged between centre and periphery, those based on the world market, those adducing a poor economic structure or an adverse environment for *laissez-faire* to work, explanations adducing the persistence of old forms of production, all those explanations failed to answer a pivotal question: why is it that the upper class in mid-nineteenth century Colombia did not improve production in the direction of greater efficiency and competitiveness? They failed because they assumed what needed to be demonstrated; they assumed that *laissez-faire* was about the exchange of things in the market or property relations between individuals and things. *Laissez-faire*'s meaning, it has been argued in this chapter, was altered in its encounter with the

regime of representation based on the will to civilization. Its condition of possibility, in those places where capitalism developed first, was linked to a conception of individuals governed by interest, not passions, as well as to the idea that things should be left alone to produce the best results, the isolation of the economic sphere. One and the other bound together civilization and wealth.

In those nations imagined as deprived of civilization, as was the case of post-colonial Colombia, individuals were envisioned as lacking a constructive vision and the idea of a self-regulatory principle regulating the exchange between things was discharged. In nineteenth century Colombia, *laissez-faire* was embedded in discussions about the preservation of the species, happy marriages, anarchy and despotism. Arguments about the international division of labour, the causes of poverty or the abandonment of manufactures envisioned passionate individuals unable to pursue the march towards civilization. The principle that 'interest governs the world' were not unknown to those Creoles in charge of directing the nation's destiny, however, in its encounter with the will to civilization, this principle was particularized to those nations already enjoying the benefits of civilization. The political economy was centred in the drive to accumulate civilization's secrets: morality and instruction, under the conviction that they will be followed later by the accumulation of wealth.

Chapter 6

Violence and the Development of Capitalism

"Each social group obeys the laws of its own physiology and geography; [each group] develops according to their own point of departure and concurs in the work of Colombian civilization according to its own aptitude."

José María Samper (1861)

The persistence of the use of forced labour has been posited as the main obstacle to the expansion of capitalism in the Third World in general¹ and in Colombia in particular. Scholars concerned with the persistence of pre-capitalist forms of production joined the broader polemic as if capitalism or feudalism were the only appropriate mode of production in the periphery.² In what follows, it is suggested that the explanation of the use of force in the relations of production is not grounded in the relations of production *per se*, but in the regime of representation. It is argued that the forms of manifestation of violence in the relations of production and in politics can not be understood independently from forms of representation of identity/difference. Capitalist relations of production require a fostering of 'undifferentiated' individuals equated under the guise of the search for self interest. As Marx observed, exchange relations in the form of a labour market presume the existence of individuals who are substitutable.

I have argued that the conception of the 'barbarian' which was at the nucleus of the "will to civilization" regime of representation precluded an autonomization of economic

¹ Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism", in *Introduction to the Sociology of "Developing Societies"*, eds. Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin.

² The Latin American debate appeared in Ernesto Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America," in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, ed. Ernesto Laclau, (London and New York: 1977). In Colombia Kalmanovitz aligned with the defenders of the 'feudalism' position. In his view after Independence there was a tendency towards the *enfudamiento* of the relations of production. Salomon Kalmanovitz, "El Regimen Agrario durante el Siglo XIX en Colombia in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*. When addressing the dilemma, historian Palacios preferred to use a third category. In his view the relations of production 'do not look like capitalism, but neither is it feudalism', rather they look like 'semi-servitude'. Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia, 1850 - 1970*, 119-120. José A. Ocampo does not doubt the capitalist character of the economy in the XIX Century. He considered that the peripheral location within the world capitalist system, gave Colombian capitalism a speculative character. The main drive was not to re-invest in the productive capacity but to obtain easy gains. José A. Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial, 1830 - 1910*.

activities. In this chapter the argument will be expanded further to illustrate that in those places where racialized conceptions of individuals predominated, violence in the relations of production was prevalent and the use of violence hindered the process of capitalist accumulation by annihilating the drive to transform production in the direction of greater efficiency.

The argument is facilitated by the existence in Colombia of regions structured around racial identities. Therefore regions which are more and less hierarchically stratified can be compared and contrasted. As stated by Wade, "[i]n Colombia, history gave race a regional structure such that race cannot be properly understood simply as a social construction around phenotype, but must also be seen as a social construction around region."³ Extending Wade's statement, we can assert that race, gender, political affiliation and class became regional. As social constructions, issues concerning race, gender and class were resolved regionally. To assert the social construction and regional resolution of racial, gender and class categories, problematizes an 'essentialist' understanding of identity and acknowledges the mutual constitution of multiple identities.⁴ As the Colombian case illustrates the construction of differences varied regionally. Regional variations did not coincide unambiguously with physical differences

³ Peter Wade, "The language of race, place and nation in Colombia," in *America Negra*, 2, (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Diciembre, 1991), 46.

⁴ Borrowing Butler's concept, 'essentialist' understanding of gender, race or class assume an "original identification which serves as a determining cause". Judith Butler "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 338. For a non-essentialist conception of race see Henry Louis Gates Jr, ed, "Race", *writing, and difference*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), and Roxanne Lynn Doty "The Bounds of 'Race' in International Relations", *Millenium*, 22 (Winter 1993).

but rather were structured within local practices of domination. In Colombia, regions can be differentiated not only by a diversity of forms of organization of the structure of production, but also layers of civilization entered as an important element in the constitution of the region.⁵ The superimposition of racial, productive and civilization layers intervening in the formation of the region is suggested in the following description by Camacho Roldan:

The Antioqueño, a settler of the mountains, miner or metal trader, with a tendency to banking, must be different from the inhabitant of Bolívar and Magdalena, where huge plains and cattle raising are predominant. The peaceful Boyacense peasant, coming from the Indian race disciplined by the iron yoke of the Spanish *encomendero*...can not be similar to the African-Spanish *mestizo* raised under the tender protection of the owner, [working] in cattle raising and [living] amidst a natural environment which calls for freedom. The farmer from Santander, perhaps a descendent of proud Catalans whose lands were freed from feudalism and *encomiendas*, resulting in a more equitable distribution of property, has few things in common with the polite Cundinamarques of the capital, and even less in common with descendents of the Chibchas, mixed with Spanish blood, ruled in the semi-feudal *hacienda* by an arrogant, unkind and non-democratic owner.⁶

⁵ The regional question has been identified as a key to understanding the process of capitalist formation. Marco Palacios, among contemporary historians, has been a pioneer in signalling the importance of the region in the formation of the nation. As he writes "by 1930 the identity of most of the Colombians was regional rather than national". Marco Palacios, "La fragmentación regional de las clases dominantes en Colombia: una perspectiva histórica", *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 42, 1684. On the regional question see also Alvaro Tirado Mejía, *Centralización y Centralismo en Colombia*, (Bogotá: Fundación Friedrich Naumann, 1983). In Tirado's view racial homogenization, in a context of geographic fragmentation, was the main cause of social divisions and wars between the cities after Independence. He argues that the regional aspect had a primacy over racial and caste (sic) factors (pg. 45). I argue, on the contrary, that racial, 'economic' and gender factors are fused together in a contradictory encounter. Even J. A. Ocampo's recent contributions are more prone to abandon the 'external' determinants in favour of a more regional explanation. In his view "most of the secrets of the formation of the state have to be found in the complex regional articulation characteristics of Colombian historical development...rather than in [the economic development]." Unfortunately, he does not explore the latter view. José A. Ocampo, "Comerciantes, artesanos y política económica en Colombia, 1830-1880," in *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico*, vol 27, 22 (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1990), 21.

⁶ Salvador Camacho Roldán (1889), "Manuela, novela de costumbres Colombianas por Eugenio Díaz," in *Escritos Varios*, Salvador Camacho Roldán. An alternative typology is used by J. M. Samper.

As this passage suggests, some regions were imagined as more civilized than others. These images were shaped along with the racial identity of their population. The use of the expression 'along' regarding the formation of a regional image, has a double meaning: on the one hand, the image of a region as predominantly white, black or Indian was not grounded on physical difference or the ethnic origin of their inhabitants. This is clear in the case of Antioquia which was considered white and descending from Jews. This is also the case of Santander, considered to be predominantly composed of whites and the descendants of immigrants. In Antioquia the representation about 'whiteness' or ethnic origin was a legend which have little to do with the physical differences of the population.⁷ On the other hand, the image of the racial composition of a region within the region itself and the outside image are not necessarily the same. This case is illustrated by Wade regarding the Atlantic coast. Identified as *Costeños*, they are equated by people from central Colombia as blacks; "*Costeños* would not at all necessarily agree that their region is a *black* one."⁸

Despite the diffuse character of the boundaries between one region and another, we can distinguish the following regions in Colombia: i) the Andean mountain region, Cundinamarca-Boyacá-Tolima, was considered mainly Indian and mestizo and potentially capable of becoming civilized. Although belonging to this region, Bogotá was considered white and the centre of civilization. ii) The Atlantic and iii) Pacific coasts were

⁷ See section 6.4. of this chapter.

⁸ Peter Wade, "The language of race, place and nation in Colombia," in *America Negra*, 47.

considered predominantly black; iv) the Santander and v) Antioquia regions were considered predominantly white, vi) The Amazon is Indian and considered to be the epitome of primitivism and savagery. The main argument of this chapter will be developed using the Pacific region (Cauca), the Central region (Cundinamarca-Bogotá-Tolima), Santander and Antioquia.⁹

Cauca, which forms part of the Pacific Coast region, was the main gold producer and the most important region during the Colonial period, declining in importance towards mid-nineteenth century. During the tobacco and quinine booms, Santander had the economic predominance that Cauca had before. Towards the end of the century, Antioquia became the main gold producer and also a major coffee exporter.¹⁰ It will be argued that the formation of 'undifferentiated identities' is one of the conditions of possibility for the spread of contractual rather than forced labour relations. Both Cauca and the Central regions were characterized by hierarchical distinctions. In Santander and Antioquia, however, the tendency was towards a perception of 'undifferentiated' individuals. In Santander and Antioquia contractual relations were prevalent, while in Cauca the use of force predominated. Whereas in Antioquia the situation resulted in fostering the process of accumulation, this did not happen in Santander.

⁹ A pertinent analysis of the Amazonian region is Michael Taussig's, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987). For an excellent analysis of the Atlantic coast, see Orlando Fals Borda, *Historia Doble de la Costa*, vols 1 - 4 (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1979, 1981, 1984, 1986).

¹⁰ By the early twentieth century Antioquia exemplified Colombian manufactured production.

6.1 The Cauca region

Cauca's gold-based economy made it the most important region during Colonial times. Mining extraction made the region the centre and breadbasket of the slavocracy.¹¹ Since this time a predominant element in the region was the presence of a 'culture of terror' where the control of the population developed around the cultural elaboration of fear.¹² Since the 16th century a 'negro code' allowed the owner of slaves to control their social conduct: slaves could not move around the territory without proper identification, and every black slave without an owner was considered criminal and placed under slavery. The infringement of this code resulted in severe corporal punishment.¹³

In the discussion of the abolition of slavery in the 1820s, fear was used as a main argument by the groups opposing abolition: the criminal nature of blacks became a central issue and very often blacks were accused of crimes such as assault, abortion,

¹¹ A small number of families had over 1,000 slaves employed in plantations and mines. Michael Taussig, "The Evolution of rural wage labour in the Cauca Valley of Colombia, 1700 -1970," *Land and Labour in Latin America*, ed., Kenneth Duncan and Ian Rutledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

¹² For a conceptualization of the 'culture of terror' as an element of domination see Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

¹³ Gutierrez de Pineda gives some examples of this code: if a slave walked at night around the estate without the owner's permission he should have 200 lashes in public; if one stole a pig he should receive 100 lashes; if he disappeared ten days, 200 lashes; if 20 days he must die, or his genitals must be pruned. The same punishment was allowed for robbery in the mines. Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda, *La Familia en Colombia*, Vol 1, (Bogotá: Editorial Iqueima, 1963), 204 - 205.

infanticide and suicide.¹⁴ In 1843 the proximity of liberation increased the fear of the manumitted, as is shown in the following passage written by the governor of Buenaventura:

We must consider seriously, the growing number of blacks that have left the power of their master and become members of the society, bringing with them the seed of all kind of vices, indolence and African wildness. Very soon there will be almost no trace of the white race; instead of the virtues proper to the Republic we will observe barbarism, the habits of slavery or ignorance, and the savagery of the black race.... a race that must be separated from us. We must ask Congress for a law demanding that all emancipated blacks, without distinguishing the means through which they reached freedom, be directed to begin new populations in the uninhabited land dividing Colombia from Venezuela or in Central America...¹⁵

An important element ensuing from fear of the black identity was the conception of space within the organization of the relations of production after slaves were freed in the Cauca region. An increase in the physical distance of the workplace or exclusion from the national territory were the strategies most commonly employed to keep blacks away. The Law of June 22, 1843, entitled "Repressive measures against insurrectionary movement on the part of slaves", made it legal to export slaves or to send them to build new localities under the guise of protecting public peace.¹⁶ There was also a strong debate

¹⁴ For a description see Harold A. Bierck, Jr, "Las Pugnas por la abolición de la esclavitud en la Gran Colombia" in *El Siglo XIX visto por Historiadores Norteamericanos*, ed. Jesus A. Bejarano.

¹⁵ Quoted in Alvaro Tirado, *Aspectos Sociales de las Guerras Civiles en Colombia*, (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1976), 98. This passage is from the year 1843; the same year repressive measures against the threat of insurrection of slaves were taken.

¹⁶ Since 1821 the Cucuta Congress had issued a decree allowing the liberation of the children of slaves. This law was known as "libertad de vientres" (womb freedom). According to this law, the sons and daughter of slaves should work with his mother's owner until the age of 18. In the legislation of 1842 and 1843 there were provisions for an 'obligatory agreement' (concierto forzoso) for those that according to

around the possible renewal of the Law of 1836 whose objective was the creation of a new criminal category, 'vagrants', for the manumitted (*libertos*). They were defined as "[a]ll those without a job or rent, or, those whose rent comes from gambling or prostitution."¹⁷ According to this Law (*Recopilacion Granadina*) vagrants were subject to punishment, ranging from a arrangement (*concierto*) with private individuals or public establishments for a term from two to six years; military service; or colonization of empty lands. For Conservative Caro, the best way to deal with the problem was the military service, as established in article 6 of the Law of 1843.¹⁸ Army recruitment for *libertos* and vagrants addressed the problem of disciplining the new *libertos* to conform to the economic system and also used recruitment as a form of punishment for lack of obedience. In Caro's view the "legislation does not assign the *libertos* to the army only for being *libertos*, but to the *libertos* that degenerate into vagabonds, that is, the ones destined for the army are the vagrants as vagrants, not the *libertos* as *libertos*."¹⁹ Within this logic, there can be no ambiguity in the application of the law sinc. the

the Cucuta Congress should be free. The law asked for those between the ages of 18 and 25 years old to remain under the protection of the previous owner. The owner should provide an occupation and instruction. If the *concertado* did not obey or made an attempt to escape "they would be declared vagrants, and could be destined to the permanent army...or to develop new localities within the national territory". The description of this process appears in Margarita Gonzalez, "El Proceso de Manumisión en Colombia," in *La Nueva Historia de Colombia*, ed. Dario Jaramillo (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1976).

¹⁷ José E. Caro (1849), "La polemica de los Rojos," in *Escritos Historico-políticos*, ed. José E. Caro, (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1981), 125.

¹⁸ Article 6 states that "The emancipated young, children of slaves...will be inducted into the army, or sent to new villages within the Republic, according to the Executive, in whose jurisdiction it is to prescribe and order in accord".

¹⁹ José E. Caro (1849), "La polemica de los Rojos," in *Escritos Historico-políticos*, ed. José E. Caro, 124. [emphasis added].

"difficulty of proving [non-vagrancy] ... for those experiencing difficulty, is by itself, an indication of vagabondage. ²⁰

The Liberals' mid-nineteenth century reforms put an end to slavery and vagrancy laws. Nonetheless, the culture of fear did not end but became a predominant element in the region's regime of representation. Fear shifted to the political divisions between the two parties and relations of production were regulated by fear as well. When faced with legislation freeing slaves, landowners devised several solutions which allowed them to continue exerting control over the black population. Some²¹ opted for a *concertado* system: in return for a small plot of a few hectares, blacks worked a certain number of days on the *hacienda*. A refinement of this system was the *terrajés*: virgin forest was divided among ex-slaves who had to clear the jungle. Land was provided for cultivation for themselves and for the *hacienda*. The task was to clear the jungle and pay off their rent dues (*terrajés*) with five to ten days' labour each month for the *hacienda*. A further variation of this system was the establishment of contracts and sub-contracts; in this system 'honest white *peones*' from central Colombia were allowed to work in the *hacienda*. The owner reserved all rights to buildings, and no recognition was made for land improvement. Tenants were not allowed to work for anyone else. Control was exercised by the establishment of a system of a graded 'hierarchy of latent status

²⁰ Ibid., 125.

²¹ A detailed description of these systems appear in Michael Taussig, "The Evolution of rural wage labour in the Cauca Valley of Colombia, 1700 -1970," *Land and Labour in Latin America*, in Kenneth Duncan and Ian Rutledge. The above description relies entirely on his work.

differences' and by 'informal, underground controls'.²² The outcome could not have been more discouraging: soil exhaustion, a capital infrastructure which remained the same as under the old *hacienda* system, and, according to the owners, anarchy was so great that due to the "horror that permeated those woods nobody entered them to claim *terrajés*."²³

The central control exercised in the *hacienda* at the time of slavery was replaced by a dispersion of relations of power where the control was exercised by groups which opposed one another. The final result was chaos and economic stagnation. According to Taussig's study of the Cauca Valley:

... the monolithic, tightly centered slave *hacienda* gave way to a series of concentric spheres of authority, with a great variety of distinct but overlapping relationships to the central power. Large cattlemen who rented land, white peons, free contract workers, cash-paying tenants, and labor-paying tenants found themselves in a gridwork of oppositions to one another.²⁴

Taussig's analysis reveals the differentiated character of labour used in the Cauca Valley.

Labour practices differed among white men, blacks or women:

²² Ibidem

²³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 410.

²⁴ Michael T. Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 53.

[Arboleda] established a laboring elite of whites. In his instruction to the state manager in 1857 he said that the blacks worked too slowly in the mill and ruined the animals; only whites were to be employed there. Once proven, these whites have a three year contract for on a regular salary, he instructed, and to be given a plot to cultivate and on which to build a hut...

Arboleda stressed that the working day of the blacks should be organized by piecework rates, never by time, and that it was better to leave work undone than to owe money. In the planting and harvesting of readily edible crops, like rice, only male peons from far outside the *hacienda* were to be hired, 'but do this without people understanding that you do it intentionally'.²⁵

This organization of production also increased the system of surveillance over workers via private armed guards and diverse system of punishment, as described by Harrison for the locality of Palmira:

The governor of Cauca, in 1858, ordered the police of the tobacco-growing community of Palmira to keep an up-to-date list of all day-labourers and people claiming to have sedentary occupations and to see to it that the employers of vagrants made use of the authorized punishments. The police were to encourage good and patriotic citizens to denounce those who fell into the various classes of vagrants, and to volunteer their services as *comisarios de policia*. The plains of the Upper Magdalena and the Cauca were turned into lands of brigandage and fear.²⁶

Partisan alignment, like labour relations, utilized fear as part of party strategy. Cauca's elite was predominantly Conservative, while blacks and mulattos enrolled in the Liberal party.²⁷ Former slave-owners resisted the manumission laws, and went to war (1851)

²⁵ Ibid., 53. (emphasis added).

²⁶ John P. Harrison, "The Evolution of the Colombian Tobacco Trade, to 1875", in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol XXXII, 2, (1952), 173.

²⁷ Helena Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863 - 1899*, 23.

in the name of the Conservative party.²⁸ Liberals formed the *sociedades democráticas* gaining the adherence of the black population, while Conservatives reciprocated with the formation of the society *amigos del pueblo*. The place of fear in the partisan struggle appears clearly in the following letter sent in the 1870s by the manager of a property to the owner, who in this case was his father:

In the last session of the local Democratic Club, mainly attended by blacks, they were saying that the aim of the Conservatives is to make a new revolution in order to re-enslave all the blacks. The Conservatives are believed to be saying 'Slavery or the gallows for all blacks'. What is more, the blacks state that the Conservatives are not true believers but feign Catholicism in order to deceive; the only true Catholics are the Liberals.²⁹

In 1859 the president of Cauca, Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera, led the Liberal party to revolt against the Conservative party in power, claiming that the Conservative president intended to strengthen the executive's control over the provincial governments.³⁰ Mosquera interpreted the president's laws as a declaration of war against the provinces and announced that the province "would no longer consider itself part of the Confederation if the Congress refused to repeal the Law."³¹ For President Ospina, on the other hand, the Cauca rebellion was a struggle of the dispossessed against property,

²⁸ For a description see J. Leon Helguera, "Antecedentes sociales de la revolución de 1851 en el sur de Colombia (1848 - 1849), *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura*, No. 5 (1970).

²⁹ Quoted from Michael Taussig, "The Evolution of rural wage labour in the Cauca Valley of Colombia, 1700 -1970," *Land and Labour in Latin America*, in Kenneth Duncan and Ian Rutledge, 421.

³⁰ The laws aimed to control the provinces' electoral process and the provincial armies. Another law was issued in 1860 "The Law of Public Order" which made provincial officials liable for criminal action in cases of disobedience to the Constitution. Felipe Perez, *Anales de la Revolución escritos según sus propios documentos*, (Bogotá: Imprenta del Estado de Cundinamarca, 1862).

³¹ The complete text of Mosquera's declaration appears in *Ibid.*, 319.

of 'criminals' against 'justice' and a struggle of 'corruption and barbarism against morality and civilization'.³² The element of fear appeared as well in the mobilization against the Cauca rebels:

Do you believe that the ignorant black from Cauca, the outlaw, the criminals from the villages, that those men enrolled in the rebels' armies are interested in a metaphysical question about the form of government? No, that is a silly belief. The mob's motives are not different from an appetite for your property and hatred against your race, fed by the outrage and humiliation of their families.³³

The analysis of social relations in the Cauca Valley suggests that labour exchange was less than an 'undifferentiated' market. Rather than a commonality of individuals under the guise of common interest, what emerged after the collapse of the slave system was a system regulated by fear. Fear regulated the spatial and temporal relations of production; fear also regulated partisan relationships among Liberals and Conservatives. The consequence, as the letter written by Arboleda's son suggests, was economic ruin for the *hacienda* and relations based on distrust: "These haciendas now produce nothing...The only hope is with the *terrajeros*, but they refuse to pay. And the plantains! You have to place a guard beneath each tree so they aren't stolen."³⁴

³² Mariano Ospina, "Alocución a los Granadinos," in *Ibid.*, 575 and *passim*.

³³ *Ibid.*, 577.

³⁴ Quoted in Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, 55.

6.2 The Santander region

An analysis of the eastern region, in particular, the province of Santander, reveals how little the situation resembled the one depicted in the Cauca region. Manuel Ancizar, a member of the *Comision Corografica*,³⁵ depicts the people of the province as mostly whites as a result of the rapid mixture between Indians and Spaniards. Regarding the province of Tunja, he observes:

the indigenous race forms the smaller number of inhabitants, it being admirable how rapidly it has crossed with and been absorbed by the European, since half a century ago the province of Tunja presented a compact mass of Indians and very few Spanish families. Today one notes in the new generation the progressive improvement of the castes: the children are white, blond, of fine and intelligent features and better built bodies than their elders.³⁶

Ancizar also depicts the population as hard workers and happy proprietors like those of the province of Velez:

...forming the base of a happy population since it is formed of small owners without the oppressive influence of big capitalists. This fortunate circumstance, common to the province, and the occupation of everybody in agriculture, a school of civic virtue, foretells that with time all of them would be equal in the society, as they are now equal in fortune.³⁷

³⁵ Manuel Ancizar, *Peregrinación de Alpha*.

³⁶ Manuel Ancizar, *Peregrinación de Alpha*. Quoted in Frank Safford, "Race, Integration and Progress: Elite Attitudes and the Indian in Colombia, 1750 - 1870", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 71:1 (1991), 28.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

In the province of Velez, as in most of the provinces of the region, women worked in textiles and hat production:

If a traveller arrives in Zapatoca on a labouring day, he may think that the city is empty since no one is in the windows nor in the streets, except for some domestic workers going to the store or the man attentive to his business; all the rest are not visible. Peasants spend the week on their small farms taking care of the land...women are always inside the houses, weaving *nacuma* hats, with such industry and dexterity, that there is no foreign piece that intimidates them and they are not able to copy. They attempt everything and everything is well done. It is admirable the perseverance of these women when they work; they work from morning to night time, when 10 or 12 of them get together in a friend's house, pay together for an oil lamp, and sitting together in the floor keep working part of the night.³⁸

The image of equal individuals was matched with a representation of the region as a place without violence. Women engaged in productive activities were considered as one of the causes of happiness, "they [women] work with pleasure, although without great profit" (*con gusto pero sin provecho*). Women's work was seen as a protection of women against misery, sexual oppression (mainly in the form of prostitution) and of more oppressive forms of labour such as domestic service.

The other causes were the more equal distribution of property and employment. Ancizar suggests the relation between a lack of criminality and employment. Cities, like Barichara, are praised for the absence of crime, having only small robberies, fights and common injuries. This situation he attributed to the "absence of the two major causes of

³⁸ Manuel Ancizar, *Peregrinación de Alpha*, 169.

crime, idleness and misery"³⁹ while in other towns, like the city of Socorro, he noted a higher rate of criminality and illegitimate children. According to the author, this situation could be prevented "if the rich neighbours of El Socorro would take an interest in the industrial education of poor women, if they had opened industrial shops and had thought about the road to honest living."⁴⁰

It is no coincidence that the province of Santander was the one embracing the principles of *laissez-faire* and considered the bastion of Colombian Liberalism.⁴¹ In a circular to all municipalities the secretary of government summarized the philosophy of the Assembly of Santander: No one knows better their own interest than does the individual.⁴² The Santander Constitution of 1858 sought to make the province a model for the abolition of government.⁴³ The 1857 Assembly of the province abolished the death penalty and granted a general amnesty for political prisoners. According to the President of Santander, Murillo Toro, crime did not have its origin in the individual but was the result of political, religious and economic causes. How could the government

³⁹ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 145.

⁴¹ Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue: The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863 - 1899*, 34 - 35. In the elections of 1848 and 1856 Liberals won by a large majority.

⁴² Gonzalo Tavera (1858), "Circular llamando la atención de los funcionarios públicos al estudio de las instituciones del Estado, para que identifiquen con ellas su conducta oficial", Bucaramanga, enero 14. Quoted in David Church Johnson, *Santander Siglo XIX -Cambios Socio-Económicos*, (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1984), 75.

⁴³ In words of Murillo Toro, "The Constitution of Santander has abolished, as it was supposed to the case, the government". Quoted in Jesus C. Torres Almeida, *Manuel Murillo Toro. Caudillo Radical and Reformador Social*, (Bogotá: Ediciones El Tiempo, 1984), 210. The first article stated that the province was constituted by all men in the territory, no matter their nationality.

severely punish these faults?⁴⁴ As a corollary of the principle of individual interests, it was stated that individuals bear the responsibility for building schools, bridges and hospitals. The President recommended that individuals should get together and finance these activities in a free association. The president of Santander also stated that education, industry and public works, including the construction of roads, should be an individual responsibility.

Unlike the *terrajés* in the Cauca province, in Santander there was a system of 'mutual contract' (*contrato de compañía*). According to Palacios' description,⁴⁵ in the 'mutual contract', estate-owner and share-cropper agreed to share the proceeds of the harvest according to a form of contractual arrangement where land, work, resources, and expenses were shared. A characteristic of this system was that there was no personal subjection of the sharecropper to the estate-owner, and that the contract was for a fixed, rather short, period of time. The situation differed in the case of cinchona bark extraction, which has been characterized as capitalism with a 'savage' character.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ M. Murillo Toro (1858) *Informe del Jefe Superior del Estado de Santander a la Asamblea Legislativa*, Bucaramanga, 19 - 20; quoted in David Church Johnson, *Santander Siglo XIX -Cambios Socio-Económicos*, 97. In the *Informe* Murillo endorsed the rights of individuals to self-defense against the existence of a permanent army, government by the majority against the right of minorities to govern, and lack of geographical representation in elections. *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁵ Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia, 1850-1970*, 80.

⁴⁶ See José Antonio Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial*, 297 *passim*. According to Ocampo the extraction of quinine took place in forest where empty lands were granted to private individuals or companies (*compañías*). The latter defended the land using private armies, and fights between *compañías* were common. Also the relationship between the *compañía* and the *cascarillero* was a relation of distrust; finally, the *compañía* employed collective exploration with a hierarchical internal structure.

Despite *laissez-faire* radicalism in the region, it is not inconsistent to affirm that the notion of the economic isolated from the political had not yet appeared.⁴⁷ The political situation in Santander was characterized by strong opposition and open confrontation between Liberals and Conservatives. At the centre of the debate was the type of *laissez-faire* reforms decreed by the provincial government. Conservatives interpreted these reforms as anarchical and closer to communism than individualism. The following was the position of the Society *Estrella del Norte* of San Gil with regard to the Liberals' conception of equality:

The Society cherishes equality...But in no way is it inclined to that kind of equality which, contradicting natural inequalities, confuses merit with ineptitude, probity with vice, and laboriousness with laziness; since this equality is destructive of the social order. And by virtue of this the Society will conduct propaganda against the dissolving doctrines of communism.⁴⁸

The opposition mounted by the Conservative newspaper *La Voz* revealed the uneasiness of Conservatives with what they saw as anarchy resulting from the reforms. Under the motto, "Alliance of freedom and order", the newspaper called for laws which would take into consideration the wickedness and passions of individuals.⁴⁹ Conservatives rebelled against the provincial administration in 1859. Towns, predominantly Conservative, asked to be liberated from the Liberal government. According to them, this "freedom does not

⁴⁷ The conditions of possibility for this to happen will be the subject of Chapter 7.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Robert Louis Gilmore, "Nueva Granada's Socialist Mirage", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXVI, 2 (1956), 205.

⁴⁹ Quoted in David Church Johnson, *Santander Siglo XIX -Cambios Socio-Económicos*, 56.

lead to progress...We prefer to give up this freedom and to protest against these guarantees and these benefits. We prefer a different order of things."⁵⁰

Local revolts were common in Santander and Boyaca, and a situation of chaos predominated until 1862. Economically, the region was in decay. Commerce between the towns almost disappeared due to the lack of good connecting roads. By 1865 Santander abandoned its radical *laissez-faire* position and began a more regulatory system.⁵¹ In 1871 the progress in terms of its political relations was recognized by the remaining provinces. The Conservative newspaper *El Herald* (1871) of Medellin reported

Here is a state which contrasts with...other Liberal states. The government of Santander proceeds with regularity; it attends with interest to all branches of public administration, especially popular education and the means of communication; it is not the scene of shameful dissensions or electoral frauds. Santandereanos are proud, fond of liberty and work, and respectful of the law...⁵²

The region's economy did not prosper at the same pace. There was a crisis in the agricultural exports of tobacco, cinchona and cotton. The traditional tobacco region of Girón which had been known for the high quality of the tobacco, had ceased to be an

⁵⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 101.

⁵¹ In 1865 the province published the *Código político i municipal, de policía, penal i militar del estado soberano de Santander* with regulations not only about government and justice but also about land distribution, use of water, fisheries, control of epidemic diseases, behaviour during celebrations. The code also regulated the construction of roads. According to the code roads were a state's responsibility. According to the law prisoners should work in public works. This information is from David Church Johnson, whose conclusion is that "it was difficult to find an aspect of social relations which was not regulated in the codes". *Ibid.*, 181; 203-204.

⁵² Quoted in Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863-1899*, 89.

export region by the 1870s as a result of both soil exhaustion and poor quality in the packing process and low international prices. Cinchona bark did no better; by 1880 exports had almost disappeared. In the Santander region, violence was generalized in the forests and war regulated the relations between *compañías*. In the international market, Colombian cinchona was refused due to the low quality of the product. The crisis in the artisanal sector was not less than that characterizing agricultural exports. Textiles and hats were the main artisanal products of the Santander region. National textiles, which clothed the nation at the end of the Colonial period, supplied only 10% of national consumption in the 1870s, and less than that by 1890.⁵³ Artisanal production shifted to hat manufacture which experienced an export boom around 1870, only to enter into crisis by the 1880s. The crisis in the sector appears reflected in the decrease in population of the main artisanal centres. Towards mid-nineteenth century, 10% of the Colombian population inhabited the artisanal centres of Santander; sixty years later this percentage had diminished to 4%.⁵⁴ In 1879 severe conflicts developed in the capital of Bucaramanga between artisans and German immigrants who were involved in commercial activities. Two Germans were shot to death and the German consulate as well as the houses of German citizens were painted with legends against German immigrants.⁵⁵

⁵³ José Antonio Ocampo, "Comerciantes, artesanos y política económica en Colombia, 1830 - 1880", *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico*, Banco de la República, XXVII, 22, (1990), 41.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁵ David Church Johnson, *Santander Siglo XIX -Cambios Socio-Económicos*, 282.

The analysis of Santander serves to illustrate the relationship between the perception of undifferentiated individuals and the lessening of force in the relations of production. Santander, unlike Cauca, established a contractual relationship in property relations. A perception of racial homogeneity allowed the concept of individuals following their own interest to be generalizable. This became embedded in the region-wide adoption of *laissez-faire* principles. However, Santander, like Cauca, was struck by a severe economic crisis. This crisis has been attributed to Santander's situation of war with the federal government and the lack of the concept of the state as the myth integrative of individual desires.⁵⁶

6.3 The *Cundi-Boyacense* and Tolima region

The central region of Cundinamarca, Boyacá and Tolima was heterogeneous ethnically and hierarchical in its social organization. A division between 'white' *hacendados* and Indians prevailed in Cundinamarca and Boyacá, while in the Magdalena Valley, the predominant division was between 'white *hacendados*' and *zambos* (a mixture of black and Indian) and mulattos. Two important locales set the stage for the development of social relations in the mid-nineteenth century. Bogotá, the capital and centre of administrative power was dominated by Creole literati, nicknamed *cachacos* (dandies), after the *casaca* or English coat they wore (see figure 5). The other locale was the

⁵⁶ On this point see *Ibid.*, 114. Church Johnson mentions as an important element in Santander's economic crisis the incapacity on the part of the provincial government to carry out public works, specially the conservation of roads: "Towards 1863 commerce between towns -without mentioning exports - had disappeared and the economic life in the rural areas reached almost subsistence level".

March 1881. - Mrs. D. and Mr. D. and Mrs. D.

Ambalema region, the most important economic centre during the tobacco boom. By mid-century the region was the main tobacco exporter and had the biggest tobacco factory. Ambalema was a 'trading centre' where all kinds of immigrants arrived, and a site of prosperous national and international business. In Bogotá, a city located in the highlands, social divisions were strong between literati and *mestizos*, while Ambalema, in the lowlands, had a predominance of *zambos* and mulattos. During the tobacco boom strong linkages developed between the two centres: a migration of literati from the capital moved to the lowlands in search of fortune, and *mestizo* peasants migrated as well to clear the land for cultivation.

Unlike the Cauca region where representations were centred around the threat posed by the black to the white population, in the central region concerns were built around the lack of discipline of the work force, a problem known as '*la falta de brazos*'. This problem did not refer to a lack of workers but to the absence of disciplined workers.⁵⁷ Indians were not feared but they were considered a problem due to their lack of initiative and habits of work, as appears in the following description:

...patient but stupid, [the Chibcha Indian] is useless as a *guerrillero* but could become a good soldier given his servility, dispassionate character and his exceptional ability to walk stooping with a heavy burden. Easy-going, completely ignorant, static and conservative, without ambition, ignorant of the word citizen

⁵⁷ A description of the problem of discipline in a Cundinamarca *hacienda* appears in Malcom Deas, "A Colombian Coffee State: Santa Barbara", in *Land and Labour in Latin America: Essays in the Development of Agrarian Capitalism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed., Kenneth Duncan and Ian Rutledge.

and avoiding any kind of participation in public affairs...Nevertheless, he is harmless and never is emotional enough to fight for religious matters.⁵⁸

Zambos were considered lazy and, unlike the submissive Indians, they were characterized as having a natural resistance to work. The image of the *zambo* was related to the wild environment, and lawlessness life:

The evident inferiority of the original race (black African and copper indigenous) and the subsequent decay, increased by the presence of a fermenting climate...produced in the *zambo* a race of animals in whose figure humanity hesitates to find their image or a part of their being...The *Zambo* exhibits his ugliness in three different ways: in the *champan* or boat, on the beach dancing the *currulao*, and in his hut, near the river, enjoying the *dolcissimo far niente* of the savage.⁵⁹

Both groups were considered opposites to the ideal of the good worker: "If we take a Magdalena boatman or an Indian from Cundinamarca and compare him with an educated Bostonian, we will have before us both our starting point and our goal."⁶⁰ The problem demanded different solutions than those envisaged in the Cauca region. The response on the part of the landowner was not to enlarge distance, as with the blacks in Cauca, but to increase the system of surveillance, in order to deal with what the landowner perceived as a lack of discipline of the work force. The *hacienda* became the prevailing system of production. In the *hacienda* the landowner gave plots of his land (*finca*) to the

⁵⁸ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las revoluciones políticas y la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas.*, 88 - 89.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 95 - 96.

⁶⁰ Quoted in M. Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia, 1850-1970*, 72. Palacios added that probably the *Bogotano* felt more at home with the Bostonian than the Indian or the Magdalena boatman.

arrendatarios, who would grow their own crops and in addition work in the owner's land. The *hacienda* has been named a servile or semi-servile system,⁶¹ *enfeudamiento*⁶² or 'liberal-feudalism'⁶³ because the relation between the worker from the landowner was not free as in the labour contract and was not as enforced as in feudalism. In the *hacienda* the work system is characterized by the pronounced control of the everyday life of the worker and the family. Surveillance became one main element to exert this control. The spatial distribution of the *hacienda* and the village maximized the surveillance of the *arrendatarios*, as is apparent from Camacho Roldan's description:

In addition to the house of the *hacendado*, there are two *tambos*, huts with straw ceiling without walls, the cane mill occupies one of the houses, and in the other is the shelter for the workers, men, women and children, without sex distinction.... Notwithstanding, each family of *arrendatarios* had its own room in a hut in the middle of the forest, and a small plot of land with corn, *yuca*, banana plantation. This was located in the farthest place from the owner's house, whose surveillance the *arrendatarios* always want to avoid.

In contrast, the owner's house was located in an elevated place allowing the direct supervision of most of his land. The families of small properties used to live in the house since they could not afford to live in the capital or in a bigger house: the wealthiest *hacendados* used to live in the capital and visit the *hacienda* during summer time...Because these mansions are distant one from the other and do not have good access due to the road conditions, their owners have almost no social relations among themselves. Social relations were possible only in the parish-town (*cabecera de la parroquia*) where each Sunday they went to mass and to shop.

⁶¹ Ibid., 80.

⁶² Salomon Kalmanowitz, "El Regimen Agrario durante el siglo XIX en Colombia," *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, tomo II, segunda edición.

⁶³ From Eugenio Díaz Castro, *Manuela*.

The parish was formed by few houses...governed by four main establishments: the church with the house for the priest annexed to it; the prison, whose main furniture was a stock for punishment...;the cemetery... the *venta*, the host house, and the place where provisions (food and liquor) were sold...The prison was the symbol of authority and justice, protective divinity in the leaders' imagination, but represented by a cell, a stock for punishment, and a inflexible jailer, to awaken ideas of terror and hatred.⁶⁴

Two texts written during the tobacco boom serve to illustrate the complexity of the social relations within the *hacienda*. One is Medardo Rivas' *Los Trabajadores de Tierra Caliente*⁶⁵ and the other is Eugenio Díaz Castro's *Manuela*.⁶⁶ Rivas was a lawyer from the National University, as well as a politician, representative to the Congress, journalist and literati. He depicts the life of men like himself who became *hacendados* in the Ambalema region during the tobacco and quinine booms. Eugenio Díaz Castro, on the other hand, was a peasant described by literati Tomas Rueda Vargas as not really a writer: "Mr. Díaz was a *costumbrista* among others, a *costumbrista* who wrote less carefully than the others, with less style, a good peasant narrating to the people of the city what he saw in the *trapiches*". Rueda Vargas adds that Díaz, "did not conclude high school in San Bartolomé but gained his support working in the Sabana de Bogotá and low lands. His readings must be few and occasional, because the trace of them in his writing is very limited. He was not as arrogant as an ignorant man nor as self-sufficient as a pseudo-intellectual. And he did not abandon the *ruana* and *alpargates*" even when he

⁶⁴ Salvador Camacho Roldan, "Introducción", *Manuela*, 503.

⁶⁵ Medardo Rivas, *Los Trabajadores de Tierra Caliente*, (Bogotá: imprenta y Librería de M. Rivas, 1899). The title in English means 'The Tropical land workers'. In reality none of Rivas' heroes was a 'worker', but land-owners, *hacendados*.

⁶⁶ Eugenio Díaz Castro, *Manuela*.

came to the city.⁶⁷ Thus, for the literati, this writer was not one of them - he was an oddity. While both texts narrate the failure of Ambalema's tobacco exports⁶⁸ they offer very different versions of the same problem: Rivas' view is the *hacendado's* while Diaz represents the worker's perspective. Rivas' main topic is the life of the 'pioneers of capitalism': literati from the capital who went to gain a fortune from the tobacco boom. We know by Rivas's description that among those who went to Ambalema were young lawyers like Pedro Navas Azuero, members of *la escuela republicana*. Rivas describes how *peones* cleared the jungle, while Navas read books about the history of the Girondines. Among the notable literati *hacendado's* were: the brothers Evaristo (who established the economic and juridical bases of public credit); law professor, Eustaquio y Alejo de la Torre and Salvador Camacho Roldan, a pioneer of sociology and successful businessman. Even José María y Miguel Samper and Anibal Galindo, politician, governor of Cundinamarca, minister, and author of a book on economic history and one on national statistics, swelled the ranks.

Rivas' description confirms the assertion made in chapter one, regarding the heterogeneous class composition of the Colombian elite. They were literati and merchants who combined their careers with agricultural exports. From Rivas' description it can also

⁶⁷ Reprinted in Tomás Rueda Vargas, "prologue". *Manuela*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Universales), 5.

⁶⁸ Rivas makes reference to the crisis of the tobacco exports in the 1870s. In the Ambalema region the price of the land was a third of the 1856 value, and half of the value in 1865. The price of each kilo of tobacco went from \$0.40 in 1857 to \$0.25 in 1868. The cost of production were higher than the price paid. By 1875 Ambalema disappeared as a tobacco region. José A. Ocampo, *Colombia y la Economía Mundial, 1830 - 1910*, 236 - 237.

be concluded that despite the *hacendados* knowledge of political economy and their adherence to *laissez-faire*, they neither played according to the market game nor initiated a process of capital accumulation: "most of them ended impoverished; others, unable to pay the capital borrowed at a high interest had to turn over the *haciendas* to the money lender; others during the crisis of the Ambalema tobacco, after many years of labour, returned to their homes, like war invalids, sick and poor."⁶⁹ The fate of those engaged in the extraction of indigo was no better.⁷⁰ Those places where indigo was planted became "covered by yellow straw, symbol of the infertility and abandonment of the soil."⁷¹ As a witness of the disastrous indigo production, Rivas quotes from a poem written by his partner, Francisco de la Torre. In "Farewell of a *tanquero* to his horses", a *hacendado* recites the frustrations of his struggle with both workers and nature, leading him to consider committing suicide.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid., 175.

⁷⁰ During the tobacco crisis, the Colombian investment went to indigo whose price had increased in the world market. The national exports went from 4 tons in 1864 to 182 tons in 1870. Ten years later, the exports reached the same level as in 1863, 6 tons. The decrease in Colombian exports is related to soil exhaustion and the low technical conditions of production and packing, unable to respond to a decrease in world demand. Ibid., 364 - 369.

⁷¹ Medardo Rivas, *Los Trabajadores de Tierra Caliente*, 306.

⁷² Ibid., 309. The poem is the following:

Cansado yá de batallar sin tregua
Con mayordomos, peones y jornales.
Con plátanos, con miel y con tasajos,
Y con prensas y géneros y empaques,
Y con esa maldita paja-zorro,
Que cuanto más se arranca más renace;
He resuelto acabar con esta vida
Con esta vida inquieta y miserable,
Y de cabeza echarme en el Depósito,
Con una piedra atada en el gaznate.

Rivas' description allows us to envision the process of land appropriation. Guataquicito, his *hacienda*, was located in a beautiful valley at the border of the Magdalena river, in front of the village of Guataquí. In the past, the land was owned communally by the Guataquí Indians. The Indians had 'transferred' their rights in the previous fifty years, and, according to Rivas description, only 300 people had the right over the land but over 3,000 had land claims. This situation occasioned a legal dispute at the termination of which Rivas had legal rights over most of the land.⁷³ He describes his great happiness as follows:

I was happy with nature's light, with the Magdalena River's majesty as the border of my property, and with the feeling of being a landowner, since I was born poor. I enjoyed being an important person for all the people around me; I enjoyed being strong and able to work; I enjoyed collecting the tobacco from the *cosecheros* and counting my *cosecheros* by the hundreds as my proteges; I enjoyed knowing that I was increasing the national wealth...I read a lot, wrote novels and poems; and I had always my mind fixed in the hundred thousand pesos that I would extract from this land, I did not feel the passage of time.⁷⁴

Rivas reveals the differentiated strategies in the *hacendados'* hiring practices. As in the Cauca Valley these practices varied according to the regional origin of the workers. Those clearing the jungle or collecting tobacco leaves were not locals but migrant workers brought from Antioquia. He explains: "[t]o turn Guataquicito into a meadow I

⁷³ Rivas' description was the typical situation in the lowlands *circa* 1870s. According to Catherine Legrand the land struggles emerged in a legal-institutional context. *Colonos* (settlers) resisted land entrepreneurs using judicial and administrative channels, appealing to bureaucrats, congressmen and hiring lawyers. The press and pamphlets were used also as means to express different viewpoints. The selective use of violence was also employed in the land struggle. Catherine LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1850-1936*, (Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1986), Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ Medardo Rivas, *Trabajadores de Tierra caliente*, 237.

ask for workers from Manizales; and suddenly I had two hundred Antioqueños with their wives, children and dogs".⁷⁵ They were a testimony to laboriousness and discipline "a few days later they were installed, submissive, working and following my orders in the same manner as the Indians from la Sabana [de Bogotá]."⁷⁶ The results were evident "with knives they began the logging and the mountain was consumed ravenously as a mirage...In three month the forest had disappeared; six months later, one thousand *cargas* of corn were harvested; one year later the land to settle 500 live stock was ready."⁷⁷ Rather than contract these migrants directly, he hired a *capitán* (chief) who received a pay for each acre cleared; *el capitán* commanded directly these groups of local migrants.

The people from the locality of Guataquí were engaged in subsistence agricultural activities in their own plot of land "each one has a *platanera*, a *chagra* (hut) with cassava, sweet potatoes and other roots produced in abundance; and either as *cosecheros*, or *jornaleros*."⁷⁸ Rivas did not believe that the Indians were savages, but he referred to them as weak, slothful and condemned to disappear soon.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 224.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 245.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 245.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 247.

Rivas depicts the *cosechero-arrendatario* as hard workers living in with his family in *caneyes*. In the eyes of Rivas, his *arrendatarios* were better off than those workers living from a wage:⁷⁹ "It is a pleasure to come to the Magdalena Valley, after a trip to the Nation's capital; there the population is dirty and enslaved to a salary, here lives the *cosechero*, happily surrounded by his family, in the middle of wealth which lessens the bad fortune of having to gain their bread by the sweat of their brow (*mitigando la maldición de comer con el sudor de su frente*)". To the question, does the *cosechero* have needs not fulfilled? he responded:

He had work, prosperity, home, family and future. Yes, he needs something else; a friendly voice who teaches morality to him; who changes his semi-barbarian habits; who will made him sober and economic; who turn him on the road to civilization; and who, without depriving him of his children's work, inspires in him the desire of bettering his condition, making him a lover of virtue and showing him the pleasures and charm of social life.⁸⁰

It is clear from Rivas' description that *hacendados* were familiar with the wage relationship, but they considered that a salary relation did not 'civilize' the workers. He mentions the case of those *cosecheros* who did not learn their lessons and fulfill their obligations to the landowner. Indebted to the landowner, they smuggle tobacco, and one day run away searching for better land. Rivas, who had equated the ruin of tobacco to the ruin of the Nation, attributed the misfortunes to destiny or chance.

⁷⁹ Medardo Rivas, *Los Trabajadores de Tierra Caliente*, 260.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

The picture of the Ambalema region painted by Eugenio Diaz in his novel *Manuela*, differs than the one traced by Rivas. The novel's locale is not Ambalema but a small town within the area of influence of Ambalema. In *Manuela*, workers are not depicted as *hacendados*' proteges as in Rivas' narrative. Workers are subject to exploitation and violence. *Hacendados* exert control over the *arrendatarios* of the *hacienda* using the power derived from ownership of the land and knowledge about legal codes.⁸¹ The element of fear was not alien to the *hacienda* but it appears under a different form: the threat of expulsion from the land. The following is a dialogue between two *hacendados*, Cosme and Damián:

- How is your situation with regard to *peones*?, Cosme asked his friend.
- It looks as if *peones* were everywhere, responded Don Blas.
- One day I was short of *peones*; I sent someone to destroy the hut of an *arrendatario* who was insolent, and they are obedient now. There is no chain as strong as the land...They blindly obey my orders whatever they are. If we could rent the air, as we rent the land which gives *peones* their living, can you imagine how much respect we would receive from these animals?

- ¿Y que tal de *peones*? le preguntó don Cosme a su profesor.
- Me llueven, le dijo don Blas.
- A mí se me iban escaseando, pero le mandé picar el rancho a un *arrendatario* que me estaba altivando, y temblando o no temblando, están todos ahora obedientes. No hay cadena tan poderosa como la de la tierra... me obedecen de rodillas el día que yo quiera. Porque figurese usted que le arrendáramos aire, así como les arrendamos la tierra que les da el sustento, ¡con cuánto mayor respeto nos mirarían estos animales!⁸²

⁸¹ The power derived from knowledge of legal codes was dealt with in chapter 3.

⁸² Eugenio Diaz, *La manuela*, (1858), 44.

In this version, the *Peones* considered their situation to be a type of slavery, only, as one says: "I am slave three times: slave of the *gamonal* because he releases my daughters from working and two times slave of the landowner". Asked if he considered his situation fair, his only answer was "Fear, friend, fear. Do not you believe that [fear] has a lot of resources to make damage?"⁸³ Women living in the *hacienda* were used as a form to pay the foremen's (*mayordomos*) favours to the owner. As Manuela explains to her *arrendataria* friend:

Poor women! They are forced to go to the *peones* without considering their health, religion or any other condition; and everything to make the landowners richer! Why care about spoiling their women *arrendatarias* if the cane mill produces more honey? Poor *arrendatarias* who had to suffer their slave situation not only for themselves but for their daughters too!

!Pobres muchachas! !se las echan a la peonada sin miramiento de salud, de religión, de conveniencia de ninguna clase; y todo por hacerse ricos los amos! Ellos ¿qué tiene con que se corrompan sus arrendatarias, como la molienda les rinda una totuma más de miel? !Pobres arrendatarias, que tienen que sufrir el peso de la esclavitud hasta en el honor de sus hijas!⁸⁴

Díaz illustrates the contradiction of Liberals, ostensibly believers in *laissez-faire* principles, who use feudal practices. He refers to *hacendados* as 'liberal feudal' whose only laws are those coming from control over the land. He also illustrates the coexistence

⁸³ Ibid., 248.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 207.

within the same locale of factory workers working on a salary and *arrendatarios*. Manuela is the site of encounter between the *hacienda* system and the capitalist world, represented by a tobacco factory located in the city of Ambalema. According to Diaz, Ambalema is a "land of oppression and tyranny."⁸⁵ In Ambalema, Manuela meets a well dressed former friend who seems affluent: "her fingers, neck and ears were shining with fine gold, and even her hair was ornamented with gold."⁸⁶ In the street she noticed that the women working in the tobacco factory all dressed like Matea. At the same time, Manuela observed that Mateas' room, which she shared with 5 women, had no ventilation, little furniture, and poor conditions leading to the death of the working women. To Manuela's question of how it is possible to live there, Matea responded that in addition to having a daily salary, there was no one who oppressed her against her will. The view of a sick factory worker, living in the streets, increased Manuela's confusion. "With so many things, and so many landowners and merchants", she asked, "is there not one hospital for sick workers?...Is this the protection and caring you were talking about?"⁸⁷ Manuela's perplexity increased with her visit to the tobacco factory:

Manuela was astonished by the activity of the people, especially the women, who moved their fingers as fast as the hummingbirds move their wings; and these women left their post with dissatisfaction when it was time, willing to make six or eight *pesos* a week, without fearing the hunger, thirst, heat or tiredness. Honour to the man which installed the first factory (Don Francisco Montoya), which with his commercial habits, his remuneration for work and his spirit of

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 224.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 267.

order maintained in the interior of the Republic a place of venture for rich and poor...!

...Manuela asked her friend where was the landlord (*amo*).

- Master? answered Matea...Master? There is no need of master around here.
- Then, who is in charge of whipping?
- This is the whip which governs everything, said Matea, placing in front of her eyes three or four pesos.

Manuela se quedó asombrada de la actividad de la gente, en especial de las mujeres, que movían las manos con la ligereza con que las tominejas mueven las alas, y que dejaban el puesto con repugnancia cuando era la hora, por tal de ganar seis u ocho pesos en la semana, sin que las arredrase ni el hombre, ni la sed, ni el calor, ni la fatiga. ¡Honor al fundador de la primera casa de alifios, (don Francisco Montoya), quien con sus cálculos comerciales, sus recompensas al trabajo y su espíritu de orden mantuvo en el interior de la república un plantel de especulaciones para los ricos y los pobres...!

...Manuela preguntó a su paisana cuál era el amo de su trabajo.

- ¿Amo? exclamó Matea, haciendo sonar uno de sus cachetes con un puño que se dio, ¿Amo? De eso no se usa por aquí.
- ¿Cual es el que las sacude con la zaurriaga, pues?
- Esta es la zurruiaiga que gobierna todas las cosas, dijo Matea, mostrandole tres o cuatro fuertes.⁸⁸

The factory workers, all women, came from the rural areas to escape oppression and the violence exerted on them. Contradicting Rivas' perspective, in Díaz' description neither morality nor protection were the main motivations behind the *hacienda* system. Nor were economic benefits.

Labour relations, as described in Díaz' version, contribute to the contradictions inside the *hacienda* which contributed to the lack of economic viability of this system. Malcom

⁸⁸ Ibid., 271.

Deas's study of an *hacienda* in Cundinamarca shows that the tension between the *arrendatario* and the owner and administrator was never resolved.⁸⁹

6.4 The Antioqueño region

Antioquia's economic growth during the nineteenth century has been seen as an enigma by those scholars interested in capitalist development. Antioquia, like the central and the Cauca regions, was ethnically mixed.⁹⁰ During the Colonial period Antioquia, like Cauca, had an economy based on the exploitation of gold. But Antioquia was one of the poorest regions at that time. In 1808 the province of Antioquia was the 6th in population (111,000) following Tunja (209,000), Santa Fé (189,000), Popayán (175,000), Cartagena (170,000) and Socorro (162,000).⁹¹ Yet in the second half of the nineteenth century Antioquia became one of the most prosperous provinces leading in exports first of gold,

⁸⁹ Malcom Deas, "A Colombian coffee estate: Santa Barbara, Cundinamarca, 1870-1912" in *Land and Labour in Latin America*, eds. K. Duncan and I. Rutledge, 280. This problem continued until the 20th century. As Deas shows despite several devices used by the administrators like the threat of expulsion of their land and their houses or the destruction of the crop, *arrendatarios* did not find 'motivation' for work. In the words of one administrator: "I'll never understand these people: they really are *Indios*. Now they get a good day's wage in the harvest, one still has to force them and mule-drive them just as is if one was asking them to work for nothing".

⁹⁰ According to the 1812 census the following was the distribution by race of a population of 735,470 people: 45% mulattos and *mestizos*, 34.6% white, 18.2% blacks, 2.2% Indians. Felipe Pérez, *Geografía física i política del estado de Antioquia*. Quoted in James Parsons, *La Colonización Antioqueña en el Occidente de Colombia*, (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1979), 20. On average for Colombia the distribution given by J. M. Samper is as follows: 62% white, 22% indians, 10% mulattos, 5% blacks (slaves). The high proportion of white is related to the incorporation of *mestizos* in this category. José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las revoluciones políticas y la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 73.

⁹¹ Felipe Pérez, *Geografía general física i política de los Estados Unidos de Colombia y geografía particular de la ciudad de Bogotá*, (Bogotá: Imprenta de Echavarría Hermanos), 156.

and then of coffee. It is estimated that between the years 1851 and 1871 Antioquia's population increased by 63%, one of the highest growth rates in the country.⁹²

Antioquia became a pioneer in the process of capital accumulation. In the nineteenth century, Antioquia not only surpassed Cauca's gold exports, but became the main exporter of coffee, surpassing Santander, the pioneer in the cultivation of coffee beans. During the Antioqueño colonization, settlements of smallholder cultivated the mountain slopes and the region grew from less than 10% of the Colombian population at the beginning of the century to 25% in the first third of the twentieth century. Although the process of industrialization did not begin in Antioquia, the region became the leading industrial sector.⁹³

The relatively successful capitalist development of the Antioquia region has been the object of a considerable debate among economic historians. The myth of the Jewish origin attributed to Antioqueños has been at the centre of the discussion. The myth was common among nineteenth-century scholars typified in the following description by J. M. Samper:

The Antioqueño is a very interesting person, physically the best-looking and the strongest by his character and his influence in the federal government...The old province of Antioquia...conquered by Robledo y Heredia, attracted the first

⁹² The first one was the state of Panamá (74%). Ibid., 165. In the period between 1843 - 1851 the biggest rate was held by Santander (22%).

⁹³ During the nineteenth century most of the industries began in Bogotá.

Spanish immigrants because of its gold mines and the good weather. Later, during the Spanish persecution of Jews, even those converted to Christianity by force, they organized an emigration of 200 families, converted to Catholicism, and settled in Antioquia...Spaniards, Israelies and Creoles mixed and created the most beautiful and vigorous race known in Hispano-Colombia. Today the state of Antioquia has over 300,000 people, and at least 250,000 are the result of a merge with Jews.⁹⁴

One hundred years later, Berkeley professor James Parsons began his doctoral dissertation on the Antioqueño colonization by reminding the readers that Antioqueños named themselves the 'yanquis de Sudamerica', signalling 'energetic individualism' as one of Antioqueño's most important qualities.⁹⁵ The Antioqueños were also the centre of attention in Everett E. Hagen's theory of social change.⁹⁶ Like Parsons, Hagen attributed their success to their psychological characteristics. The former stressed their poverty and the harsh condition of the territory as the main factors forming the distinctive character. Hagen added an additional factor, which in his view is the key contributing factor: he is referring to the legend born in the nineteenth century which said that the Antioqueños were Jewish descendants. After discarding the foundation of the legend, Hagen argues that because of this legend, those in the cultural centres despised the Antioqueño people. In his view, the Antioqueños emphasized the acquisition of wealth to counter this disdain. Historian Frank Safford⁹⁷ entered the debate with an alternative

⁹⁴ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las revoluciones políticas y la condición social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 85.

⁹⁵ James Parsons, *La Colonización Antioqueña en el Occidente de Colombia*.

⁹⁶ Everett E. Hagen, *El Cambio Social en Colombia: El Factor Humano en el Desarrollo Económico*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1963).

⁹⁷ Frank Safford, "Significación de los Antioqueños en el desarrollo económico Colombiano", in *Aspectos del Siglo XIX en Colombia*, ed. Frank Safford.

interpretation: the legend about the Jewish roots of Antioqueño was not the origin but the result of their economic success. The engagement in gold activities explained the economic well being and not the other way around. The legend, in his view, was a kind of 'sour grapes' attitude to the region's success expressed by the economically weak provinces.

Although provocative, Safford's thesis does not provide a complete explanation. Until the mid-nineteenth century Cauca was not only a more prosperous region but also dominated political life in the post-independence years.⁹⁸ Yet it attracted neither the legend nor the success with capitalism. Santander also experienced tobacco and quinine booms, but that region failed to establish a stable environment favouring the accumulation process. As Alvaro López has pointed out, "it is difficult to say for those groups or regions that had been gold suppliers, the control of the resource is enough to ensure financial control, business management and social influence."⁹⁹

A key factor to explain the process of development in Antioquia is the predominance of a conception of 'undifferentiated' individuals as compared with the hierarchical structures of Cauca or the Central region. As a consequence, in Antioquia the use of force in the

⁹⁸ At the end of the XVIII century the production of gold and silver in Cauca represented a 43%, as compared with 31% in Antioquia. The share of population in mid-nineteenth century was respectively 15 and 11%. Popayán, Cauca's capital, played an important political and social role, sometimes comparable to the capital, Bogotá. During the period after independence Cauca was the most important political centre. The presidency of the country was often occupied by important families of Popayán.

⁹⁹ Alvaro López T., *Migración y Cambio Social en Antioquia durante el siglo diez y nueve*, (Bogotá: CEDE, Universidad de los Andes, monografía 25, 1968), 52.

relations of production was less severe. The Antioqueño's representation centred on the *raza Antioqueña* (Antioquia's race) where an inclusive rather than a exclusive concept of identity prevailed. This regional identity provided the condition of possibility for insertion into the global, *laissez-faire* regime of representation. The 'Jewish identity', as a collective myth, overcame the contradiction between the 'will to civilization' and *laissez-faire* practices.

Antioquia, like the other regions, had racial diversity. The census data shows a distribution of the population not far from the average in the country. This racial diversity appears clearly in Enrique Price's watercolor entitled "Types of the Medellín province" (figure 6) where black and mestizo are a predominant element. It is important to notice also that the spacial distribution of individuals differs from that in most pictures drawn by other artists of the *Comisión Corográfica*. To illustrate the point let us compare Price's drawing of the people of Medellín and Fernández' picture of Ocaña - Santander (figure 7). In Price's picture, all the individuals, disregarding race or gender, are located on the same level. The black woman is placed at the centre captivating the attention of three of the four characters. Whereas in Carmelo Fernandez' watercolor, entitled 'White Women', not only is the black woman erased from the picture's name but she is located in the back with her sight opposing the 'representatives' of Ocaña's women.

Three Women in Late 19th Century Dress

Despite the racial diversity in Antioquia, all the descriptions concur in attributing to the province racial homogeneity, habits of hard work and physical attractiveness. Unlike the feeling of fear or frustration with laziness expressed towards the lower class elsewhere they too were seen to have positive attributes: "The lower class (*el bajo pueblo*) Antioqueño, the most beautiful of the province and the Republic, is smart, hard working and honest...All the population is homogeneous, and the accent is distinctive."¹⁰⁰ The Antioqueños were aware of their distinctiveness with regard to the remaining provinces. Gutiérrez Vergara's poem, for example, highlights the regional attributes of Antioquia, especially language, to the point of describing the Spanish used in Antioquia as a regional language:

No estarán subrayadas las palabras
Poco españolas que en mi escrito empleo
pues como solo para Antioquia escribo
yo no escribo español sino antioqueño.

I will not underline the regional expressions
which I often use in my writing
Thus while I write only for Antioquia
I do not write Spanish but Antioquian language.¹⁰¹

Antioquia formed its regional identity outside the national project. In the book with popular songs from Antioquia, edited by Antonio José Restrepo, one of the song says

¹⁰⁰ José María Vergara y Vergara (1905) *Historia de la literatura en la Nueva Granada desde la Conquista hasta la Independencia (1538 - 1820)*, 480.

¹⁰¹ Gregorio Gutiérrez González, "Memoria científica sobre el cultivo del maíz en los climas cálidos del estado de Antioquia por uno de los miembros de la Escuela de Ciencias y Artes dedicado a la misma escuela", reprinted in Eduardo Camacho Guizado, "La literatura Colombiana entre 1820 y 1900," in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, tomo II, (Bogotá: Círculo de Lectores S.A., 1982), 638.

"My first love was a Colombian woman" (*El primer amor que tuve/fue con una colombiana*). According to Restrepo, this poem is a clear example of Antioquia's regional identity, which he attributes to the Antioqueños' limited vision and their ignorance about abstract concepts. Antioqueños see everything beyond their own boundaries as foreign, unfamiliar. "There is an absence of abstract concepts...like nation, fatherland, state; those nouns are only understood and enhanced, even used as an instrument of exploitation against the productive sectors, by the enlightened and evolutionist."¹⁰²

The problem of *mano de obra* was defined in a different manner in Antioquia than in Cauca or the Central region. According to Alejandro López, the modern history of Antioquia began at the end of the eighteenth century with the arrival of a member of the Spanish crown, Mon y Velarde.¹⁰³ In the Spaniard's eyes, the problem in the province was the *desidia y abandono* (negligence and lethargy) of the population. In Mon y Velarde's testimony:

[u]sing all kind of instruments I made all of them believe, from the oldest to the youngest, that they were born for working, and that we should look upon as a delinquent those useless to their fatherland and those who do not employ their strength in gaining their own subsistence... Once this idea was happily spread among the people, they awoke from their lethargy, and like those awakening from a deep dream, began to settle new towns.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Antonio José Restrepo, *El Cancionero de Antioquia*, 115 - 116.

¹⁰³ Alejandro López, *Problemas Colombianos*, (Paris: Editorial París-América, 1927).

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 25.

Mon y Velarde did not only spread ideas however. He initiated political and fiscal reforms ensuing from his belief in the undifferentiated working habits of the population. His main reform was to grant free access to land to those wishing to found towns (*pueblos*) and agricultural villages. Alejandro López pointed to the enormous difference between these reforms and the process of colonization elsewhere. In his view, there are two forms of colonization, one which employed the axe, the other legal paper (*el hacha y el papel sellado*). In the latter the land is obtained through personal influence. The former, which characterized the Antioqueño colonization, had a different effect as he explains:

The merit of those who left the town to conquer land with the axe is not their strength in clearing the forest, but the decision to isolate themselves from the world...Theirs is an industrial enterprise, whose only demand is their own, and without exchange with others during long periods of time; their work means self confidence and confidence in the future.¹⁰⁵

The mechanisms of social control differed from those mentioned in the case of *terrajeros* in Cauca, where fear became an important element of the power held by the white landowner. In Antioquia a different form of social organization emerged. As has been stressed by Palacios, "[t]he dominant classes in Antioquia are not scared... of the 'barbarism' of dances or cultural expressions of the people, on the contrary, they were able to recreate from peasant folkloric traditions a holistic vision of an Antioqueño world, with the vision of a free, proud, frugal, entrepreneur-peasant from the mountains

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 45 - 46.

(*montañero*) as the epitome of the *raza antioqueña*.¹⁰⁶ In Antioquia the local administration had a more communitarian character than in Cauca or Ambalema. As has been pointed out by López Toro ¹⁰⁷ local authorities did depend on the power of the *hacendado* but were elected by the community. Another characteristic was the existence of collective tasks in activities such as the selection of land for settlement, the preparation and financing of new expeditions, clearing of land, etc.¹⁰⁸

Social relations in the *hacienda* also differed from those developed in Cauca or Ambalema. The system is depicted ¹⁰⁹ as one of relatively free *aparcerías* (share-cropping) where the *aparceros* had more freedom to organize and market the production. They were also able to hire additional workers, and both product and expenses were shared with the landowner. The work system had important effects on productivity:

The technical backwardness of *haciendas* using forced labour was a consequence of the negative and violent incentives on direct producers, while the relative freedom as in the case of [Antioqueño] colonization and the individual incentives

¹⁰⁶ Marco Palacios, "La Fragmentación regional de las clases dominantes en Colombia: una perspectiva histórica", *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 1678.

¹⁰⁷ Alvaro López T. *Migración y Cambio Social en Antioquia durante el siglo diez y nueve*, 32 -33.

¹⁰⁸ The previous remarks do not mean that the colonization was democratic and equitable. Palacios' refer to this interpretation as a 'white legend'; on the contrary, land distribution was far from egalitarian and social conflict also existed among colonizers. Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia, 1850 - 1970*, specially chapters 8 and 9. Alvaro Lopez Toro, *Migración y Cambio Social en Antioquia durante el siglo diez y nueve* also mentions how in new waves of colonization a number of vagrants, poor and criminals were displaced to the colonization areas. Conflicts were also caused by the appropriation of land on the part of big landowners and the displacement of independent peasants.

¹⁰⁹ Salomon Kalmanowitz, "El régimen agrario durante el siglo XIX en Colombia", *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, tomo II, 293 *passim*.

acted as engines propelling towards a bettering in labour, better discipline, more responsibility and initiative, favouring an improvement in the technology of production.¹¹⁰

In contrast to the colonial period, in 1850 the peasants of Antioquia was better off than their counterparts in Boyacá or Cundinamarca.

An additional paradox lies in the fact that the entrepreneurial character of the Antioqueño elite did not derive from the *laissez-faire* school voiced by Liberalism. Antioqueños were as Conservative, as Santandereanos were Liberal. In the elections of 1848 and 1856 the percentage of Liberal votes was 17% and 23% respectively.¹¹¹ *laissez-faire* principles collided with the religious beliefs of Antioqueños. It appears that the Jewish legend about the Antioqueño's origin may have allowed the population to harmonize their utilitarian tendencies with their religious beliefs. Thus, an article in a local newspaper entitled "Israelies and Antioqueños"¹¹² recognizing that the legend was not founded in reality, nonetheless used the legend to differentiate Jews and utilitarians. It argues that whereas the latter are a threat for society, Jews "with their activity, work and economy increase wealth and spread civilization". This is precisely the compromise between civilization and capitalism which so often eluded Colombians during the will to civilization period.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 297.

¹¹¹ Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863-1899*, 38 *passim*.

¹¹² Mariano Ospina Rodríguez (1875), "Los Israelitas y sus detractores" published with the title "los Israelitas y los Antioqueños" in *Escritos sobre Economía y Política*, ed. Mariano Ospina Rodríguez, (Bogotá: Biblioteca Universitaria de Cultura Colombiana, 1969), 207 - 210.

The vision surrounding the Antioqueño region allowed them to embrace those aspects of the Constitution of 1863 more in accordance with their representation and to discard those contrary to their spirit. Pedro J. Berrio, governor of Antioquia from 1865 to 1873, described the Constitution as "generally good...its only objectionable features are its tyrannical dispositions regarding ecclesiastical matters".¹¹³ More meaningful was the fact that Antioquia remained apart from the nation's civil wars for most of the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1865 Conservatives discussed the possibility of a nationwide uprising, but were discouraged in their plans by the feeling that they did not count with their partisans given the Antioqueño's 'selfishness'.¹¹⁴

Antioquia's regional representation allowed it not only to avoid the local turmoil of the other regions but also to reach the point of leading the nation in the pursuit of the regional interest. The following letter of Mariano Ospina Rodríguez is very illustrative: "The merchants of this province (Antioquia) had embraced with joy the idea of joining the Republic to the United States, as the only means to ensure security...This step will entail some inconvenience, but is the only solution to stop the barbarism which menaces the destruction of this country."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Quoted in Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863-1899*, 96.

¹¹⁴ Expression used by Conservative José María Quijano Otero. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 96.

¹¹⁵ Mariano Ospina Rodríguez a Pedro Alcántara Herrán, 28 de Agosto, 1854. Quoted in Frank Safford "Significación de los Antioqueños en el desarrollo económico Colombiano", in Frank Safford, *Aspectos del Siglo XIX en Colombia*, 87. According to Safford this was not the only occasion when Antioqueños thought in that way: in the conflicts of 1860-63 this anti-political feeling appeared again.

6.5 Conclusion

An analysis of four main regions in Colombia (Cauca, Cundinamarca-Boyacá-Tolima, Santander and Antioquia) has brought to light the linkage between the representation and manifestation of violence, on the one hand, and between these forms and capitalist development, on the other. In Cauca, a region perceived as predominantly black, representations were dominated by a culture of terror. The use of fear was a dominant element in both the organization of production and partisan alignment. Spatial and temporal categories and relations of surveillance corresponded to the isolationism/distantiation between the Creole landowner and recent manumitted blacks. Once a prosperous region during the Colonial period, Cauca turned into a 'land of brigandage and fear'.

Indians and *zambos* prevailed in the central region (Cundinamarca-Boyacá-Tolima). Indians were said to be stupid, submissive and with low capacity to work. *Zambos* are said to be lazy, negligent and lawless. The Indian's image of submissiveness and *zambos'* image of laziness did not create the same feeling of fear as in the Cauca region. However, control of their lives became a main concern within the *hacienda*. This control was related to the discipline of Indians and *zambos* to turn them hard workers. The control over them included everything from a 'proper' marriage to strict regulations regarding planting, time allocation, distribution of crops, not to mention rituals regarding threats and punishments. The *hacienda* system did not prove economically more

successful than the Cauca *terrajés*. Briefly successful ventures like tobacco and tannin went bust within a few decades.

In contrast, Santander offered the appropriate environment for *laissez-faire* principles to prosper. Conceived of as being homogeneously white, the region became the bastion of Liberalism. Legislation was enacted to provide for the individualistic character of the region. Violence was almost absent from those locales where artisanry and small production prevailed. 'Mutual contract' between estate-owner and share-cropper reduced the extent of personal subjection which characterized relations in the Cundinamarca-Boyacá region. Despite Santander's prosperity in manufacturing and later in tobacco production, the region's experience with *laissez-faire* ended in local revolts and economic crisis.

Antioquia, like Santander, was said to be an homogeneous region inhabited by white population and with strong work habits inherited from their Jewish origin. The myth surrounding the Antioqueño not only allowed the people to be represented with positive attributes related to habits of hard work but also had an effect on the organization of production in the region. Labour was not seen as a problem as in Cauca or Cundinamarca; fear disappeared as the main element of control and the population could concentrate on 'conquering the land with axes'.

These cases illustrate, on the one hand, the importance that the violence of representation has for the subsequent manifestation of violence and, on the other hand, the importance that the conception of 'undifferentiated' individuals had for the development of the productive forces, especially free labour. Those places where identities were constructed negatively tended to employ coercive relations of production. On the contrary, in places where the population was perceived in an homogeneous way, independent of the racial differences, as in Antioquia and Santander, contractual relations, although not necessarily in the form of wage labour, tended to prevail.

Chapter 7

The Nation the State and Violence

"Thinking of how many constitutions were written in our country, it comes to my mind that instead of the paper spent in their elaboration, it would be more convenient to wrap the walls of our Senate with the following motto employed by doctor Brandeth when selling his pills 'constitution is what constitutes and what constitutes is blood', be it the blood spilled in war or the blood filled with hatred, revenge and futility in the veins of our legislators."

Miguel Samper (1867).

This chapter addresses the issue of the relationship between violence and representation. In those places where capitalism developed first, overt violence was expelled from the economic and concentrated in the state, and from the nation and concentrated in the state-system. This has not been the case in third world countries. The reason, it is argued, lies in the formation of representations without the capacity to transcend violence. In those places where capitalism developed first, the separation of the economic from the political allowed a displacement of violence from the former to the latter. Nation and state eventually came together in the single form of the nation-state. The questions to be asked are, how can the war of movement (the use of force) be transformed into a war of position (the gaining of consent)? And, how is this passage related to representation? In Gramsci's view,¹ the transformation of a war of movement into a war of position coincided with the passage from the economic to the political, when economic interests are articulated and become universal interests. This is also the moment of the nation-state and the moment when international relations are acknowledged.

The regime of representation which emerged in nineteenth century Colombia, the will to civilization, precluded the formation of the nation. The state was deprived of the monopoly of force, and law emerged as a site for infinite acts of private revenge. The will to civilization resembled Gramsci's description of the Sorelian myth: it worked by

¹ For Gramsci the 'war of movement' is a war waged by the use of force and happens when there is a desire to annihilate the enemy. The 'war of position' is the moment of consent. It is named the 'political moment' which is seen as a hegemonic moment, the organization of 'dispersed people' around a concrete fantasy, or 'collective myth'. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 182.

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'differentiation'.² The Gramscian 'dual perspective' of force and consent, violence and civilization, the particular and the universal, was absent. The reason, it is argued, is to be found in the process of **constitution of identities/differences** accompanying the will to civilization: negativity was the dominant system of distinction. Concepts like the nation, the state and the law, had a self-defeating character. Crises of distinctions became endemic, and violence was not resolved.

7.1 Regimes of Representation and the moments of violence

Regimes of representation have been defined as spaces of encounter which extend in time and space through the construction of meanings which are relatively fixed and distinct. In nineteenth century Colombia (1849 - 1878) the predominant regime of representation was the will to civilization. Liberals and Conservatives agreed about the importance of the civilizing mission while they were deeply divided regarding the **how** of civilization. Party leaders proclaimed unanimously that the source of civilization was in the European Continent, and that the Independence gained in 1810 was not the beginning of a new civilization. Civilizations could neither be invented nor improvised, they agreed. European civilization furnished the model to be emulated, while indigenous practices were considered as vices to be eradicated. Religion, education, grammar, law and constitutions, were contentious arenas for party leaders. Wherever these were threatened

² Gramsci depicted Sorel's myth as 'non-constructive': "[it] leaves the collective will in the primitive and elementary phase of its mere formation, by differentiation ('cleavage') - even when this differentiation is violent..." Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 128.

parties were ready to wage a war against the rival party. The will to civilization was embodied in the dream of a *civilización mestiza* in which the Indian and black colour would fade in their encounter with white descendants. The will to civilization established hierarchical identities and distinctions between Creoles, blacks and Indians, between men and women, between literati and artisans. In these acts violence was represented, later to be manifested.

This chapter argues that regimes of representation differ in their capacity to establish fixed, routinized and stable systems of identity formation. This stability is linked to a regime's capacity to give a solution, in representation, to the three moments of violence: representation, manifestation and resolution.³

The first moment, **representation**, refers to the violence originated in the process of endowment of meanings to things. The constitution of identities is an act of exclusion, and every act of exclusion is a violent act. The second moment, **manifestation**, is violence's phenomenal, observable dimension. It is a violence that is reciprocal, defined in terms of vengeance and reprisal. The third moment, **resolution**, is the moment when manifested violence comes to an end. It is the political moment. The resolution of violence is itself a force propelling processes of institutionalization. This is the moment of the nation-state, of 'politics' as a separate sphere, of the juridical. Gramsci's

³ These moments replace the conception of violence as a phenomenal event, a manifestation. When restricted to 'observable interactions', more subtle aspects of violence, such as the violence implicit in naming, interpreting and qualifying are ignored.

conception of 'war of movement' (the moment of force) corresponds with manifested violence, while 'war of position' (the moment of consent, the political moment) corresponds with the moment of resolution.

The analysis of nineteenth century Colombia serves to illustrate a regime of representation's ability to overcome violence and thus to gain stability and persist. It is suggested that because of the will to civilization's reliance on differentiation, the passage from a war of movement to a war of position was not possible. The three foundational myths - the formation of the nation, the state and the rule of law - entered into contradiction with the myth of a civilization *mestiza* which suppressed certain identities and blended them in a process of whitening. Civil wars were the predominant way to solve situations of conflict. The will to civilization as a regime of representation entered into crisis.

7.2 The formation of the nation

According to Benedict Anderson a nation is "an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".⁴ In his description of the emergence of nations South American Creoles appear as pioneers in the invention of nations. Miscegenation was linked to Creole's conception of nation-ness. This section

⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, New York: Verso, 1983), 6.

argues that the construction of identity/differences in the will to civilization both facilitated and impeded the formation of the nation.

Mid-nineteenth century Colombians did not invent a nation. Rather than a nation, what emerged in the post-colonial period is the image of a society "fragmented by its geography, history, tradition, ethnicity and material backwardness."⁵ Nations are born from a sense of common domestic identities and from distinguishing 'us' from the 'other', the external, the outsider. The will to civilization as a regime of representation precluded common identity formation and, hence, the formation of a nation. Miscegenation as a process of whiteness suppressed the identities of Indians, blacks and women by locating their identities in the not-civilized side of the dichotomy civilized-barbarian.

Spatially, the country emerged already mapped according to degrees of civilization. The spread of civilization was conceived as a movement where one world, the non-civilized, would disappear in the encounter with the civilized. This movement appears clearly in the following description of the country written for the Ethnographic Society of Paris by literati José María Samper:

It happened that the introduction of slavery and the climatic and ethnic differences produced a distribution of the population strongly differentiated, distributed in layers according with the topography. The European race settled almost entirely in the peak and the mountain slopes; the African race, slaves, was condemned to

⁵ Marco Palacios, "La fragmentación regional de las clases dominantes en Colombia: una perspectiva histórica", *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 42, (1980), 1665.

misery and decolonization in the deepest and hottest valleys; and the indigenous races, exploited and dominated everywhere remained in their own territory. Therefore, the result was: on the peak, civilization; towards the middle, desolation; and in the low land, the violence and horror of slavery.

As a result of the spatial distribution of ethnic and social conditions, all the work of civilization in the New Granada could be summarized in an ascending and descending movement. Civilization had to spread down to the valleys... The barbarian should climb towards the plateau and then disappear or change completely.⁶

Samper's passage illustrates the ontological, spatial and temporal character that the will to civilization had in nineteenth century Colombia. Civilization was conceived as a biological movement going from male Creole towards blacks, Indians and women; as a spatial movement going from mountains to valleys; as a temporal movement going from a barbarian past to a civilized future. The movement of civilization, however, did not prove to be as steady as the one envisioned by Samper. Generally, the ascending and descending movement was furthered by the violent suppression of one group in favour of the other.

7.2.1 Literature and the formation of the Nation

By naming nations as "printing communities", Anderson points to the importance that language, in general, and printed language, in particular, had in the formation of nations. In nineteenth century Colombia, however, printing did not create a sense of community.

⁶ José M. Samper, "La Confederación Granadina y su población", in *Ensayo sobre las revoluciones política y la condición social de las repúblicas Colombianas*, (París: Imprenta de E. Thunot y Ca, 1861), 299.

The discovery of differences, more than the search for simultaneity, characterized the imaginary of the nation. The emergence of *costumbrismo* as a literary genre reflects this desire to consolidate internal differences rather than establish commonalities. As a literary genre *costumbrismo* has been called a 'picture' (*cuadro de costumbres*) "where things --houses, dresses, picnics, furniture, etc.-- 'habits' are isolated from the people wearing or practicing these habits; like in a craft and art museum... 'Habits' are mere external stereotypes."⁷ Difference more than simultaneity characterized this literary genre. As pointed out by literary historian Sanin Cano, *costumbrismo* is a "description of the known more than the invention of the unknown or non-existent."⁸

Mid-nineteenth century literati saw the unification of language as an important condition for the consolidation of the nation. According to the 19th century grammarian, Rufino José Cuervo:

...when various peoples share the benefit of a common language, to work for the uniformity of that language is to invigorate their sympathies and the relations between them, to make them one. So then, leaving aside those who work to preserve the unity of religion, no one does more for the brotherhood of the Hispanic-American nations than those who encourage those studies which tend to preserve the purity of the language, destroying the barriers that languages place in the way of the commerce of ideas.⁹

⁷ Eduardo Camacho Guizado, "La Literatura Colombiana entre 1820 y 1900", in *Manual de Historia de Colombia*, II (Bogotá: Círculo de Lectores, 1982), 662.

⁸ Baldomero Sanín Cano, *Letras Colombianas*, (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1944).

⁹ Rufino J. Cuervo (1885), *Apuntaciones críticas sobre el lenguaje bogotano*, in *Obras*, tomo I, (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1954), 6. The translation is from M. Deas.

The Castilian language was effectively linked to Spanish civilization. It was "the only one accepted among the civilized people, to be followed by those who want understanding and respect."¹⁰ Its prominence and authority was unquestioned: "History has already pronounced its verdict,"¹¹ was Cuervo's conclusion regarding the use of Spanish. In addition to the unification of language, mid-nineteenth century literati envisioned the inextricable linkage between literature and power. Vergara y Vergara, an historian of literature in the nineteenth century, began a chapter on the study of literature in the post-independence period as follows: "Literature in America interacts so strongly with political events, that is impossible to follow the progress of literature without seeking its cause in political events. Although it seems difficult to believe, in our countries, politics decides even about literary schools."¹²

Nowhere is Vergara's assertion more accurate than in the discussion about ethnic and gender identities (blacks, women, Indians) and literary production. According to Vergara, before the struggles for Independence, poetry was not popular, given the isolation of the ethnic groups, even if there was linguistic unity. The struggle for Independence had as one of its effects the "unification of memories, and there was a fatherland and a common history."¹³ This unification was not enough to overcome the feeling of hostility between

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹² José María Vergara y Vergara, *Historia de la Literatura en Nueva Granada desde la Conquista hasta la Independencia (1538 - 1820)*, (Bogotá: Librería Americana, 1905), 387.

¹³ Ibid., 467.

the black, Indian and white races; in his view "for the disappearance of this obstacle [hostility], and for the three races to absorb mutually each other's qualities, form one and bond their memories, requires the passage of a long time."¹⁴ This unification of memories, in his view, would give birth to 'popular poetry' which he defined as an exchange between the dominant and dominated. As an example of popular poetry, Vergara quoted a popular song entitled *El Trapiche* (The sugar mill)

El Canto del Trapiche

Mi señora no me quiere
Mi amo no me puede vé;
Mi señora, la chiquita,
Dice que me ha de vendé
Por un plátano maduro
y una totumita é mié.

-Mi señora, la chiquita,
No me venda sumecé (bis)
Fracica!

- Señor

- Tu amo te quiere vendé!

- Por qué? Po qué?

- Poque no sabe molé.

- Man que nunca sepa
Yo aprenderé,
Y si no aprendiere
Vendame uté.

Molé, mole!
Molé, trapiche, molé!
Mole la caña pasada,
Moléla a la medianoche,
Molela a la madrugada.

The Sugar Mill Song

My lady does not love me
My lord hates me;
My little lady says,
she is going to sell me
for the price of a ripe banana
and a cup of honey.

-My little lady,
Don't sell me, gentlewoman (bis)
Francica!

-Sir

-Your owner wants to sell you!

-Why? Why?

-Because you do not know how to grind

-Although I knew nothing
I will learn,
if I don't
you can sell me.

Grind, grind!
Grind, sugar mill, grind!
Grind at midnight,
Grind at dawn.

¹⁴ Ibid., 467.

The song ¹⁵ refers to the relationship between a black slave and her owners. While the black woman knows hate from her owners, she prefers to learn what she is expected to learn than to be sold for a very low price to another owner: Vergara's attribution of this poem to black authors was profoundly contested in a polemic by literary historian, J. M. Restrepo which shows the linkage between literary power and the representation of identities (ethnic and gender). Latter on, Restrepo alleged that it was impossible for blacks to produce poetry:

Unmixed blacks, hunted as animals by slave traffickers...could bring their dance and maybe their own tunes; but only when they learned Castilian were they able to sing what they heard, that is, the songs of the learned tongue. The *Canto del Trapiche*, attributed by Vergara as something peculiar to blacks, and whose song we can still hear in Antioquia, has nothing proper of Cam's sons, because of their ignorance, and given the difficulty of passing from their own native dialects to the Castilian voices, soft and docile, pronounced by their owners, which was spoiled with cruelty, [the Castilian language] is even spoiled by cultivated blacks, despite the fact of living for several generations and during long periods of time among white and civilized people....Today democracy, political equality and primary school have done miracles [with blacks]. But before, what kind of songs, tunes nor poetry, could ever be chanted by those wretched, oppressed by work and maintained under the foreman's whip submerged in the dark silence of their slave's prison?¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., 470 - 471. In the nineteenth century the use of *trapiches* (sugar mills) were very common. Men and women, generally blacks, used to sing sad songs while doing their labour, as in the following description by Medardo Rivas: "The *Trapiche* is a primitive machine invented to obtain the juice of the sugar cane. The wheel in the middle has a stick, which is continuously pulled by two mules, chased by a filthy young boy half-nude and dirty...This job is carried out by men whose cruelty is an indictment against the established Republican and democratic government, against the country's religion, whose civilizing mission has been abandoned, and against any feeling of philanthropy which is supposed to reign in our society; many women, who have lost the charm proper to their gender, and live in the most humiliating situation, held by the physical necessity to earn pay, work there...Sitting each side of the *trapiche*, two women crush the sugar cane in the middle of the two wheels; and they sing something sad, monotonous and gloom producing sadness in the heart." Medardo Rivas, *Los Trabajadores de Tierra Caliente*, (Bogotá: Imprenta y Librería de M. Rivas, 1899), 43 - 44.

¹⁶ José M. Restrepo (1911), "De la Poesía Popular en Colombia," reprinted in *El Cancionero de Antioquia*, (Barcelona, Editorial Lux, 1929), 50 - 51.

The search for differences rather than the discovery of simultaneity is also present in the numerous literary and scientific projects. This was clearly the case in the most important scientific and literary mission of the nineteenth century, *La Comision Corográfica* (1850).

Appointed by Liberal President López,¹⁷ the commission intended that:

the description of provinces and regions will be a detailed explanation of everything concerning the physical and political geography, with minute relation of their borders, contours, extension, local advantages, valleys, rivers, etc, and including as precise as is possible information about natural and manufactured production of each locality, population, military statistics; commerce, live stock, valuable vegetation, unused land and land quality; undomesticated animals, mines, weather, seasons and all those particulars which deserve mention. [emphasis added]

The members of the commission were geographer and colonel Agustín Codazzi, writer Manuel Ancizar, biologist José Jerónimo Triana, and artists Carmelo Fernández, Enrique Price and Manuel María Paz. The watercolors produced during the journey of the scientific missions had as a recurrent theme the description of racial and regional differences. As appears in figures 8 and 9, the concept of simultaneity or the sense of shared identity, suited to the conception of a nation, is largely absent. As Joanne Rappaport observes, the prevalent idea in the watercolours is that of distance in space and time:

Mestizos, white, mulattos, and blacks (the few Indians are displayed separately) stare into space, never at one another: they are illustrative types, not characters; they inhabit tableaux, not narratives...In watercolors...there was no pre-established canon into which the ethnic variety of America could be inserted...

¹⁷ Quoted in Gonzalo Hernández de Alba, "Introducción," *En Busca de un País: La Comisión Corográfica*, (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1984), 8 - 9.

Notwithstanding this significant difference between the narrative genre of fiction and the illustrative genre of travel painting, nineteenth-century authors and artists employed similar ethnic stereotypes in their depiction of subaltern ethnic groups. In both genres, for example, Indians are romanticized, pushed back in time to the pre-columbian era or transported in space to the distant and inaccessible jungle; neither in fiction nor in art are they situated in the same time or place as the national society...living Indians are only depicted in the distant tropical lowlands or in close association with aspects of the landscape, as though they belonged to the topography and not to the national society.¹⁸

Geographical descriptions of the country were also characterized by this lack of spatial and temporal 'simultaneity'. Indians, *zambos* or blacks belonged nowhere, or simply were pushed back to the past. Samper¹⁹ for example, recognized the following ethnic types which he ascribed to topographical regions: Creole from Bogotá; *mestizo* from Antioquia; Indian from Pasto; Indian Chibcha; *mulato* from valleys and coasts; the Llanero; the *zambo* from the big rivers. It is noticeable that in Samper's description, as in the watercolours, only whites and mestizos belong to a region (Antioquia, Bogotá, Pasto) while *zambos* and mulattos form part of the landscape (valleys, coast and rivers). No geographical space is attached to them.

Doris Sommer, following Anderson's postulate of a continuity between nation and print communities, illustrates the connections between private and political passions as

¹⁸ Joanne Rappaport, "Fictive Foundations: National Romances and Subaltern Ethnicity in Latin America", *History Workshop Journal*, 34, (1992), 126.

¹⁹ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones i las Condición Social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 78.

projected in the Latin American novel of the nineteenth century.²⁰ Sommer shows how there is a translatability between nineteenth century romances and republican desires: the lovers desire the kind of state that would unite them. Eros and politics fuel one another "Eros and Polis are the effects of each other's performance."²¹ Sommer points as an exception among Latin American romances in regard to nation-building, the Colombian novel *Maria* (1867) by Jorge Isaacs. *Maria*, Latin America's most popular nineteenth century novel, narrates the frustrated history of two lovers, Efraim and María. The scenario is a Cauca plantation, Isaacs's place of birth. The author's father was a Jamaican-English Jew and his mother the daughter of a Catalan officer. The contrast with other Latin American novelists is clear: while the latter project the future, *María* is the only novel written backwards. *María* neither projects the future nor finds any obstacle that it might hope to overcome.²² In Sommer's interpretation, Isaac seems to be saying that no myth of racial amalgamation is possible between the Colombian aristocracy and its recently freed slaves.²³

²⁰ Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fiction. The National Romances of Latin America*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

²² *Ibid.*, 172.

²³ *Ibid.*, 202.

7.2.2 The body, capitalism and nation-ness

This section shows the tensions resulting from the presence of ethnic and regional differences, capitalist development and the impossibility of imagining the nation. These tensions will be illustrated using Tomás Carrasquilla's novel *Frutos de mi Tierra*.²⁴ Like Isaacs' *Maria*, Carrasquilla's novel is a frustrated romance, evoking the impossibility of a national project. The original title of the novel *Jamones y Solomos* (Hams and Sirloins) insinuates the importance of the body as a central point of reference for the construction of differences. In Carrasquilla's novel not only does the thematic of bodily differences structure the novel, but bodies are the main actors. Ham is an allegory for repulsiveness associated with the symbolism of the pig. The brother and sister, Agustín and Filomena Alzate, embody the ham. The siblings also represent the spirit of capitalist accumulation.

Agustín and Filomena owned a store and a pawnshop and are depicted as having a special capacity for business: "The two siblings complement each other to form, in admirable unity of mercantile genius. Oddly enough, her mercantile nature represents the synthesis, and her brother, the analysis."²⁵ They made their fortune during the 1860 war. Once the war ended and thanks to free trade they replaced local products with "wine, imported

²⁴ Tomás Carrasquilla (1896), *Frutos de mi Tierra*, (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1972).

²⁵ Ibid., 23.

food, clothes and whatever God and industry produced. The store was the cosmos."²⁶ As their fortune increased they spent money on themselves. Agustín is depicted by the story teller as self-centred and individualist: "Imagine a human being enjoying the hedonism of the self...imagine an individual without relations of dependence, looking at the world as formed of toy figures; imagine a blow of individualism which continuously praises Agustín Alzate."²⁷ Filomena is also depicted as willing to accumulate money, but of a more moderate character.

Brother and sister also incarnate the fate of those who, thanks to the accumulation of a small fortune, move to a rich neighbourhood in the city of Medellín. Their experience with the people surrounding them is not mediated by the amount of money they have, but by physical differences. Agustín and Filomena felt all the time haunted by their sense of this physical difference:

Dressed in red, adorned with gold and make-up, the pawnbroker stands at her door. María, a child from the neighbourhood, passed by chewing candies which filled her mouth. Suddenly, she looked at Filomena, and distracted by her necklace and earrings, the girl stared at her. The old beauty looked at the girl's cheeks and thought that María was making fun of her and jumped on her.

Vestida de bermejo, hecha una ascua de oro y colorete, se estaba una vez a la puerta la gentil prendera. María, la menorcita de las Palmas, pasaba por la calle, paladeando un corozo grande, que, al chupar, le inflaba los carrillos. De pronto e inconscientemente alzó a mirar a Filomena, y, a la vista de aquella guacamayona picando uvas corales, con que la señora prendía el cuello; a la vista de esas *uchubas* que le colgaban de las orejas, la muchacha se encantó y se quedó

²⁶ Ibid., 29.

²⁷ Ibid., 48.

fija en aquello. La quintañona beldad observó, a su vez, las papujadas mejillas de la niña; y creyendo que la remedaba y la hacía burla en su propia cara, se abalanzó sobre ella.²⁸

Agustín's sense of difference is even stronger than his sister's, to the point of ending in solitary confinement on the family's farm to avoid what he interpreted as mockery by their neighbours.

There is also in the novel a sense of confusion which results from a sense of loss of the body's place. The main characters, Agustín and Filomena, are 'white' but according to the main thematic their 'whiteness' differs from that of the upper class neighbourhood they have invaded. On certain occasions, the author parallels the Alzate's to blacks using the figure of the pig, as in the following passage:

Agustin had on his farm, not far from his house, a hut where a pig gave birth to seven noisy piglets. As this situation made Agustín uncomfortable, he decided that his neighbour should go with his noise elsewhere. The owner of the pig rejected Agustín's request, [although] the sick Agustín persisted; they fought with words...but ended in a altercation worse than pigs.

Tenía éste en el extremo de su lote, no lejos de la casa que habitaba Agustín y cerca a la cancilla enantes mencionada, un rancho en que la puerca amamantaba siete cochinitos, los cuales prendían un berrinche de todo el día. Como esto incomodara a Agustín, determinó que el vecino se fuera con la musica a otra parte. No quiso éste; insistió el enfermo; se trabaron de palabra...; acabaron por ponerse peores que la puerca.²⁹

²⁸ Ibid., 53.

²⁹ Ibid., 284 - 285.

The semblance of Agustín and the pig is not only reflected in the allegory of the pig's seven offspring (earlier the reader has been told that Agustín's mother had seven children) but also in their behaviour suitable for pigs. In the following passage Agustín's black maid criticizes Agustín for behaving black: "A white like yourself...mixed with these kind of people! No, *mi amo*: blacks are blacks and whites are white; blacks in the kitchen, whites in the dining room..."³⁰ Thus, the protagonists confuse the spatial, physical and class ordering of both monetary status and race.

Carrasquilla uses the allegory of sirloin, an expensive meat, to refer to the upper class Escandón family. Don Pacho Escandón, the father, had a prestigious social and financial position obtained in commercial activities. Pacho's social position was obtained thanks to his early marriage to Bárbara Campero de la Calle, a name that had a high value as it kept the scent of Castilla."³¹

The novel tells the story of two parallel romances: one between Pepa Escandón, Pacho's young daughter, and Martín Gala, a university student from Popayán, Cauca's capital, where his widowed mother, owned an *hacienda*. Martín Gala, as his last name signalled,³² displayed wealth and charm. Impressed by Lord Byron's biography, Gala's desire was to become a poet. The other romance takes place between the old Filomena

³⁰ Ibid., 285.

³¹ Carrasquilla is referring to the last name 'de la Calle' whose use of 'de la' was associated with Spaniard ancestors. Ibid., 229.

³² *Gala* in Spanish means a full-dress. It also means ostentation "*hacer gala*" show off.

Alzate and her nephew César Pinto, a poor young *cachaco* who came from Bogotá to work as her employee. The two couples are characterized by their dress habits, as a symbol of their personalities. Cesar's last name 'Pinto' is an analogy to 'appearance': "His profits, as soon as they were earned, were spent on fashion, becoming in his dress style a regular *cachaquito* (dandy)." His ambition is for wealth but "without the burden of work, nor the vulgarity of the economy."³³ Antioquia became the ideal solution:

His parents referred to Antioquia as the land of gold; in Bogotá there were several rich Antioqueños, uncultivated people who brought money...In the capital he had an uncle and aunt very rich but miserly...maybe...in Antioquia fortune waited for him.

Sus padres hablaban de Antioquia como la tierra del oro; en Bogotá habían muchos ricachones de Antioquia; esos patanes que de Antioquia venían traían mucha...; en la capital de Antioquia tenía él unos tíos, muy tacaños, por cierto, pero podridos en plata...y pudiera ser...que en Antioquia le aguardaba la fortuna.³⁴

The two romances have a different mediation. That of Filomena and Cesar is mediated by monetary interest, while the relation between Pepa and Martin is experienced through poetry.

The regional origin of the main characters (Antioquia, Cauca and Bogotá), their class composition (merchants, *hacendado* and clerks) and their gender, set the stage perfectly for what Sommer names 'an erotics of politics'. The simultaneous presence of the four characters in the same locale, in the same streets, set also the stage for what Anderson

³³ Ibid., 189.

³⁴ Ibid., 190.

names 'printing communities'. It is easy to imagine that the author had the appropriate plot to project a national consolidation through the character's successful encounter. But, as in Isaacs's *María*, the process of nation building is not present. First, there is no encounter of the two love stories. The main characters never meet nor speak to each other. There is spatial simultaneity: the two couples live in the same locale, walk through the same streets, even share some friends. Nonetheless the concept of ontological simultaneity, as in the artists of the *Comision Corográfica*, is absent. Second, the two love stories resemble the coexistence of the two regimes of representation: one, as in capitalism, mediated by interest; the other, mediated by enlightenment and civilization. The author not only rejects the possibility of a synthesis among them but also seems to suggest that the latter (civilization) has a primacy over the former (interest). Pepa Escandón successfully wins the love of Cauca's Martín Gala. Filomena marries César, using his desire for money but the union is not consummated. Soon after the marriage, César steals Filomena's fortune causing her sudden death.

The story of success in Pepa's marriage and failure in Filomena's evokes distrust of monetary exchange as a means to build a future, in the same way than Isaac's *Maria* evokes distrust of miscegenation.

7.3 The formation of the state

The state, like the nation, is grounded in representation. The materiality of the state coincides with the constitution of individuals over whom the state is to exercise power. A repressive state is called for where individuals are guided by unruly passions, while a civilizing state is evoked where individuals' passions need to be harnessed. Or it can also happen that individuals' passions, as was the case in *laissez-faire* capitalism, acquire a positive connotation so that it is they who are called upon to control the state.³⁵

In nineteenth century Colombia, the formation of the state was inextricably linked with the civilized/barbarian identities attributed to individuals. The state, it was argued, differed from its European counterpart, where the state mirrored the character of its citizens. As J. M. Samper explains:

Northern races have the spirit and tradition of individualism, freedom and personal initiative. In them the state is a consequence, not a cause - a guarantee of rights, not the source of rights - an aggregation of force, not the only force. That explains the habit of rationality, creativity and self development. On the contrary, our Latin races, have passion instead of rationality, improvisation instead of cold reflectivity, collective and authoritarian action instead of individual action, a collective sense of rights overwhelming everything, instead of the collective rights within each one.³⁶

³⁵ This argument is developed in Albert Hirschman. *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism Before its Triumph*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

³⁶ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas y la Condición Social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 33 - 34.

The political question was linked to racial diversity to the point that J. M. Samper argued that the "political, like humanity, has a **physiology**, and the evolution of politics follows the same rigid principles as does physical nature."³⁷ Debates about the nature of the state, citizenship, democracy and the constitution were embedded in the problematic of the racial diversity and the barbarian character of the new Republic.

The political system appears as another layer traced on top of nature's hierarchical system. Which, asked Samper, "is the political, economic and social system best tailored to this astonishing coexistence of races, castes and diversity? Certainly, it is the **democratic** republic, the one of complete individual freedom, complete equality, and popular sovereignty. Only this [democratic] regime can fit this diversity, respect all the manifestations of progress, propel change, guarantee all rights and maintain the fraternal unity, without doing violence to any one."³⁸

Since its emergence, the democratic space was embedded in the world of racial, hierarchical differences. As expressed by Samper, "Democracy is the natural government of mestizo society,"³⁹ one in which not all appear as equals but in a stratified system of 'natural' superiority/inferiority categorizations. It is one in "which each social group obeys the laws of its own physiology and geography, develops according to its own point

³⁷ Ibid., 77.

³⁸ Ibid., 100 - 101.

³⁹ Ibid., 77.

of departure and participates in the work of Colombian civilization according to its own aptitude."⁴⁰ Political space is provided with a physiological connotation in which racial inequality appears as natural as the geographical landscape.

Government should be in the hands of those having enlightenment and property. Florentino Gonzalez called this form of government a *democracia ilustrada* (an enlightened democracy)

We want an enlightened democracy, a democracy where intelligence and property guide the people's destiny; we do not want a barbarian democracy where the proletariat and the ignorant extinguish the seeds of happiness and immerse society in chaos and disorder.⁴¹

An important disagreement between the Liberal and Conservatives was the concept of citizenship. This question reflected the differences between the two parties regarding the conception of the individual. Liberals like Samper argued that voting rights should be restricted to men who knew how to write and read and with property. In a debate on the topic with Conservatives ⁴² Samper classified the population into three ethnic groups. According to him, blacks did not have any notion of law and Indians are:

⁴⁰ Ibid., 102.

⁴¹ This concept formed part of Gonzalez' proposal for what he named the 'moderate liberal party'. He ran in the presidential elections of 1848 as the representative of this party. The platform appears in Jaime Duarte French, *Florentino Gonzalez. Razón y Sinrazón de una Lucha Política*, (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1982), 387.

⁴² The debate appears in Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, *Rafael Nuñez*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Librería Siglo XX, 1946), 282. Although this debate happened after Samper's conversion to the Conservative party, it illustrates how this change did not affect his early views on the racial question.

unable to be civilized do not know how to read the catechism, do not have consciousness of their rights, and even lack the strongest instinct in all men, curiosity about God.... They do not have, and are unable to have, the curiosity to know the institutions and interests of the country, nor their own rights and political obligations.... To concede the right to vote to those individuals of the second and third categories (blacks and Indians) who are the majority in Colombia, would be to condemn us to never reach a good government, serious and respectable, and to live in a permanent *zambra*.

Conservative Caro, on the contrary, favoured an 'universal' suffrage which included all men regardless of literacy or property:

Enlightenment or property, which belong to the scientific and literary field, and to the economic one, are not moral principles nor designation of citizenship; their value is subordinated to a superior criteria which is the citizen's correct judgement and independence to vote ⁴³.

Caro's argument displays clearly the linkage between identity, citizenship and the conception of the state. The base for his defense of universal suffrage is the belief that differences between men are moral rather than intellectual. It also illustrates the primacy that morality has over the economic, and its effects on the conception of the state: "To restrict the right to vote only to individuals with property because they pay taxes to the state, is to conceive the state as a stockholders' business and not a moral entity."⁴⁴ The mission of the state was grounded in morality and the need to restrict individuals' passions

"[e]ven if it is true that interests led to alliances and agreements, those interests are guided by passions, tending towards illicit ends...If all interests were in harmony,

⁴³ Miguel Antonio Caro, *Estudios Constitucionales y Jurídicos*, (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana), 242 - 244.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 244.

all human behaviour would be legitimate, and lawyers will only have to restrict these rights. Public power, as old as society, is there to regulate the social fabric and to prevent the tyranny of the strong over the weak."⁴⁵

Liberals differed from their Conservative opponents regarding the project of the state. Liberal Samper advocated not a strong state but the bettering of individuals: "If the domination of an already civilized nation needs collective force, the foundation of a civilized society where barbarity was before needs the power of creation coming from free and spontaneous individual effort."⁴⁶ The organization of the state proposed by Liberals had a federal character:

The physical environment, the diversity of races, the backwardness of the people, and the manner in which the Revolution arose spontaneously in the cities, called for institutions which would favour the simultaneous development of all villages...Only a federation could satisfy the need to educate the people for Republican government.⁴⁷

Yet, Liberals like Samper, were aware of the limits of federalism for the civilizing mission:

But also [a federal] organization was inconvenient in moments of struggle. The most important thing was to obtain victory, to assure independence, to create a nation, to discipline the people for freedom, to create men of government. A federation was powerless to obtain those results given the presence of ignorant crowds, paralysed and isolated, just awakening to the light of freedom, in danger of being blinded by its light.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid, 253 - 254. Caro's statement also reinforces the view that in mid-nineteenth century Colombians were far away from *laissez faire* premise that "interests govern passions". See chapters 4 and 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 179.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The Conservative party opposed federalism and favoured a strong state. The Conservative platform of 1878 recognized the party's anti-federalist orientation: "Our party, while defending national unity, has not been federalist, it is not federalist by conviction and by character, and [our party] considers that the actual provincial federation is a true anarchy which would disintegrate the country...A necessary condition for national unity and the ending of anarchy is the centralization of Public Order."⁴⁹

The federal organization of the state and strengthening of the sovereign individual were accompanied by a force tending to privatize war, and to deprive the state of a monopoly of force. The elimination of the national army was fiercely debated during the mid-nineteenth century. Liberals favoured the elimination of the national army and the installation of a strong civil force. Florentino González, one of the most fervent defenders of this view, stated during the discussion of the Constitution of 1853:

One of the most powerful obstacles impeding the strengthening of republican institutions in South America is the habit of using the army inside the country as a means to secure allegiance to the country. Consequently, the people see power in the soldier and not in the law. The soldier believes that he is superior and more powerful than the law; the soldier commander thinks that he has the right to dispose of the political destiny of the nation; and the governor either lives in dependence on the military, or makes an ally of the military to accomplish his ends.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Programas del Partido 1849 - 1985, "Programa de 1878," in *El Pensamiento del Conservatismo Colombiano*, (Bogotá: Futuro Colombiano, 1986), 23.

⁵⁰ Florentino González (1853), quoted in Jaime Duarte French, *Florentino González: razón y sinrazón de una lucha política*, (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1982), 521.

Jose María Samper also saw in the army "the portrayal of violence given its organization, mode of operation and privileges"; he proposed an "armed democracy" where the "citizen would become a soldier."⁵¹ The Liberal constitutions reflected the ideal of an armed democracy: the Law of April 3rd 1854 granted all people "the right to trade all kinds of weapons and ammunition and the right to carry them and to learn their use."⁵² The Constitution of 1858 also prohibited the provinces from "impeding the commerce of arms and ammunition."⁵³ The army was effectively reduced by Liberal reforms.⁵⁴ The state did not hold a monopoly over force.

7.4 The Constitutional Battle

Constitutions, like nations and states, are not independent of the process of identity formation. As stated by Sheldon Wolin, "a constitution not only constitutes a structure of power and authority, it constitutes people in a certain way."⁵⁵ An analysis of the Colombian constitutions written in this period (1853, 1858, 1861 and 1863) reveals that

⁵¹ José M. Samper, *Ensayo sobre las Revoluciones Políticas i la Condición Social de las Repúblicas Colombianas*, 235.

⁵² Quoted in Gerardo Molina, *Las Ideas Liberales en Colombia 1849 - 1914*, (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1970), 45.

⁵³ Felipe Perez, *Anales de la Revolucion escritos según sus propios documentos*, (Bogotá: Imprenta del Estado de Cundinamarca, 1862), 17.

⁵⁴ In 1842 the national army had 3,000 men; in 1854, the size was reduced to 800; by 1858 only 511 soldiers formed the national army. William P. McGreevy, *Historia Económica de Colombia 1845 - 1930*, (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1975), 88.

⁵⁵ Sheldon S. Wolin, *The Presence of the Past. Essays on the State and the Constitution*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 9.

people were constituted as isolated and differentiated individuals without a centre of authority, a state. The war of 1861 against the central government gave witness to the tensions aroused by the Constitution of 1858. A conflict arose between the provinces, which claimed their right to sovereignty, and the federal state claiming control over the territory. The principle of **legitimacy** advocated by the central government was opposed to the principle of **sovereignty** invoked by the provinces. The newspaper *El Comercio*, which advocated the cause of the provinces, sought to equate legitimacy with sovereignty against the central government. An article entitled "The Legitimacy Fallacy" argued as follows:

Legitimacy is synonymous with sovereignty; only those with the right to sovereignty can claim legitimacy. As scientific principles have shown that only the people is sovereign, to defend the cause of the people is to protect legitimacy; to defend the government against the people, is to be the enemy of legitimacy.⁵⁶

In this vision, the image of the president was personalized and deprived of any signification of national unity. He was depicted as a man just wearing a symbol, the presidential band, which was equated to a person with a mask. "The members of the federation are everything because there is life and strength in them; the head is nothing, only the symbol of national unity."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ The content of the article appear in Felipe Perez, *Anales de la Revolución, escritos según sus propio documentos*, 270.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

In the Constitution of 1863 the encompassing concept of the nation was also absent. This constitution followed a civil war where the governor of the province of Cauca deposed the President to preserve the sovereignty of the provinces.⁵⁸ The Constitution was issued in the name of the people and the provinces (*estados*) forming the nation named *Estados Unidos de Colombia*.⁵⁹ The provinces were given responsibility for defense against all violence damaging the sovereignty of the union or the provinces (art. 2o.). The Constitution also supported the sovereignty of the individual, proclaiming, among other things: abolition of the death penalty (art. 1o), incarceration longer than 10 years was abolished (art. 2), individual freedom whose only limit is other's freedom (art 3o.), absolute freedom of the press (art 6o.), equality (art. 10), freedom to carry and to trade arms (art. 15); religious freedom (art. 16). As important as the individual was provincial sovereignty: The central government could only act in those circumstances delegated by the provinces. Furthermore, the Constitution did not allow the central government's intervention when there was civil war in a province, or when there were acts against the Constitution as in the case of rebellion against the provincial authority.

In the Constitution of 1863 the structure of the state and individual sovereignty were constituted in a contradictory way. At the centre of this contradiction was the inability to supersede the violence emerging from isolated individuals. Feelings of anarchy and

⁵⁸ Jorge O. Melo, "Del federalismo a la Constitución de 1886," *Nueva Historia de Colombia*, Vol 1, Cap.1, (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 1989), 17.

⁵⁹ Justo Arosemena, ed., *Constitución de los Estados Unidos de Colombia*, (Havre: Imprenta A. Lemale Aine, 1870). Colombia's name before the Constitution of 1863 was Nueva Granada.

fragmentation prevailed over the urge for government and nationhood. In his book of memoirs, Liberal Quijano observed that as an effect of the Constitution "wars were decentralized".⁶⁰ Liberal Miguel Samper concluded that the Constitution of 1863 "organized the anarchy".⁶¹ Even Justo Arosemena, one of the signatories of the Constitution, thought that "the Constitution organized the central power as a simple host in the constitutional house".⁶² The words of Miguel Samper, a key legislator, are the best testimony of how close were constitutions and violence in his mind. Anibal Galindo condemned the Constitution of 1863 as the main cause of the country's misfortunes. In his view the main difficulty ensued from the desire to make uncivilized individuals sovereign:

As the fundamental law of political organization, the Constitution could not be more erroneous in the conception of sovereignty: the citizen was everything, the absolute guarantee for the exercise of his individual freedom was granted to him. The society was nothing, the authority, that is, the public power representing all of us, in charge of making effective the individual guarantees, lacked any power to conserve order and administer justice...

In a country where civilization had just began, having a tiny layer of enlightenment and culture, as fragile as an egg shell, to authorize the individual and the society in the exercise of ten sovereign provinces, ten kinds of public order, ten civil and penal codes, the codes of the nation and those of nine provinces, was a crime against civilization.⁶³

⁶⁰ This was Quijano's expression after President Murillo recognized the governments of Bolívar, Magdalena, Panamá and Antioquia, after a revolt deposed the elected mandataries. José María Quijano Wallis, *Memorias autobiográficas, histórico-políticas y de carácter social*, (Roma: Grottaferrata, 1919). Quoted in Alvaro Tirado Mejía, *Aspectos Sociales de la guerras civiles en Colombia*, (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1976), 150.

⁶¹ Miguel Samper (1867), "Libertad y Orden," in *Escrito Político-Económico*.

⁶² Justo Arosemena, quoted in Miguel Samper, *Escritos Político- Económico*, vol II, 351.

⁶³ Anibal Galindo, "La Constitución Federal de 1863 (Análisis crítico)", reprinted in *Los Radicales del siglo XIX. Escritos Políticos*, ed. Gonzalo España (Bogotá: El Ancora Editores, 1984), 167.

The Liberal dream of a society formed of sovereign individuals resembled what Gramsci denominated the Sorelian myth in that the prevalent element is 'differentiation'. Collective myths, such as the nation and the state, work by differentiation and unification. They are both constructive and destructive. The Liberal concept of 'individual sovereign' lacked a unifying element, as does the concept of 'interest'. Only an 'anarchical' character of society was put into place in the Liberal proposal. At the same time, the 'individual sovereign' proposal undermined the basis for intervention by those who govern on behalf of individuals. Here lie the roots of what has been named the contradictory encounter between the 'will to civilization' and the nation-state.

7.5 The judiciary

It has been already illustrated ⁶⁴ that law served as a foundational myth in the emergent Republic. Against the view that Christian morality or a strong army were the instruments of civilization, Liberals offered the rule of law. Law was proclaimed as the propeller of the principle of rationality and as the revolutionary means to install civilization.

The deification of law, however, did not prove any more capable of organizing the collective will or of superseding violence. On the contrary, law would be the object of

⁶⁴ Chapter 4.

condemnation during the crisis of the regime of representation. Law became solely an instrument of domination.

The province of Cundinamarca witnessed the extreme situation in which those holding power in the name of law exercised its domination. The provincial political machinery was consolidated by Ramon Gómez, a professor of law nicknamed *El Sapo* ("the toad"). The lawyers following him were denominated *sapistas*. Their power is summarized by Helen Delpar as follows:

The *sapista* machine originated in 1861 when the results of a state election held while the Liberal revolution was still in progress, gave Gómez and his followers a majority in a constituent assembly that met in August 1862. They proceeded to draft a state constitution that enabled them to remain dominant by concentrating power in the legislature and judiciary. The constitution provided for the election by the legislature of the *procurador*, or attorney general, and of judges of the superior court of the state. The court in turn named circuit judges, notaries, and registrars of public documents; the *procurador* appointed district attorneys (*fiscales*); and the circuit judges appointed lower court magistrates. The constitution also provided that the *juntas escrutadoras*, or examining committees, which inspected election returns, being composed of circuit judges, notaries, registrars, and district attorneys. By means of this system, therefore, the men who determined the membership of the state assembly were themselves creatures of that body.⁶⁵

Miguel Samper's analysis of the poverty of Bogotá attributed blame to the power of law in the previous years: "law and new political habits have augmented the number of

⁶⁵ Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863 - 1899*, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981), 89.

vergonzantes.⁶⁶ The increased power conferred by the exercise of law is denounced as the oppression of a new class named *rábulas* (pettifoggers) who possessed the art of writing legal codes:

Very soon a new class coalesced around the scrivener (*escribanías*) and the courts of law, the tribunes, city mayor's office and even political officers. The pettifoggers were the lawyer's extension...Covered by these functions, *rabulas* exploited to their own advantage all the oppressive means which were deposited in their hands by the use of law: army recruitment, criminal processes, court sentences, communal rents, Indian reserves, all were permanent treasures for those preys upon the people.⁶⁷

Rábulas were also named *tinterillos* "ink-consumers", making reference to the power of writing in legal form. Eugenio Díaz' novel, *Manuela*, illustrates the problematic surrounding the struggle for civilization using either law or religion as the main instruments. Written in 1858, the same year the Constitution was proclaimed, the novel unfolds in a small town within the area of influence of Ambalema, the epitome of wealth during the tobacco boom. The author followed the *costumbrista* tradition, whose "scenes of traditions can not be invented, they are copied."⁶⁸ Like *María*, and *Frutos de mi Tierra*, it is the history of a frustrated romance between the heroine Manuela and Dámaso. The plot has been summarized as follows:

⁶⁶ *Vergonzantes*, according to Samper's description, were those poor who do not exhibit their poverty in the streets like 'mendigos' but hide their misery by isolate they and their children in empty rooms. Miguel Samper (1867) "La Miseria en Bogotá" in *Escritos Político-Económicos*, 8-9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Joaquín Ospina, *Diccionario Biográfico y Bibliográfico de Colombia*, (Bogotá: Editorial Aguila, 1939), 663.

Demóstenes is a *bogotano* intellectual who arrives in a small provincial town as representative of the more radical faction of the Liberals, or the *gólgotas*. He is characterized from the opening chapter as, above all else, a man of letters. He soon meets the unlettered Manuela, who is being pursued and persecuted by Tadeo, a *draconiano*, or moderate Liberal. The basic plot of *Manuela* revolves around Demóstenes' presence in this rural area of Cundinamarca and his observation of the Manuela-Tadeo-Dámaso affair...The novel ends with Manuela dying from the fire that Tadeo sets on the day of her marriage to Dámaso, which falls on July 20, the anniversary of Colombian independence.⁶⁹

The novel is about the desire for civilization. The desired object of civilization is represented by a poor black woman: Manuela. Right from the beginning, the main characters, Demóstenes and the priest, are presented as allied in the civilizing mission, although pursuing opposite means: law and religion.⁷⁰ Demóstenes, whose name means "the power of the people" (*Demos*= people; *sthenos*= strength), is a literati who embodied the will to civilization: the basis of his capital is not represented by his wealth but by his ownership of books: "books and clothes" are the only things in his suitcase. He read "The Mystery of Paris" and praised printing, "Oh Gutenberg! Even here has arrived your marvelous discovery;"⁷¹ "Oh, printing is science's channel and freedom's bastion."⁷² The habit of reading kept him away from what are the main events in the

⁶⁹ Raymond Leslie Williams, *The Colombian Novel, 1844 - 1987*, (Texas: Austin University of Texas Press, 1991). See also Raymond Williams, "Manuela: La primera novela de 'la violencia'," in *Violencia y Literatura en Colombia*, ed. Jonathan Tittler (Madrid: Editorial Origenes, 1989). Williams offers a different reading of the novel. For him the novel symbolizes the encounter and conflict between the written and the oral culture in Colombia. He sees Manuela as representing oral culture (preliterate) while the male characters are associated with the highly rational, writing culture.

⁷⁰ Eugenio Díaz, *Manuela*, 24 - 25. The complete argument between the priest and Demóstenes appears in chapter 4, section 4.2.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 23.

town, "Buried in his books, he did not pay attention to the movement in the streets."⁷³ Demóstenes' relation to Manuela is to be a protector and guardian: "She is under my protection and favour."⁷⁴ The Constitution and law, are his main instruments to gain Manuela's favour and to fight the one who he considered Manuela's main enemy: Tadeo.

Tadeo is the town's Liberal *tinterillo* ('ink-spiller') - one of those practitioners of law, mainly in rural localities, who had not attended university. Although ink-spillers do not derive their power from their enlightened nature, they do by their ability to know the law and to use it among illiterate people. Most of the writing in the nineteenth century refers to them as trouble-makers and producers of violence. In Díaz' description *tinterillos* are equated with ticks, blood-sucking animals, almost impossible to eliminate.⁷⁵ Manuel Ancízar refers to them as a plague whose presence occasioned conflict and division among the people. According to him, towns like Mogotes were destroyed by *tinterillos* in alliance with priests; the town of Zapatoca is depicted also as a victim of the *tinterillos*' plague.⁷⁶ Salvador Camacho Roldán called them "ignorant pettifoggers who defend unjust causes and complicate controversies."⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 170.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁶ Manuel Ancízar (1853), *Peregrinación de Alpha*, (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1942).

⁷⁷ Salvador Camacho Roldán, *Escritos Varios*, (Bogotá: Editorial Incunables, 1983), 505. Catherine LeGrand's study of land struggle held that *tinterillos* in most of the cases were allies of settlers. They informed illiterate settlers of their rights, drafted petitions on their behalf and occasionally furnished monetary support. They also played an important role in the dissemination of knowledge of land laws; on several occasions they also cheated the settlers. See Catherine LeGrand, *Frontier Expansion and Peasant*

Tadeo's attempt to control Manuela's life engenders violence and ends up causing the destruction of the desired object. Tadeo's power comes from the control he can exercise by his interpretation of the law. His power is represented in his ownership of the town's archives. When he came to the parish he was in charge of delivering the citations:

Then, he began writing documents; then he had the list of labourers and elections...; then he became director of the judges and in this job he gained money by confusing the neighbours with allegations and litigations; then he became director of the municipal *cabildo* and was in charge of all the things in the parish. Things did not stop there, he won everybody's dominion, either because they needed him to free them of their problems, or as an ally in their rogueries, or simply because they fear him; in the end he had everybody under his domain. And the worst thing is that he is the only one who understand the *Recopilación Granadina*. He understands elections, lawsuits, contributions...He intervenes in testaments, marriages, family fights, dances, everything. You must know, Don Demóstenes, that he wants to have the same control on men and on the young women. He wants that all of them, specially the most beautiful ones, be under his will

...y luégo comenzó a escribir documentos; y luégo a sacar las listas del trabajo personal y de las elecciones, ..., y luégo se hizo director de los jueces y en este oficio empezó a ganar más plata enredando a los vecinos con alegatos y pleitos; luégo se hizo director del cabildo y quedó mandando en todos los asuntos de la parroquia. Pero no paró en eso, sino que se los fue ganando a todos poco a poco, a unos porque lo necesitaban para que los sacase con bien de sus empeños, a otros para que les ayudase a hacer sus picardías, y otros se iban con él por el miedo; de modo que vino a lograr tenerlos a todos bajo de su dominio. Y lo peor es que es el único que entiende y registra la *Recopilación Granadina*. De modo que hoy el señor don Tadeo entiende en elecciones, cabildos, pleitos, contribuciones...Don Tadeo interviene en los testamentos, y en los casamientos, y en las peleas de la familias, y en los bailes, y en las fiestas y en todo. ... pero ha de saber el señor don Demóstenes que el mismo partido que tiene entre los hombres, quiere tenerlo entre las muchachas del pueblo, y su empeño es que todas ellas, mayormente las más bonitas estén sujetas a sus antojos...A las que lo aborrecen las persigue y las tiraniza para salirse con sus intentos.⁷⁸

Protest in Colombia, 1850 - 1936, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1947), specially chapter 4.

⁷⁸ Eugenio Díaz, *Manuela*, 153.

Don Tadeo's archive, is depicted as a "photograph of the parish, taken by daguerreotype. All political fractions are there, civilization is there, the march of the Republic is there". When the people took possession of the archive, Tadeo's power crumbled.

The novel's heroine and main character, Manuela, is the housekeeper of the house occupied by Demóstenes. Manuela is named by the people *la pacificadora* (the peacemaker) and she appears as the representative of her own political party, the Manuelista party. Manuela is both an object of desire and a metaphor to illustrate contradiction. Demóstenes, on the contrary, is an epitome for isolation, whose solitude came from being literati: "I only have here my books to establish a dialogue". When he wishes to communicate he is able to do so with the priest. Despite their ideological differences, they both have in common the civilizing mission. Not only words, but different conceptions of space and time are obstacles to communication among the different characters of the novel. This becomes clear in the following dialogue between literati Demóstenes (De) and the peasant, Dimas (Di):

- De: Don Dimas! It seems to me that you are late!
Di: Do not worry, each hurry brings its own slowness...
De: The problem is that the travellers will be too far.
Di: The one that runs does not go far away, if the one behind does not dismay.
- De: !Don Dimas! Me parece que se le hace un poco tarde.
Di: Espere un poquito su persona, que cada prisa trae su despacio...
De: Lo que tiene es que los viajeros se nos retiran.
Di: No va lejos el que corre, como el de atras no se canse.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Ibid., 241.

Manuela's role is to question the value of Demóstenes' enlightenment. She puts in evidence the contradiction between the words and the everyday practices, between theory and reality. Manuela made the following comment about the contradiction between being a Liberal and the way Demostenes used the hammock:

D: How are the hammock and freedom related?

M: Don't you know that hammocks are the epitome of centralism, located in the middle of the living room, as you are, impeding the free movement of people.

D: What a thought!, said Don Demóstenes, laughing at her simplicity.

M: You also forget about equality when you take possession of the hammock, here or in my cousin's house.

D: Equality?

M: Yes, sir, equality; we are annoyed in the floor while you are balancing, lying down in the hammock, that is not equality. And if a lady enters the room, I do not know how you deal with the situation.

D: Oh! I figure I would stand.

M: That does not go with the equality you are talking about; that means that you treat us (local housekeepers) with less respect, and you said we all are equal.

D: Ah! It seems to me we were talking about equality of rights.

M: Is there not another equality than equality of rights?

D: Yes, social equality, but there are exceptions...

M: One thing is to crow and another is to lay eggs. One thing is to talk about equality and another is to practice it.

D: ¿Y que pitos toca la libertad con la hamaca?

M: ¿Luego, no sabe usted que la hamaca es el puro centralismo, estando en la mitad de la sala como la suya, haciendo estorbo a los que pasan?

D: ¡Vaya una ocurrencia! dino don Demóstenes, mirando a Manuela y riendose de su sencillez.

M: Que usted ebcha a pasear la igualdad cuando se apodera de la hamaca en esta casa o en la de mi prima.

D: ¿La igualdad?

M: Sí, señor, la igualdad; porque todos los demás estamos fregados en los poyos o en los escaños, mientras usted se está meciendo en la visita, acostado muchas ocasiones, y ya usted ve que eso no se puede llamar igualdad. Y si entran las señoras a ese tiempo yo no sé como se entienda usted con ellas.

D: ¡Oh! pues entonces me levantaría.

- M:** Eso tampoco se conviene muy bien con la igualdad de que usted nos habla; pues querría decir que a nosotras se nos debe tratar poco más o menos, y usted nos ha dicho que todas somos iguales.
- D:** ¡Ah! pero era porque estábamos hablando de la igualdad de derechos, me parece.
- M:** ¿Entonces no hay más igualdad que esa igualdad de derechos que usted dice?
- D:** Pues sí hay: la igualdad social; pero tiene sus excepciones.
- M:** Entonces diga usted que una cosa es cacarear y la otra poner el huevo; una cosa es hablar de igualdad y la otra sujetarse a ella.⁸⁰

The novel's end, like Isaac's and Carrasquilla's, shows law's inability to unify the nation. Not only is Manuela and Dámaso's marriage frustrated but also Manuela and Demóstenes failed to consummate their union. When Demóstenes realizes that his presence in the town kept Manuela away from happiness, he decides to leave, doubting his hidden desire for Manuela. He "asked himself, without being able to respond, if his feeling for her were not profound love...".⁸¹ On his way out, the priest reminded Demóstenes how important it was that in the future he "does not legislate according to what [he] saw there [in the United States] but what exists here...there you have seen what civilization should be imitated...but here you have seen what vices must be corrected."⁸²

7.6 Wars and crisis of representation

Civil wars were the common mechanism to solve disagreements among Colombian party leaders. Five civil wars were fought during the will to civilization regime of

⁸⁰ Ibid., 86 - 87.

⁸¹ Ibid., 439.

⁸² Ibid., 435.

representation: 1851, 1854, 1860, 1876-1877, and multiple regional conflicts spread across the nation.⁸³ Rafael Nuñez, a fierce opponent of the Liberal reforms, summarized as follows the situation of conflict: "During our politically independent life, the exception has been the maintenance of public order, and civil war the general rule."⁸⁴ These wars were fought by a party or faction to contest what they considered to be an infringement of the spirit of constitutional reform. In these wars armies were financed by the *hacendados*, and soldiers were recruited from among peasants working the *hacienda* and manumitted slaves (*libertos*).

The use of force, war of movement, was the predominant way to solve conflicts. This section argues that the process of differentiation on which identities were constructed did not allow a consensus, war of movement, to emerge. In nineteenth century Colombia, political parties, regional identification and racial distinction became relations of antagonism.

Chapter 2 made the argument that in the construction of identities in the form A/not-A, one identity is pure positivity, the other negativity. As a consequence any attempt on the part of the not-A identity is perceived as a threat to the A side of the dichotomy. Because one identity presupposes the other's disappearance, the relations between them are

⁸³ Alvaro Tirado, *Aspectos Sociales de las Guerras Civiles en Colombia*, Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, has collected a rich documentation regarding the main characteristics of civil wars during the civil wars of the nineteenth century.

⁸⁴ Rafael Nuñez, *La Reforma Política en Colombia*, (Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1945), 45.

antagonistic. In that sense Girard is right when he refers to manifested violence as a situation of double identities. The sense of not-A is lost and one side becomes the double of the other. In contrast, the emergence of consent supposes a mobility of frontiers. Distinctions take the form A/B, and a third encompassing term C can establish communication between A and B. The war is a war of position.

The predominant political, economic, and racial identities took a A/non-A form, thus precluding the resolution of violence. The formation of the category of 'vagrant' illustrates well the relationship between political, economic and racial identities as well as their contradictions. According to the Law of 1836, vagrants were "all those without job or rent, or, those with rent who have gambling or prostitution as their only job."⁸⁵ Only those with both job and rent enjoy the positivity of being; vagrants carried the negative pole, and the term could be applied to unemployed, women, blacks, etc.⁸⁶ Army recruitment of vagrants served to solve the problem presented by the need to discipline and to civilize the manumitted. The boundary separating vagrants from the manumitted was so difficult to trace, that Liberals and Conservatives frequently were caught in debates about race and freedom. According to Liberals, vagrancy laws made by the Conservatives went against security and freedom. Against this charge,

⁸⁵ Ley de Recopilación Granadina. Quoted in José Eusebio Caro, "La Polémica de los Rojos," en *Escritos Histórico-Políticos de José Eusebio Caro*, ed. Simón Aljure Chalela (Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1981), 125.

⁸⁶ This quality of not-A is named the "inflation of the negative". It occurs when there is lack of internal boundaries in not-A side of the dichotomy: the concept of 'vagrant' can be extended to all individuals without a job. See Nancy Jay, "Gender and Dichotomy," *Feminist Studies*, 7,1 (Spring, 1981), 44-45.

Conservative José Eusebio Caro asserted "legislation does not assign a manumitted person to the army only for the reason of being manumitted, but to those manumitted that degenerate into vagabonds; that is, the ones destined to the army are the vagrants as vagrants, not the manumitted as manumitted."⁸⁷ To clarify further the distinction, Caro added that the "difficulty on the part of those which can not prove that they have rent or occupation, is by itself, an indication of vagabondage."⁸⁸ The vagrancy laws defended by the Conservatives were eliminated in 1851 by the Liberal government. In the bill repealing these laws, Liberals proclaimed that "vagrancy is not subject to the action of laws or the persecution of the magistrates and authorities of the republic."⁸⁹

Partisan division took an antagonistic form. The divide between Liberals and Conservatives was posed as a moral divide: "morality is the only one and true query. This is the issue that explains the origin of the Conservative and Liberal party. It could not be other."⁹⁰ Morality became an internal attribute of only one party, Conservatives: "[morality] belongs to the character."⁹¹ Since, at least for the Conservatives, morality

⁸⁷ José Eusebio Caro, "La Polémica de los Rojos," en *Escritos Histórico-Políticos de José Eusebio Caro*, 124. (emphasis added).

⁸⁸ Ibid. 125.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical. Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 73.

⁹⁰ José Eusebio Caro, "La libertad y el partido Conservador," in *Escritos Histórico-Políticos de José Eusebio Caro*, 59.

⁹¹ Ibid., 59.

was seen to be absolute and unsharable, the struggle between Liberals and Conservatives was a struggle which presupposed the other's disappearance:

The last struggle over this question [morality] will not come to an end until the Conservative party had annihilated completely and absolutely the Liberal party, that is, until the lack of credibility would be so great, that the party lost its capacity to appear...The Liberal party must disappear like crime and licentiousness.⁹²

Although Caro did not mean the physical annihilation of the party, the two forces were seen as antagonistic: the triumph of one could not happen without the other's disappearance. During civil wars, political antagonisms were joined with racial/regional antagonisms. None of these antagonisms admitted a third encompassing term, nor a mobility of the frontiers separating them. It was an either/or contest where one's victory would be the other's disappearance: it was either regional or central power, either blacks or whites, either Liberals or Conservatives. As has been stated by Tirado Mejía with respect to the nineteenth century civil wars: "[t]he regional problem was one of the most important expressions of the civil wars...This regional struggle disguised other aspects, i.e. racial."⁹³ However, the racial factor was not as disguised as asserted by Tirado Mejía. Rather, partisan antagonisms varied along racial/regional conjunctures, as the case of Cauca illustrates. In Cauca, party alignment had a clear racial connotation. The Cauca's elite were predominantly Conservative and white, while blacks and mulattoes tended to be enrolled in the Liberal party.⁹⁴ In the three main wars of the period (1851,

⁹² Ibid., 59.

⁹³ Alvaro Tirado Mejía, *Aspectos Sociales de las Guerras Civiles en Colombia*, 42.

⁹⁴ Helen Delpar, *Red Against Blue. The Liberal Party in Colombian Politics 1863 - 1899*, 23.

1861 and 1876) Cauca was a main battlefield and in these wars party/region/race and class mixed in a peculiar way.

The war of 1851 spread in the Cauca province when Conservatives revolted against the Liberal government. During this time blacks protested to protect the *ejidos*, municipal commons, against the landowners' appropriation. Cauca's governor explained the situation as a consequence of the unequal distribution of land and the exploitation of all who had African blood.⁹⁵ Conservatives, accusing the governor of being a main instigator of violence, rebelled against the Liberal government in 1851. This war gave Liberals a military victory and a partial ideological victory: slavery never reappeared.

In 1860, Cauca's Liberal Governor led a revolt against the Conservative president, Mariano Ospina Rodríguez. The Governor, white upper class Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera,⁹⁶ declared war in 1861 as a protest against the President's Law of Public Order, which Mosquera considered to be against the federal spirit of the Constitution of 1859. Although Mosquera, like president Ospina, belonged to the Colombian Creole elite, the black preponderance of the Liberal party was utilized by the elite to stir up fear of the Cauca rebels. Mosquera's army, predominantly black, inspired Ospina's statement:

⁹⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁹⁶ Mosquera belonged to one of the most prestigious families in the Cauca region. As his family he was affiliated with the Conservative party. He was President for the Conservative party in the period 1845 - 49. Later he converted to the Liberal party and became governor of Cauca.

Do you believe that ignorant blacks from Cauca, that these outlaws, dangerous men from the villages, that these men who formed the rebels' army are interested in philosophical questions about the form of government? No, this is a stupid belief. The motives of the masses surrounding the rebels' army are none other than your property and hatred for your race...the hate of the lazy indigent for the prosperous rich...the animosity of the criminal towards justice.⁹⁷

The 1861 war gave a military and ideological victory to the Liberal party. Mosquera deposed president Ospina, became Colombia's president and was named 'supreme director of war'. Once in power, Liberals wrote the most federal constitution, the 1863 Constitution.

The events during 1875, when the country was preparing for the elections, and the war of 1876 illustrates well the contradictions within the will to civilization regime which ended in a situation of organic crises - crisis of representation - and the emergence of a new regime of representation. Organic crises, following Gramsci, are those in which the masses become detached from what they used to believe, and the rulers no longer lead but exercise only force. At such moments, old contradictions "appear" and relations which had taken on the aura of the "natural" lose their taken-for-granted character. Violence is manifested in the use of force. Crises are prone, as well, to the appearance of 'morbid symptoms', of manifestations of violence. In periods of crisis an ideological struggle takes place where the forces of opposition attempt to conserve and defend the existing structure and to overcome the contradictions revealed during the crisis.

⁹⁷ Mariano Ospina, "Alocución a los Granadinos". Quoted in Felipe Perez., *Anales de la Revolución, escritos según sus propios documentos*, 577.

The pillars of the will to civilization: the power accruing to literati from their influence over the capital, federalism, and education, began to crumble. In this section I just outline the main elements of the crisis resulting from the contradictions of the will to civilization without entering into an analysis of *La Regeneración* as a regime of representation.

The frontiers separating Liberals and Conservatives about the how of civilization became less rigid and a mobility was allowed among members of the two parties.⁹⁸ Liberals split into two factions: "oligarchs" and *Nuñistas*. *Nuñistas* were the followers of Rafael Nuñez, a Liberal from the Atlantic Coast and future president (1880 and 1887). "Oligarchics" were politicians from the Central region. The contest between the two fractions in the 1875 elections has been labelled as "the *costeño* challenge to the *cachaco*."⁹⁹ Ex-president Mosquera from the Cauca region found it "intolerable that a circle should want to dominate the nation from Bogotá, centralizing power and corrupting the electoral system."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ An overview of this period appear in Helen Delpar, "Aspects of Liberal Factionalism in Colombia, 1875 - 1885," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (May, 1971).

⁹⁹ James W. Park, *Rafael Nuñez and the Politics of Colombian Regionalism, 1863 - 1886*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 75. As explained by Park "*Cachaco* literally means a dandy, a term of derision used by *costeños*, residents of the north coast region, in referring to a person from the interior, usually a Bogotano".

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Helen Delpar, "Aspects of Liberal Factionalism in Colombia, 1875 - 1885," 255.

Chapter 8

The Political Economy of Violence

Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblican hurricane when Aureliano skipped eleven pages so as not to lose time with facts he knew only too well, and he began to decipher the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last page of the parchments, as if he were looking into a speaking mirror. Then he skipped again to anticipate the predictions and ascertain the date and circumstances of his death. Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth.

Gabriel García Márquez, final page of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

The unfolding of events during the middle of the nineteenth century in Colombia (1849 - 1876) has formed the point of departure for considering the usefulness of *a political economy of violence*. Colombia, like most Latin American countries, had gained independence and its leaders were trying to define the proper pathway to capitalist development. In this period the country was opened up to external markets and a *laissez-faire* economic policy was adopted. Colombians anticipated a future entailing an international division of labour in which the country would produce agricultural commodities while the European production of manufactured goods would yield mutual benefits. Mid-nineteenth century Colombians abolished the state monopoly on tobacco, reformed laws so that Indians could sell their land, abolished slavery, and promoted individual liberties. At this time Colombians were also engaged in the task of inventing the nation and writing the country's constitution. Forty years had elapsed since Independence in 1810 yet the national project was not coalescing. The prospect of the disappearance of 'old' systems of hierarchies and power without the emergence of new ones led to feelings of instability and fear. The Liberal and Conservative parties were each consolidated in 1849. The Liberal party, which remained in power most of the time, was identified as the propeller of change, while the Conservatives appeared to be halting the processes of reform.

This period in the history of Colombia is full of paradoxes when viewed from the point of view of conventional political economy analysis. First, despite the adoption of *laissez-faire* principles in terms of opening the economy to the external market, the dream of

prosperity did not materialize. Colombia's optimistic embracing of the external market resulted in a 'sequence of failures'. Second, the insertion in the capitalist world economy was characterized by the use of force and the maintenance of 'pre-capitalist' labour relations. Third, the consolidation of the political parties was accompanied by civil wars and conflict among party leaders. At the end of the period the country was fragmented regionally and perceived to be in a state of anarchy. Mid-nineteenth century Colombians did not invent a nation, the state was deprived of a monopoly in the use of force, export merchants were impoverished, and a rudimentary textile industry almost disappeared.

An analysis of the literature produced about this period indicated the presence of important questions not properly answered in conventional studies, such as the co-existence of violence and capitalist development, the presence of both violence and democracy, and the difficult path towards accumulation of capital. The complexity of these questions increased when it was realized that violence did not affect equally all forms of production, that violence did not change apace with fluctuations in the world economy, and that violence was not exerted evenly on all regions, races, sexes and occupations.

In order to solve the 'impasse' posed by these paradoxes of Colombian history, which are also shared by other Third World countries, this dissertation did not remain within the theoretical premises of conventional political economy. This dissertation questioned the capacity of the discipline to deal with the phenomenon of violence. The weakness of

conventional analyses, it was argued, is the presumption of a separation between the political and economic realm, where the latter is identified as the sphere where 'things' are produced and exchanged. This sphere, in the case of capitalism, is seen as 'free' from violence. On the one hand, an emphasis on production and circulation of things conceals the violence implicit in the meanings accompanying these forms of production and circulation. On the other, a conventional political economy universalizes the 'rational economic men' as a standard of reasonableness, against which other representations are compared. The approach adopted entails an examination of the way in which the political and the economic are represented and the economic and political ways in which violence is manifested and provided with a solution.

This dissertation postulates the existence of a diversity of meanings accompanying the development of capitalism. Systems of production and accumulation are embedded in regimes of representation which are also related to violence through the process of identity formation which sustains only some forms of production and accumulation (violence of representation). Both the concept of political economy and the nature of violence have been detached from their purely phenomenal realm, and the realm of meanings is introduced. Political economy ceased to be seen as essentially about the production and circulation of 'things' so that it might embrace forms of production and circulation of meanings. Violence ceased to be seen purely as an external interaction where damage is produced, so as to include the violence of representation and resolution. The **regime of representation** has been defined as the space of encounter where the past,

the present and the future meet; where the self becomes different from the other; and where events are linked together and endowed with meaning. The regime of representation is a space of identity/difference; it includes what is highlighted and noted, as well as what is pushed from centre stage.

In this concluding chapter, I summarize the manner in which a different political economy of nineteenth century Colombia reveals what had remained in obscurity: the existence of a political economy centred in the will to civilization and the violence accompanying this political economy. The violent construction of identities has been a key factor hindering the capitalist process of development. In this concluding chapter I will also depict, as if looking into a mirror, the presence of two different constructions of identities within the same process of capitalist expansion: where capitalism developed early, its expansion was characterized by a positive construction of identities, leading force to be displaced and replaced by an 'invisible hand'; in the Third World, on the contrary, the expansion of capitalism was characterized by a negative construction of difference. Conventional studies in political economy have overlooked this representational dimension in the study of the development of capitalism. By seeing capitalism exclusively as a means for the production or circulation of things, the linkage between capitalism and its accompanying meanings has been rendered obscure. In the same way, the violence of political economy embedded in the representation of the Third World has been disguised. Contradicting early arguments about the autonomy of

economic interests, development literature¹ systematically questioned the capacity of the economic to reproduce itself, arguing instead for the need to recur to force either through the presence of strong states or by presuming the need for violence if the expansion of capitalism is to occur.

In the First World violence was displaced to the Other: from the economy to the political, and from the state to the inter-state system. In the Third World, on the contrary, difference was transformed into deviance. Thus a political economy which transforms difference in anomaly is a violent political economy: the act of defining Third World countries as different have fostered imperialist and authoritarian pretensions.

8.1 A different political economy of Colombian development

An analysis of the regime of representation in mid-nineteenth century Colombia allowed me to conclude that its political economy was not centred in the realm of either the production or the circulation of 'things'. The regime of representation evolved around the **will to civilization**. Individuals were graded in a scale ranked from the barbarian to the civilized, where civilization appeared as the European model to be imitated, and barbarian was represented in local practices to be avoided. The will to civilization empowered the identity of male, literati described as Creole. A small group of individuals concentrated around them the power to civilize: a white minority in a vast

¹ As mentioned in the introduction, Development Studies are Third World's political economy.

mestizo, black and Indian population; an enlightened minority in the middle of an illiterate society. The political economy centred on the production and circulation of words rather than on the production of 'things'. Liberals and Conservatives waged battles over the definition of the best strategy to convert the barbarians into civilized citizens. Their struggle was perceived as an insurmountable question whose solution would come only with one side's annihilation. Wars and parliamentary debates centred on questions like education, press freedom and religion, whose victory would ensure to the contender a meanings-based control over the population.

The use of the concept of regime of representation also allowed me to relate the political economy of civilization with the violence engendered. Violence originated from the formation of hierarchical identities and in the acts of suppression of the stories of blacks, indians and women, who were deprived of their alterity when compared to whites, males and Creoles. In a political economy of civilization, violence was manifested in the use of force in the relations of production as well as in the conflict among the leading sectors.

I illustrate the connections and antagonisms between diverse regimes of representation as exemplified between the will to civilization and *laissez-faire* capitalism. The political economy of civilization was not alien to the political economy of *laissez-faire* capitalism. They encountered each other in the regime of representation. Liberals and Conservatives alike adopted free trade and the international division of labour as the road to follow to

ensure prosperity. Nonetheless, the will to civilization and *laissez-faire* capitalism clashed in such a way that the former hampered the development of the latter. The Liberal party, the group in power, advocated *laissez-faire* principles as a central issue in the struggle for civilization. Conservatives, on the contrary, saw in *laissez-faire* a threat to their strategy grounded in the principles of Christian morality.

The will for civilization as a regime of representation stood in the way of capitalist development. To the representation of an 'undifferentiated' labour force, the will to civilization counterpoised the image of a barbarian crowd in need of restraint. An analysis of Colombia's main regions allow me to illustrate, on the one hand, the linkage between the violence of representation and the manifestation of violence, and between these and capitalist development, on the other. A regional prevalence of negative identities blocked the way for the formation of a capitalist labour market - one in which individuals are differentiated only by their productive potential. In contrast, in those regions where the population was perceived in an homogeneous way contractual relations tended to prevail.

An epistemological emphasis on regimes of representation allowed me to understand the capacity of a regime of representation to gain relative stability and survive or to enter into crisis and be replaced by a different regime. The will to civilization precluded the formation of the nation and the state. As a regime of representation it worked by differentiation impeding the emergence of spatial and temporal simultaneity, which are

central to the concept of the nation; it also impeded the emergence of a general interest so as to ground the concept of the state.

Last but not least, a focus on the regime of representation, allowed me to illustrate the gendered character of the political economy of civilization and *laissez-faire* capitalism. The construction of women's identities as a low strata in the hierarchy of civilization was central to the civilizing process and to the displacement of local manufacturing in favour of European goods. The representation of the female body supported the desirability of imported textiles and, hence, the displacement of female labour engaged in local manufactures. A violence of representation in the construction of female identities preceded a generalization of violence against women in the relations of production as well as the fragmented character of the representation of the nation.

8.2 Identity formation in Western Europe: from Smith to Marx

The endowment of positive identities was integral to the early process of capitalist expansion. In early arguments for capitalism the spread of commerce and the attainment of civilization were seen to go together. Febvre's study on the origin of the word *civilization* argues that the belief in the benign effect of commerce coincided with the emergence of the concept of *civilization*. The word 'civilization' appeared towards the mid-eighteenth century, taking the place that '*police*' had before: at the top of a ladder

whose bottom was occupied by the savages and the middle by the barbarians.² Economic doctrines at that time equated 'civilization' with property and trade:

The physiocrats also had their doctrine; we may recall Baudeau's early text in 1767: 'Land ownership, which attaches man to the land, constitutes a very important step towards the most perfect civilization'. For Raynal commerce is what counts. In 1770 he writes: 'The people who have *poli* (polished) all others were merchants', and here we can actually see that uncertainty of meaning which appears just now; for *poli* in Raynal's text means quite precisely *civilize*, since he writes a little further on, this time using the newer word in place of the older one: 'What gathered these people together, clothed them and civilized them? It was trade. It is a utilitarian theory; it was to be used by the Scots, Millar for example, for whom in the *Observations sur le commencement de la Société* civilization was '*cette politesse des mœurs que devient une suite naturelle de l'abondance et de la sécurité*', and Adam Smith was in the same way to bind wealth and civilization tightly together.³

The concept of *civilization* grew as an absolute concept of a single, coherent, human civilization and not a relative concept of particularized and individualized ethnic or historical civilizations.⁴ This opposition between European 'polished nations', and 'rude and barbarous ones' began to be common towards the second half of the eighteenth century.

The relationship between early arguments about capitalism and the formation of identities is stated clearly in Albert Hirschman's book *The Passions and the Interests: Political*

² From Lucien Febvre (1930), "Civilization: evolution of a word and a group of ideas", in *A New Kind of History from the Writings of Febvre*, ed. Peter Burke, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 225.

³ Ibid., 233.

⁴ Ibid., 232.

Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph.⁵ The book illustrates how the idea of the expansion of the market economy coincided with beliefs about individuals and how these beliefs shaped a conception of the nature of the state. Before Adam Smith the relation was formulated in terms of how to restrain the destructive passions of men. The proposed form of the state was one entrusted with the tasks of 'coercion and repression'. According to Hirschman a new paradigm emerged as Smith equated 'interests' and 'passions'. Passions were no longer seen as destructive but as 'a creative force'. For Smith:

Commerce and manufactures gradually introduced order and good government, and with them, the liberty and security of individuals, among the inhabitants of the country, who had before lived almost in continual state of war with their neighbors, and of servile dependency upon their superiors.⁶

Montesquieu also referred to the effects of commerce in the pacification of society: 'Commerce...polishes and softens (*adoucit*) barbarian ways as we can see everyday'.⁷ Steuart compared the modern economy to the delicacy of the watch, which can be destroyed if used by the inexpert hand: a 'modern oeconomy is the most effective bridle ever invented against the folly of despotism'.⁸ Smith went further by emphasizing the self-regulatory character of the economy:

⁵ Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁶ Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, (Modern Library , 1937), 385. Quoted in Ibid., 100.

⁷ Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, quoted in Ibid., 60.

⁸ Sir James Steuart (1767), *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*. Quoted in Ibid., 85.

The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations.⁹

As Hirschman suggests, the important contribution of Smith is "that economics can go it alone: within wide limits of tolerance, political progress is not needed as a prerequisite for, nor is it likely to be a consequence of, economic advance, at least at the level of the highest councils of government."¹⁰ Smith's paradigmatic change is to equate 'interest' and 'passions'. Economic and non-economic drives are turned into one; "The non-economic drives, powerful as they are, are all made to feed into the economic ones and do nothing but reinforce them, being thus deprived of the erstwhile independent existence."¹¹ For Smith the pursuit of individual interest leads to more economic development and less violence.

Seventy two years after Smith published the *Wealth of Nations*, Marx's *Manifesto* shared its optimism about the civilizing consequences of expanding capitalist relations of production. This change was conceived as the result of the desire to imitation on the part of the bourgeoisie, as well as to the decrease in the price of commodities:

⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 103 - 104.

¹¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 109.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nation into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.¹²

In Marx's optimistic view, the loss of differences ensuing free commerce and trade, would put an end to conflicts and antagonisms:

National differences, and antagonism between peoples, are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.¹³

He compares this movement to the forces unleashed by a sorcerer; once in motion these forces take a dynamic of their own:

Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.¹⁴

Marx saw an essential trait the superseding of the relations of force in labour relations; the 'dull compulsion of economic relations' completes the subjection of laborer to the capitalist.

¹² Karl Marx (1888), "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Karl Marx Political Writings. The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, Vol I (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 71. (my own emphasis).

¹³ Ibid., 85.

¹⁴ Ibid., 72.

8.3 Violence and the formation of the Western European State

In addition to the positive construction of identities accompanying early thought about capitalism, scholars have pointed out how violence in its manifested form (wars) also played an important role in the building of the Western state and the state system. A condition of possibility was the displacement of violence to the other: from the economic to the political, from inside the state towards the inter-state system.

As Charles Tilly argues violence played an important role in the formation of the European state. For Tilly, violence produced transformations; indeed, war made the state.¹⁵ The monopoly by the state of the means of violence was a result of the elimination or neutralizing of rivals outside and inside the territory. At the same time the acquisition of the means to carry out this elimination depended on the state's ability to monopolize the concentrated means of coercion. Tilly sees war as independent of the process of capital accumulation. Violence and conflict are posed in relation to the political system, produced by those trying to gain entry to, or expelled from, the polity: collective violence is a by-product of situations in which one contender openly lays claims and the other contender (the government) resists these claims.¹⁶

¹⁵ Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter Evans, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 170.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 438.

Anthony Giddens also integrates a theory of violence and war into a theory of capitalist development. He denounces as extraordinary social theorists' neglect of the recourse to violence and war, "an overwhelmingly obvious and chronic trait of human affairs."¹⁷ Like Tilly, Giddens gives importance to wars in the process of state formation. Giddens, like Marx, believes that the distinctive character of the transition to capitalism from feudalism is that in the latter "extraction of surplus production is normally backed in a direct way by the threat or the use of force."¹⁸ Like Marx, he asserts that capitalist relations of production "were not brought about through military power or through a class monopoly of the means of violence."¹⁹ Giddens criticizes Marx on the ground that he does not ask what happens to the means of violence 'extruded' from the labour contract.

Having discarded the idea that relations of production are the explanation for this displacement of violence, he attempts a different explanation: "The monopolization of the means of violence in the hands of the state went along with *the extrusion of control of violent sanctions from the exploitative class relations involved in emergent capitalism.*"²⁰ The formation of a 'demilitarized' system of production, according to Giddens, was only possible given the presence of 'bourgeois rights' and of a society already internally

¹⁷ Antony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. Vol I Power, Property and the State*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 177.

¹⁸ Ibid., 88. 112.

¹⁹ Ibid., 179 - 180.

²⁰ Ibid., 180.

pacified.²¹ This internal pacification has its correlate not in changes in economic processes but in the 'increasing power of the nation state'.²² Power was concentrated in the *absolutist* state, and this concentration resulted from the state's war and preparation for war. But this was not an internal war. According to Giddens, in the absolutist state, for the first time, there begins to come about a situation in which the army is not the main basis of the preservation of internal 'order'. This is an important distinction in Giddens' explanation, since he suggests that the internal pacification has its correlate in the ability to wage war against an external other.²³

Giddens points towards a new direction regarding the relationship between the 'internal pacification' and capitalist development. It refers to the formation of 'discursive formulations' that shape the power of the state: the definition of what counts as 'political', the definition of those practices that count as 'general interest', and the articulation of 'historicity' in relation to planned or actual trends of social change. Regarding the first one, he states that "the early development of capitalism was indeed predicated upon an insulation of the **political** and the **economic** not only **internal** but **external** to the territorial bounded state."²⁴

²¹ Ibid., 187 *passim*.

²² Antony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence. Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 139.

²³ Ibid., 113.

²⁴ Ibid., 170. (emphasis added).

By clustering the two set of elements -insulation of political and economic, and the internal and external territorial bounded state- Giddens points not only towards a internal differentiation between political and economic, but also towards the development of an inter-state system as the pre-conditions for internal pacification: "What: [the essentially pacific character of industrial capitalism] involves, however, is not the decline of war but a concentration of military power 'pointing outward' towards other states in the nation-state system'." ²⁵

It can be said thus that in early arguments for capitalism the identities of those engaged in economic activities were equated with civilization. Economic forces were provided with an autonomy of their own, capable not only of self expansion but also of capacity to restrain the vices coming from the political realm. In early arguments favouring the development of capitalism, traders and merchants were seen as the carriers of a civilizing mission. The displacement of violence from the realm of economics to the realm of politics was related to the establishment of a difference between the realm of economics and politics. Capitalism was grounded in the representation of 'undifferentiated' individuals (Marx) whose search for interest would lead to the wealth of the nation (A. Smith). Finally, the displacement of violence from the economic to the political coincided with the process of formation of the nation-state and the separation of a 'domestic' community from an 'international' anarchical system.

8.4 Violence and the expansion of capitalism to the Colonies

A discontinuity occurred in the representation of the development of capitalism in the Third World as compared to the early thought of Smith and Marx. Theoreticians of imperialism had already depicted the employment of force an essential trait of capitalist expansion towards the colonies. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century and up to 1914, the expansion of capitalism (known as imperialism) was accomplished

²⁵ Ibid., 192. (emphasis added)

by the search for markets and colonies.²⁶ This period questioned the civilizing power of capitalism. The expansion of capitalism ceased to be seen as introducing order and peaceful relations among nations. Marx's concept of capitalist expansion became the focus of criticism in the theorist of Imperialism. Rosa Luxemburg, among them, saw capitalist expansion to other nations as the condition for accumulation, and violence as the necessary result:

Accumulation is impossible in an exclusively capitalist environment. Therefore we find that capital has been driven since its very inception to expand into non-capitalist strata and nations, ruins artisans and peasantry, proletarianize the intermediate strata, the politics of colonialism, the politics of 'opening-up' and the export of capital...But the global drive to expand leads to a collision between capital and pre-capitalist forms of society, resulting of violence, war, revolution: in brief, catastrophes from start to finish, the vital elements of capitalism.²⁷

This violence was not confined to the places where capitalism moved, but also in the home of capitalism: "imperialism brings catastrophe as a mode of existence back from the periphery of capitalist development to its point of departure. The expansion of capital...is now plunging the civilized peoples of Europe itself into a series of catastrophes whose final result can only be the decline of civilization or the transition to the socialist mode of production."²⁸

²⁶ In the period 1878 to 1914, Magdoff estimated "that the rate at which foreign lands were seized was *three times higher* than it had been during the preceding seventy-five years...Before 1880 colonial possessions in Africa were relatively few and limited to some coastal areas; twenty years later, almost the entire African continent was split into separate territories owned by Europeans nations". H. Magdoff, "Imperialism: A Historical Survey," in *Sociology of "Developing Societies"*, eds. Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1982), 19 - 20.

²⁷ Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital -an Anti-Critique*, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 145.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

The experience of the First and Second World Wars also brought important changes in the envisioning of the role of violence in the international and domestic arena. Violence was situated in the international system and in the Third World countries. 'War' was entrenched at the centre of the regulation among states, and 'disorder' and 'revolution' were entrenched in the representation of the Third World.

The strength of *realism* as the hegemonic paradigm of international relations illustrates the importance of war as the key interpreter of the relations among states. Hans Morgenthau's principles of political realism summarized the prevalent views on the international arena:²⁹ the interest of nation were defined independently not only from domestic interest, but also divorced from economic criteria. National interests were represented as guided by 'power', not wealth, whose mode of regulation is conflict and the threat of war. In the words of an international relation scholar: "War and the threat of war... are so basic that even the terms we use to describe the system - great power and small powers, alliances and spheres of influence, balances of power a hegemony- are scarcely intelligible except in relation to war and the threat of war."³⁰ The claims of political realism have had important implications for the conceptualization of politics as well as for the formation of identity/difference relations. As has been stated by Walker the separation of the realm of international relations from domestic politics have made possible not only to ignore categories of class and gender but also "it has become

²⁹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, (New York: Knopf, 1967).

³⁰ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, (London: Macmillan, 1977), 186.

possible to link all forms of human insecurity to the military to the military defence of the state, despite the fact that states have become increasingly important sources of contemporary insecurity and increasingly unable to provide security from environmental collapse and economic maldevelopment."³¹

A different representation of identities also backed the opposition Western/Non-Western countries, which characterized the Cold War period. Non-Western politics was represented as 'potentially explosive' continuously threatened by political instability. Development Sociology provided the knowledge and necessary strategy to bring the Third World up to the level of stability of First World countries. Violence became synonymous with revolution, or disruption of order. Chalmers Johnson provides a good example: "To make a revolution is to accept violence for the purpose of causing the system to change; more exactly, it is the purposive implementation of a strategy of violence in order to effect a change in social structures."³²

Development in the Third World became the centre of an endless controversy, between *modernization* theory and the *dependencia* school. Notwithstanding their differences, in both schools violence became the key interpreter of the process of peripheral development. Illustrative of the problematic regarding the process of capitalist development and identity formation in the Third World is Huntington's debate within

³¹ R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 182.

³² Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1966), 57.

the core of modernization school. Huntington rejected the belief that modernization produces stability, on the contrary:

The apparent relationship between poverty and backwardness, on the one hand, and instability and violence, on the other, is a spurious one. It is not the absence of modernity but the efforts to achieve it which produce political disorder. If poor countries appear to be unstable, it is not because they are poor, but because they are trying to become rich. A purely traditional society would be ignorant, poor and stable.³³

The rationale behind his argument was the instability in Asia, Africa and Latin America circa 1960. This instability is explained by the broader political participation without a growth in the 'art of associating together',³⁴ or, the art of government. This art is related to the capacity to accumulate power in the political system. Contrary to classical liberalism's belief in an economic progress which can go alone without political progress, Huntington stated that "power is something which has to be mobilized, developed, and organized. It must be created."³⁵ Against the views of Mandeville and Adam Smith that private vices or self-interest contribute to social welfare, Huntington sustained that public interest must be created by creating strong institutions: "the capacity to create political institutions, is the capacity to create public interest."³⁶

³³ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 41.

³⁴ Huntington follows Tocqueville's observation which states as follows: "Among the laws that rule human societies, there is one which seems to be more precise and clear than all others. If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased". Huntington's own interpretation is that political institutions lag behind social and economic changes. *Ibid.*, 4 - 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 144.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 229.

The 'development of underdevelopment' school of thought diverged from the postulates of the 'modernization' school. Rather than the image of a Third World moving in the direction of first world countries, the former was conceived as an inverted image of the latter. At the root of the problematic, as posed by Andre Gunder Frank, was a differential conception of individuals, mainly the capitalist class. The interest of individual capitalists in central metropolis are conducive to the development of capitalism, while in the periphery, capitalists' interests produce the underdevelopment of their own countries. The well known argument took this form:

the group interests which led to the continued underdevelopment of Chile and the economic development of some other countries were themselves created by the same economic structure which encompassed all these groups: the world capitalist system. This system was divided into central metropolis and peripheral satellites. It was in the nature of the structure of this system to produce interests leading to underdevelopment in the countries of the periphery, such as Chile, once they had already been effectively incorporated into the system as satellites. [emphasis added].³⁷

The development of underdevelopment illustrates well the mirror image problematic. difference was transformed in a A/not-A relation (inverted mirror images). A consequence is that in relations A/not-A, for not/A to exist, A must disappear. Violence (war of movement) is called for. If the periphery represented a transposed image of the First World, violence (revolution) was the only way out of this structure:

Suffering from the same necessity and enjoying the same possibility created by the same world capitalist development in other underdeveloped countries, the

³⁷ Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America. Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), 94 passim.

people of Chile in alliance with these other peoples must and will take the initiative and leadership in destroying the system whose development has caused and still generates their underdevelopment...At the cost of their underdevelopment the capitalist system has developed, and as the price of their development the capitalist system will be destroyed.³⁸

The 'articulation of modes of production' as formulated by P.P. Rey posed the problem differently: the problem is that in social formations where capitalism arrives, it takes "the form of 'dirt and blood' and not according to 'rigorous laws of economic processes'".³⁹ The reason is that in places where capitalism appears for the first time, like in the transition from feudalism, a free labour force was born from the destruction of previous relations of production. In other social formations free labour is not produced by natural means. How does capitalism 'take root' in these social formations? Rey's answer assumes the existence of 'transitional modes of production': "The economic revolution is more violent than when capitalism appeared for the first time, since the dissolution of old modes of production takes place against the will of their dominant classes, while in feudal societies, it took place with the agreement and active participation of the nobility."⁴⁰ In Rey's formulation it is the 'dirt and blood' capitalism in the periphery which saves capitalism's scientific (non-violent) face.

The violence which characterized capitalist expansion grounded as well the postulate for a strong and authoritarian state able to further capitalist development. According to

³⁸ Ibid., 119.

³⁹ Pierre Philippe Rey, *Les Alliances de Classes*, (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1973), 158.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 160.

Mathias and Salama, in the third world: "The State is not deduced from the category of capital, but of the world economy. The role of the state as producer of capitalist relations of production is more important than in developed countries...The establishment of relations of production within an environment that is not able to produce them is accomplished through violence. Violence, repression precede the search for legitimation."⁴¹ This view was present too within Latin American scholar. For the school known as 'bureaucratic authoritarianism', the emergence of authoritarian regimes in the 1960s is related to the difficulties in the process of industrialization: the difficulty of 'deepening' the productive structure. The use of force was seen not as the result of the external development of capitalism, but in terms of the exigencies of the process of internal accumulation.⁴²

8.5 Towards a different political economy of violence

What this dissertation has illustrated is the opposite situation: it is the representation of differences, the representation of the Third World as violent, which is at the origin of authoritarian forms of political economy. Albert Hirschman⁴³ has noticed not only how in Latin America policy makers held beliefs contrary to those held by early theorists of

⁴¹ Gilberto Mathias and Pierre Salama, *L'Etat Surdéveloppé. Des Métropoles au Tiers Monde*, (Paris: Maspero, 1983), 97.

⁴² Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1973).

⁴³ Albert O. Hirschman, "The Turn to Authoritarianism in Latin America and the Search for its Economic Determinants," in *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, ed. David Collier (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

capitalism, but also how these beliefs provided a ground for authoritarian regimes to emerge.⁴⁴ As the case of Colombia has illustrated, the use of force is related to the conception of the barbarian - held by Colombian literati and politicians - which should be subject to the employment of force. This conception also impeded the possibility for the economy to go alone. When difference is transformed in deviation, this difference is perceived as threat and force is called for to install normality. Norbert Lechner's ⁴⁵ reflection reinforces the analysis of the Colombian case: The transformation of differences in 'deviation' has been the base of a culture of fear. Fear, is the condition of existence of authoritarianism.

A central task for a different political economy is the deciphering of those meanings which had accompanied both forms of production and accumulation and the identification of the violence accompanying them. Using pre-established concepts makes the Third World even less representable in such analysis. It is essential to use local representations and to bring to the stage actors and their interpretations. An emphasis on local interpretations not only brings to the surface the violence of representation but also reflects, like mirror images, the process which forged self/other distinctions. A task of

⁴⁴ Hirschman relates the low propensity to belief in the non-vulnerability of the economy on the part of the Latin American policy maker to certain characteristics of the 'late late' process of industrialization in the region. Unlike European latecomers, where ideological forces propelled for industrialization, in Latin America the ideological forces for industrialization were not as strong. The entrepreneurial force was not as strong and in addition it was weakened by the presence of forces pushing for distribution. As a consequence of the lack of trust in the self-function of the economy policy makers are more ready to use force.

⁴⁵ Norbert Lechner, "Hay Gente que Muere de Miedo," in *Los Patios Interiores de la Democracia. Subjetividad y Política*, ed. Norbert Lechner (Chile: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988).

a different political economy is to unearth the mirror image against which identities are constructed. As has been pointed out by a Central American scholar, the main task is "to identify differences in order to deal with them as normal phenomena more than as deviations of pre-established Europeans norms."⁴⁶ The establishment of these identities happen within representation and it is in representation where violence must be solved.

⁴⁶ Andrés Pérez, "Ciencias sociales y realidad social en Centroamérica" *Revista de la Cepal* (Agosto, 1993), 147.

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