

## Editor's Note

The current issue of the *Afro-Hispanic Review* commemorates the Día de la Raza, Columbus Day, at Vanderbilt University. Much has been written about Columbus's journey and the impact it had on the New and Old Worlds. This unprecedented event found resonance in the writings of many luminary figures, from Fray Bartolomé de las Casas to Alfonso Reyes, José Vasconcelos, Edmundo O'Gorman, Tzvetan Todorov, to controversial figures like Ivan Van Sertima, among others. There is another history that emerges from the bowels of slave ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Though once silenced, this voice is narrated eloquently by Afro-Hispanic works, such as Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas*.

Indeed, Columbus is associated with the Discovery and Conquest of America, but this event tends to minimize the experience of Amerindians who lived in this part of the world before his journey, or Africans brought to the Americas against their will, or Asians who arrived as contract laborers, and their contributions to the cultures of the Americas. The Día de la Raza celebrates the richness of Hispanic heritage as a representation of the many cultures, ethnic groups, and races in the Americas, and the common bonds that bring us together.

At Vanderbilt we celebrated the Día de la Raza as a partnership between the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center and the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, and other departments and student organizations throughout the university; between Vanderbilt, as an academic institution, and the Nashville community; between Hispanics, African Americans, Anglo Americans, Asian Americans, and all who reside within and outside of Nashville.

We observe the Día de la Raza and honor Dominican painter, Antonio Carreño, and the opening of his art exhibit at the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center at Vanderbilt University. The present issue of the *Afro-Hispanic Review* features Carreño's artwork, and one of his paintings, "Innocent Look," appears on the front cover. Born and raised in Santo Domingo, Carreño studied at the National School of Fine Arts, in his native city, and the Arts Student League. Inspired by nature, Carreño looks inward for inspiration and meaning. He uses mixed media and pastel, and plays with colors and gradations of colors and shadows. Carreño lays his canvas on a flat surface and moves around it and paints from all sides. His work shows a clear influence of surrealism, and his images recall those of Juan Miró, Chagall, Mondrian, Alma Thomas, Wifredo Lam, Matta, Tamayo, Yves Tanguy, and Paul Klee. Carreño's artwork has been exhibited in major cities of the United States, such as Atlanta, New Orleans, Washington, DC, New York, Boston, Cleveland, Sarasota, Chicago, Detroit, and, of course, Nashville, among many others. He also has exhibited in his native Santo Domingo. Carreño currently resides in

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New Jersey. This issue of the *Afro-Hispanic Review* contains a transcription of an interview with Carreño by the Assistant Editor, Gretchen Selcke.

The *Afro-Hispanic Review* continues to underscore the significance of the Afro-Hispanic experience as an indispensable element for understanding Hispanic literature and culture. In this issue, there is a natural conversation that takes place among the articles. Adriana Bergero and Narciso Hidalgo emphasize the importance of the slave poet Juan Francisco Manzano, who also wrote his autobiography, though Hidalgo's article covers a broader period; Julia Cuervo Hewitt and Amparo Marmolejo-McWatt highlight Afro-Cuban traditions and religions in contemporary women novelists; and Marilyn Miller and Daisy Rubiera Castillo study the works of two important Cuban poets. As a unit, all of their works point to Cuba's contribution to Afro-Hispanic literature and culture. Dorothy Odartey-Wellington contributes a second interview on Equatorial Guinean literature, in this issue with Justo Bolekia Boleká.

The journal also attempts to broaden its scope. In addition to Carreño's artwork, the section on Poetry offers a variety of poems by Nancy Morejón, Georgina Herrera, and Pedro Pérez Sarduy of Cuba; Cristina Cabral of Uruguay; but also Jay Wright of Vermont; and Tato Laviera, an Afro-Latino poet living in New York.

The *Afro-Hispanic Review*, Volume 25, Number 1 (Spring 2006) will be a Special Issue dedicated to the memory of the great Colombian writer, Manuel Zapata Olivella. Guest co-editors, professors Laurence Prescott and Antonio Tillis, and I invite you to submit articles on Zapata Olivella's work.

William Luis  
Editor