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The Representations of Parental Relationships in Zoraida Córdova's Novel: The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina

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The Representations of Parental Relationships in Zoraida Córdova's Novel:
The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2022

I would like to dedicate my Senior Project to my mother Rocio, my brother Jordi, and my sister

Kimberly. I love you.

I would also like to dedicate this for all Ecuadorian-Americans and Dreamers

*Acknowledgements**Thank You!**John Burns**Claudette Aldebot**Jane E. Smith**Jennifer Triplett**Eric Trudel**And to all my professors who have been patient and understanding towards me**Thank you, Zoraida Córdova for your beautifully written novel*

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Introduction

In this essay I will be discussing Zoraida Córdova's adult fiction novel: *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina*. But first I would like to briefly discuss Laura Esquivel's novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*. Main character Tita is forbidden by her mother to marry her love, Pedro. Her mother believes that it is Tita's duty, as the youngest daughter, to take care of her till her death. Her mother tells her that it is family tradition and does not plan to go against it any time soon. Therefore Tita is distraught but "Still Tita did not submit" (Esquivel,11). Tita does everything she can to marry Pedro despite her mother's strict rules. This novel highlights complex and cruel relationships between mothers and daughters.

Helene Price reviews this book in her article, *Unsavory Representations in Laura Esquivel's Like Water for Chocolate*. Price questions Esquivel's choice of plot and use of the magical realism tradition in the novel. She says that,

"Indeed, although the novel can be considered feminocentric in that it revolves around female characters, it is ultimately Pedro who controls their irrational behavior and interactions, be it Tita, Rosaura[Tita's sister] or the formidable Mamá Elena [Tita's mother]. Despite the text having a female protagonist and an abundance of women characters, the action revolves around the presence of one male character(a weak one at that) and the sentiments that he stirs in them, reinforcing the notion that women are guided by emotions and that their lives revolve around men and sentiments. Magic thereby contributes to the sentimentalising of women rather than transgressing the boundaries of the conventional binary oppositions set up between male and female"(Price, 185).

Like Water for Chocolate does highlight women characters, and the use of exaggerated language that illuminates the conflicts between women characters can cause skepticism for the reader. Pedro as a male character is the culprit of discourse. His presence in a male dominated society favors him. He is able to choose who he loves, and at the same time deepen the problems between Tita and her mother. He essentially has all the power. This observation is not obvious in the novel because it is veiled with beautiful written prose that illuminates Tita's tragedy of not being able to marry who she chooses because of her mother. Therefore Price dissects and dives deep to bring this out and ultimately points out contradictions. This novel on the surface represents a home that is dominated by women. But in reality this home is disrupted by Pedro, a man, who ends up dominating the home, in a way, because all the women's conflicts revolve around him.

Like Price, I also experienced the same questioning of a novel that I was reading. This novel is a work of adult fiction named: *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* by Zoraida Córdova. This novel takes place in the contemporary United States. Main character Orquídea Divina, an Ecuadorian born woman who migrated to the United States' midwest called *Four Rivers*, is about to die of old age. Therefore she sends out invitations to her descendants to visit her and collect their Inheritances. Most of her descendants are scattered all over the United States. They all visit her and have a hard time entering Orquídea's house. One reason for this is because her house was made by her magic. The magic was granted to her when she was young by a man made of stars. Her descendants finally end up entering her house and all discover secrets and answers that Orquídea has kept from them for years through dialogues and dinner parties.

Marimar, one of Orquídea's granddaughters, discovers that her family is being followed by a strange ghostly shadow man. She does everything she can to confront the shadow man. When she finally confronts him she finds that he has been haunting Orquídea Divina for years. She also discovers that he was Orquídea's first separated husband. His name is Bolivar Londoño, and the reason why he has been following this family is because he wants to win back Orquídea's love. He tries to scare Marimar's family away to take Orquídea all to himself. He refuses to leave Orquídea's family alone until they agree to let Orquídea go back to him. Marimar does not want him to win back Orquídea because he is evil and she also knows that he has treated Orquídea horribly when he was in a romantic relationship with her. Bolivar is powerful. His power is shown through his magical powers. His magical powers were granted by the starman as well. He got his power and magic when he trapped the starman and forced him to abide by him by making all of Bolivar's wishes come true. Orquídea gained her powers when she decided to leave Bolivar and made a deal with starman. She agreed to free him and in exchange she was granted a wish. Her wish was also to have magic. Marimar discovers all of this when she goes on a mission to find ways to prevent Bolivar from taking Orquídea away from her. She finally does end up fighting Bolivar and wins. By the end of the novel she gets her inheritance, Orquídea's magical house, and ultimately saves Orquídea from Bolivar.

Córdova wrote this novel with different time periods. The novel is mostly set in the contemporary United States, but in this essay I will focus on Orquídea Divina and Bolivar Londoño's past.

Character Orquídea Divina from *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* has very similar characteristics to main character Tita from novel *Like Water for Chocolate*. They are both

strange. Orquídea Divina recounts her birth to her grandchildren: “ ‘When I was born,’ Orquídea began, ‘it was May 14. I only came out halfway. The doctor and nurse thought I was dead. It wasn’t until minutes after midnight, that they were able to pull me the rest of the way out. My mother used to tell me that because of this, I would always live a life in between’”(74).

What is strange about this birth is that because nurses thought Orquídea was going to be born half dead then her mother used that to claim that Orquídea will live a life in between. Orquídea also says this casually, which shows that the phenomenon of the possibility of being born half dead is normal in the novel. The casualness of Orquídea’s description of her birth compliments the fantastical genre of this book.

In novel *Like Water for Chocolate* Esquivel also causally recounts the birth of Tita: “Tita made her entrance to this world, prematurely, right on the kitchen table amid the smells of simmering noodle soup, thyme, bay leaves, and cilantro, steamed milk, garlic, and, of course, onion. Tita had no need for the usual slap on the bottom, because she was already crying as she emerged; maybe that was because she knew then that it would be her lot in life to be denied marriage. The way Nacha told it, Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the kitchen floor”(Esquivel,6).

The word “literally” confirms that Tita’s birth is reality and not an exaggerated recount. Tita’s birth is also strange because of how much ruckus her crying causes when she is born. Her crying created a flood in the home. The narrator later in the novel said that the reason for Tita’s enormous cries was because her destiny was to take care of her mother till death.

What is similar about these two births is that both characters are not born fully developed. Orquídea is suspected to be born half dead, and Tita is born prematurely. Both characters were

not ready to come out into the world but somehow were forced out by the outside world. Orquídea had to be pulled out and Tita was born despite being premature. Both of their beginnings are similar.

Esquivel's novel came out earlier than Córdova's novel. One can observe that Córdova took inspiration from *Like Water For Chocolate*. Her writing style is also similar to Esquivel's. Her word choice evokes the same feeling of cruelty that the mothers inflict on their daughters. When Tita expressed to her mother that she wanted to marry Pedro her mother refused. Tita attempts to give her opinion but Tita's mother responds to her by saying: "You don't have an opinion, and that's all I want to hear about it. For generations, not a single person in my family has ever questioned this tradition, and no daughter of mine is going to be one to start" (Esquivel, 11). It is cruel that Tita's mother refuses to change her mind. It is clear that Tita wants to be with Pedro and her mother is denying her. Orquídea Divina has a similar experience but with a different kind of love interest. Her love interest is represented through her passion for fishing at the Guayas River in Ecuador. Her mother, Isabela, forbids her to go fishing. One reason for that is because Isabela has married and has more children. Therefore she insists on Orquídea to help her with her children. Córdova writes: "Orquídea lost any chance she had to visit the river. Instead, her days were occupied with tending to the colicky Ana Cruz [Orquídea's step sibling]. She'd had to give up her room to the guests and sleep on a cot in the nursery. When she wasn't caring for the baby, she was helping Jefita[a servant] do everything from peel potatoes to slaughter two dozen turkeys"(95). As one can see Orquídea is supposed to take on domestic chores like Tita and at the same time her mother forbids her from doing the things she loves because she is supposed to devote all her time to domestic work, like caring for children, cooking

and cleaning. Both Tita and Orquídea are hindered by their mothers. However both characters go against the ruling of their mothers by fighting for freedom. Orquídea achieves to leave her home and Tita proceeds to do what she can to be close to her love Pedro behind her mother's back.

Like the novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* is advertised as a work of magical realism. What is magical realism? Wendy B. Faris defines magical realism in her article *The Question of the Other: Cultural Critiques of Magical Realism*. She states that "Magical realism is a combination of realism and the fantastic in which the former predominates"(Faris, 102). Meaning that magical realism uses language to evoke fantasy but the language of reality dominates over the fantastical. Faris also states that

It may not be too much to say that magical realism constitutes the most important trend in international contemporary fiction. Its widespread distribution, particularly among novelists like Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Salman Rushdie, and Ben Okri, among others, who have made the world at large their homeland, suggests that it constitutes a discourse of a kind of International literary diaspora a fictional cosmopolitanism of wide application (Faris, 101).

Faris points out that the tradition/genre of magical realism is used as a marketing tool to draw in readers to works of literature that may not be discovered on their own. Books have a lot of success internationally when they are marketed as such. Magical realism also plays a big role in the distribution of commercial literature. By commercial literature I mean, books that are produced for mass consumption. Commercial literature can be found in corporate stores like

Target, and Walmart. Commercial literature works well with magical realism because it does indeed attract readers like Faris has said.

The way in which magical realism in commercial literature relates to this essay is that the novel that I analyze, *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* by Zoraida Córdova, is a book intended for commercial use. I found it on one of my daily trips to Target. I was drawn to it immediately when I found out that the main characters and the author herself are from Ecuador. I am Ecuadorian and it was rare for me to find novels by Ecuadorian authors and about Ecuadorian characters while growing up. Especially in a commercial setting. It is also known that the publishing press in Ecuador is not globally advanced. There are not many advancements in works of literature circulating inside the country and outside as well. Therefore not a lot of people have access to books made in Ecuador and books made by Ecuadorian authors. However the author of this book, Zoraida Córdova, is Ecuadorian born. And this novel was produced and published here in the United States. This novel is an example of a work of literature that represents experiences that are not seen on the mainstream. The novel's main character, Orquídea Divina, is born in Ecuador and is of African descent. It is rare to find commercial books that center around characters of Afro descent and who are also Ecuadorian. *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* was published in September of 2021 and is already being translated into the Spanish language! Seeing that this novel centers around Ecuadorian experiences gives me hope. Thanks to it being sold commercially more people will have access to it and finally Ecuadorian Americans can enjoy a book that they can deeply relate to. This is one of the reasons why I chose this novel to write about.

At first I wanted to criticize and observe how male characters in this novel are the center for the women characters' conflicts. I was also going to use the plot that I summarized earlier above to illuminate and question Córdova's word choice to achieve the notions that Price has described in her critical article about *Like Water For Chocolate*. However, I changed my mind. The plot that I will be focusing on is the one of Orquídea Divina, and Bolívar Londoño. They both have extensive backstories and I found that Córdova deepens topics of parental relationships through these characters. I concluded that the representations of parental relationships are highlighted through their absence and presence. The representations of parental presence makes the main characters complex, multidimensional, emotional, and independent. Córdova ultimately achieves this through word choice.

Which parent causes the main characters to be independent and complex? I find that fathers are the trailblazers of Orquídea and Bolívar's independence and complexity. Which parent causes the main characters to be emotional? I find that mothers are the cause of emotional damage. Orquídea Divina is the one who is mostly impacted emotionally by her mother.

Women characters like Orquídea Divina are deeply hurt by her mother's actions and she never forgets how her mother mistreated her. This pattern of daughters resenting their mother's actions is generational. Orquídea's mother, Isabela, also experiences hurt and resentment for her mother: Roberta. Therefore can the real villains of the novel be the women characters?

Paternal figures and male love interests illuminate the process of independence and freedom of women characters. Maternal figures on the other hand hinder the emotional progress for women characters because despite the years that have passed, and all the excellent things that

women characters, like Orquídea, have achieved they are still hurt by mothers. Women characters are unable to think positively about maternal figures.

In this essay I will first show how the language of active/passive representations of paternal absence causes characters like Orquídea Divina and Bolívar Londoño to develop into complex characters. Then I will show how the language of active/passive representations of maternal presence causes hurt for characters like Orquídea Divina. While I do this I will ultimately illuminate my argument that the main conflict of the novel are not male characters, like Bolívar Londoño, or male characters represented by paternity; But the legacy of female characters that are represented through maternal figures.

Chapter 1: Representations of Paternity

In this chapter I will analyze how the representation of paternity throughout the novel impacts characters like Orquídea Divina and Bolívar Londoño. By impact I mean that these characters are greatly affected by their fathers' presence, or lack of presence. I will analyze representations of presence and absence through how active or passive these representations are. Essentially, Orquídea and Bolívar are more independent and complex than what the reader might think. It may seem like Córdova views the absence of paternity as fundamentally negative for a person's life but with my analysis this is not the case. I argue that the absence of paternity can cause great pain and or conflict for Orquídea and Bolívar; however this conflict that is created builds Orquídea and Bolívar into independent and powerful characters. The lack of paternal presence develops Orquídea and Bolívar.

When Orquídea deals with paternal presence she is able to move forward and become who she is. Through time she becomes a magical powerful woman. She makes up for the paternal absence by taking matters into her own hands; while also building a future for herself. We are reminded that she has created her own family line and home. Bolívar Londoño on the other hand becomes a villain with magical prowess. The lack of paternal absence for him is one of the main factors that makes him malevolent. He takes matters into his own hands by his motivation to be more powerful, and does succeed in some ways. After he has enough power he is able to control Orquídea in their romantic relationship. He becomes a manipulative character who Orquídea can't resist for a long time . He also ultimately becomes the haunting shadow that follows Orquídea and her descendants in the contemporary time of the novel.

Part 1: Analysis of the Representations of Paternity when Orquídea Divina is Born

One of the timelines that I will be mostly focusing on, in this section of this chapter, is Orquídea Divina's early childhood in Ecuador. I will analyze how the representation of the presence of her biological father impacts her.

Orquídea Divina has an absent father. She is born out of wedlock. Because of this she is treated horribly in her early life by those around her including her family. She is known as the "Bastard Daughter of the Waves" (70). In Ecuador, where she spent most of her early development in, it is common for people to look down upon children with absent fathers. Ecuadorian society knows if a father is present or not by a person's last name. Ecuadorian society respects people who inherit their paternal last name. Therefore a lot of families value giving their children the biological father's surname even if they're not necessarily present. This tradition of naming the child after their father is what Orquídea's family did when she was born.

When Orquídea is born a nurse asks her mother Isabela, "What will you call her?" Then the narrator interjects and states that:

In the Montaya family [Orquídea's family] it was tradition to name the first child after the father, wherever he was. But she couldn't imagine saying his first name for the rest of his life. They'd [Isabela and Orquídea's biological father] spent one night together, and then he was gone. Before his departure, he'd given her two things, only one of them a gift. An orchid, a species which only grew in Ecuador. The ship he worked on was exporting them to Europe,

but he'd stolen one for her. It was a beautiful flower unlike anything she'd ever seen—white and darkest plum and soft. She still had it, but now it was beige, pressed between the pages of a book she couldn't will herself to finish. The second was her daughter, weightless, fragile, like the same flower, which didn't need solid ground to grow. Orquídea. (35)

Here we see that Orquídea's father is not present at her birth and "wherever he was" the family is going to name her after him regardless. The family justifies this by saying that this practice of naming is a "tradition". What is not said though is what her father's name is. Isabela herself is not comfortable saying his name (his name is Washington). This shows that his name holds weight and impact because Isabela is reminded of him every time she hears his name and surname. His name causes her to emotionally react. Córdova uses exaggerated language to describe Isabela's experience: she could not get herself to say his name "for the rest of her life". If his name did not mean anything she would not have a hard time mentioning it or even think something extreme as not mentioning it forever. Therefore at this point of the book I wonder: Was Isabela heartbroken? Is she ashamed that he is not present therefore can not name him? Or is he meant to be kept a secret? For the most part it is mostly clear that their encounter had been intimate. The details of him gifting her an orchid that he specially picked out for her shows that they both might have been close. It is a common practice for people to give special gifts to people that are important to the one who gives. The orchid, the gift, is described in great detail. We know that it was once a plum color and that Isabela has kept it hidden in a book. Even the orchid is something that Isabela can not easily face. The orchid is meaningful because Isabela

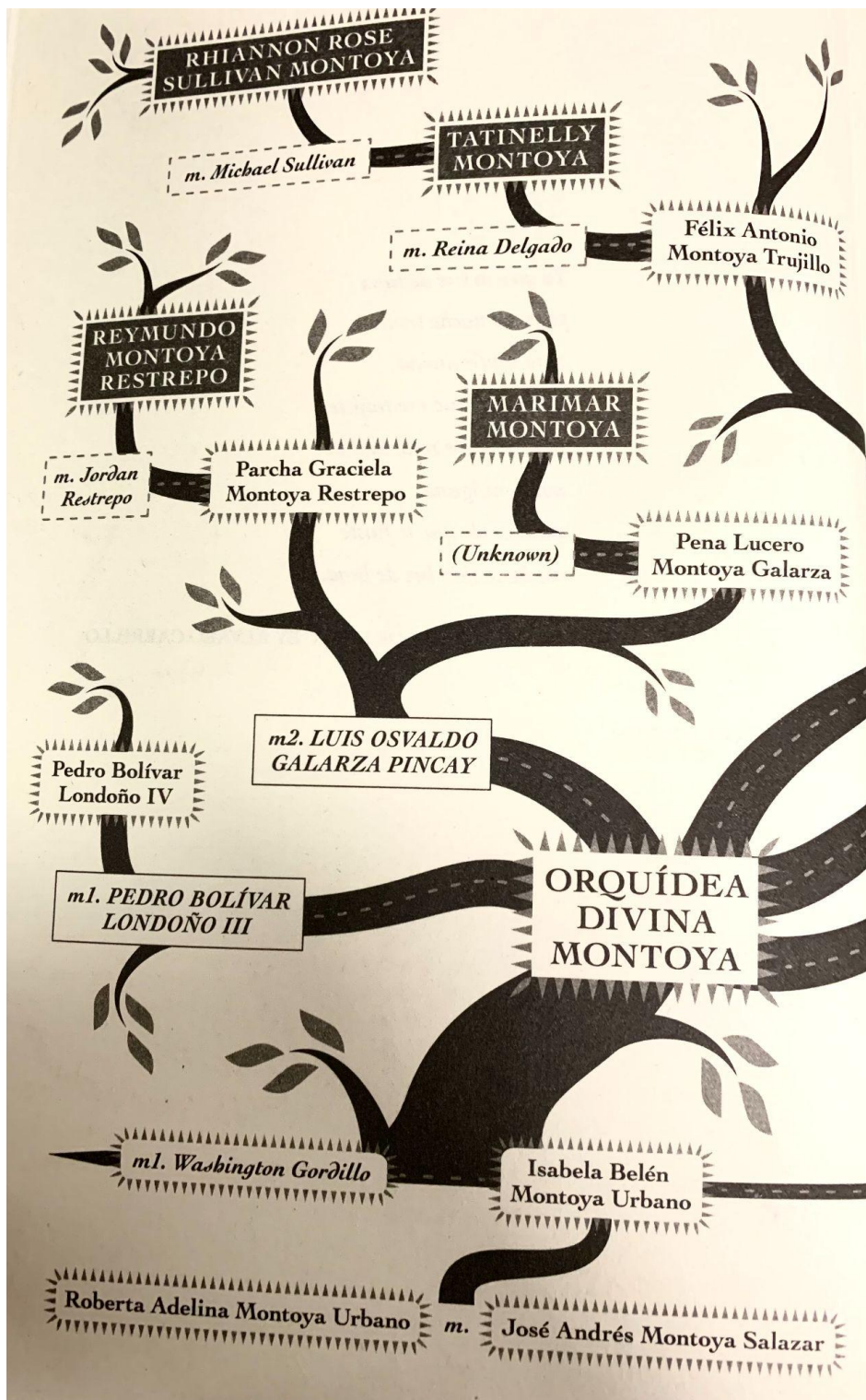
hides it in a book “she couldn’t will herself to finish”. It serves as a reminder somehow and like a closed finished book it remains untouched.

What the reader also knows is that Orquídea’s father only spent one night with Isabela and never saw her again. Their relationship or even specific romantic details are not mentioned in this passage. The author made the choice to not say anything further about Isabela and Wahington’s relationship. The lack of details illuminates the mystery and essence of what Isabela might be feeling. Which is fear of everyone outside of her finding out that she has spent only one night with him. Knowing that they have spent one night shows that they have only met once. All we know is that he gave her “gifts” and that includes an orchid and a daughter.

Córdova makes it clear that there is a connection between the literal gifted orchid flower with Isabela’s first born daughter Orquídea. She says that her daughter is “like the same flower, which didn’t need solid ground to grow”. What does Córdova mean by solid ground? It could mean that Orquídea does not need any foundations to grow. The foundations can be represented through the image of solid ground. The foundations could be the presence of a paternal figure and the lack of it is important because Orquídea does not “need” it to grow. I say this because in the above passage there are details of the absence of Orquídea’s presence and in the same passage there are details of the orchid. As readers we know that the orchid is a representation of Orquídea’s father somehow: “her daughter, weightless, fragile, like the same flower[the orchid]”. And the phrase “same flower, which [doesn’t] need solid ground to grow” comes right after. These two phrases are juxtaposed. There is an orchid that is similar to Orquídea and there is the detail: “Orquídea like the flower”, does not need solid ground to grow. I deduce that the solid ground is her father, and ultimately Orquídea Divina does not need that solid ground. The literal

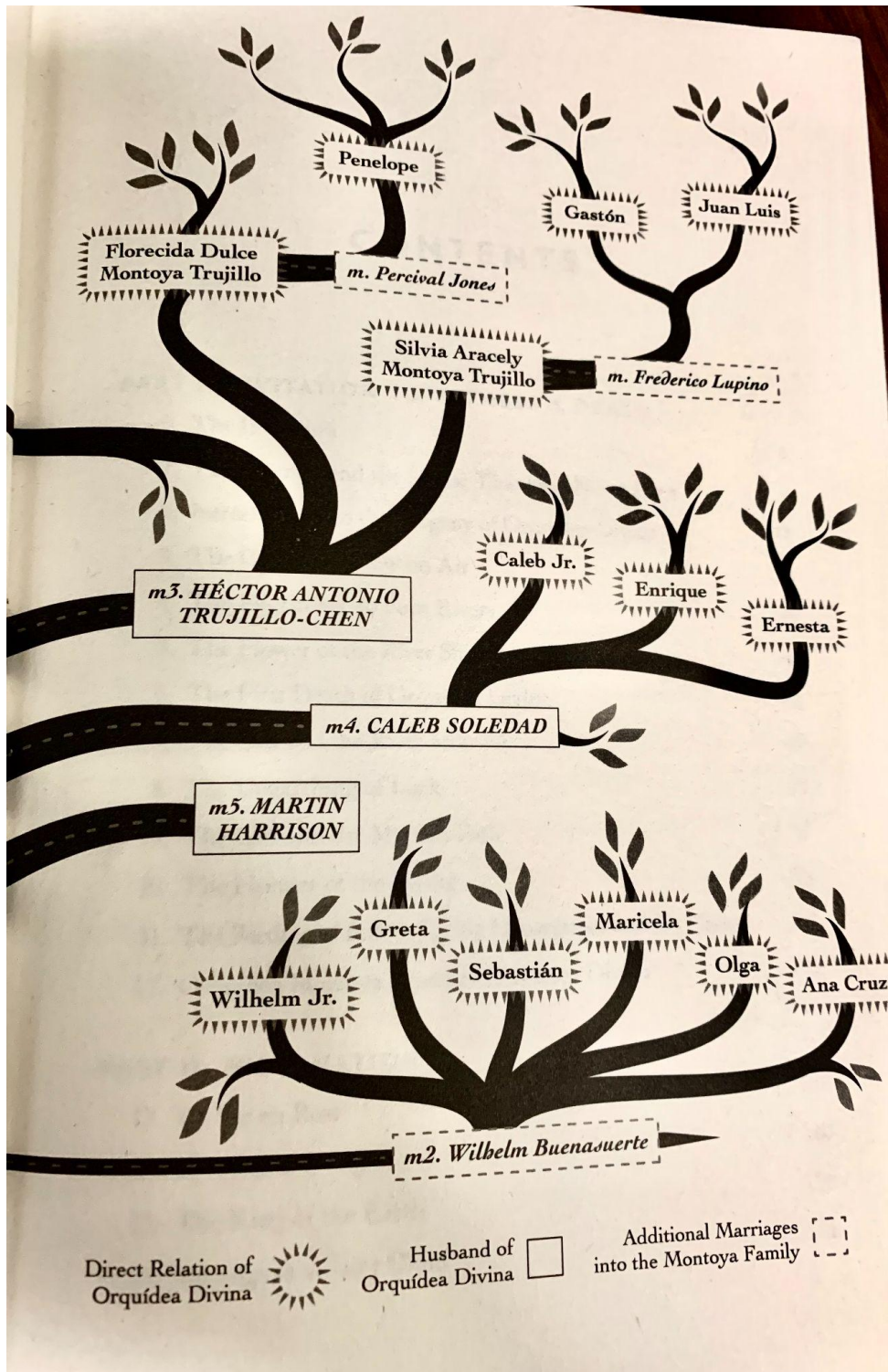
orchid flower is described as only growing in Ecuador. But Orquídea is not like that because she moves away from Ecuador, later in the novel, and further develops as a character in the United States. Therefore the lack of growing on a solid ground (where I find that her father is represented through that solid ground) means that Orquídea is flexible and multi-dimensional.

Isabela does not end up following the tradition of giving Orquídea her fathers last name because in the beginning pages of the book there is a family tree and we find that Orquídea inherits her maternal surname instead and not her fathers' which is *Montoya*:



Page 1 of the family tree in "The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina" by Zoraida Córdova

Photo taken by author



Page 2 of the family tree in “The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina” by Zoraida Córdova

Photo taken by author

The family tree that is shown above is one of the explicit instances where we find the name and surname of Orquídea Divina's father. Which is Washington Gordillo. It is strange that his name has the letter and number "m1" (m1 is an abbreviation of a first marriage) here because there is no mention of Isabela marrying Washington in the novel. He is described to be Isabela's one night stand. This image also proves that Isabela went against the family tradition by giving her surname to her daughter.

Orquídea's grandmother, Roberta, who is present in Orquídea's birth, is not supportive of Isabela. Instead she is more worried about the lack of knowledge of who Orquídea's father is. The narrator states that Orquídea's birth city: Guayaquil "Was a crowded city, but not that big. She [Isabela's mother] feared someone would recognize her, seeing her breaking her husband's decree that no one, not even the gardener, was allowed to visit Isabela and the child. A girl, at that." (35) Isabela's mother is ashamed and wants to keep her granddaughter's birth a secret. There is an anticipated fear of gossip or public shame. The town is a "crowded city" *but* "not that big". This description of the setting shows that even though Guayaquil is a city that is "crowded" there is something that makes the city small somehow, could that smallness be the population of people who gossip and spread rumors around? There are a lot of people but everyone is compacted together and therefore people are more susceptible to hearing news that even the "gardener" can suspect. The detail that they can not be seen by anyone, not even the gardener, is exaggerated and Córdova does this because she wants to show the reader how biased Orquídea's family are about her biological father's absence. These details are juxtaposed with Roberta's personal feelings of fear. Her fear is mainly motivated by what other people can say about her daughter.

Roberta is also fearful of Isabela's father finding out about Orquidea's birth because there is no father. Roberta is afraid that she will be seen "breaking her husband's decree". There is no mention of what the decree is but one can deduce that her husband and father of Isabela somehow ordered her to not be present at her granddaughter's birth? The word decree is also used to describe a legal order. Isabela's father is not a lawyer nor a politician because the author never mentions what his occupations are so one can assume that he has nothing to do with making legal orders. Therefore one can reason that Córdova is exaggerating the degree of the order that Isabelas' father is demanding. The word "decree" denotes how big and important his orders are. An order that can not be contested. We find that Roberta does not follow this order because she is present at Isabela's birth. The fearfulness that is being displayed by the women: Roberta and Isabela is a reflection of how Ecuadorian society functions under traditional values of the presence of fathers. Meaning that it is scandalous for there to be no father present at a time of their child's birth.

Like Washington, Isabella's father is also absent in this scene and there is only the nurse, Isabela and her mother. His presence is represented through his "decree". The lack of details of his relationship to Isabela shows that he is not supportive of his daughter. It also shows that he values the presence of paternal figures since he refuses to be present and orders Roberta to not be present in Orquídea's birth.

When Orquídea is finally born and enough time has passed since her birth, it is revealed that Isabelas' family continue to not support her. They reject her. Narrator says the following:

Once the sures in the crinkled white envelope had been stretched as far as they could go, Isabela secured a job working long hours at a doctor's

office on the other side of the city, and a tiny house in an industrial stretch of land by the shore. Though she lived a stone's throw from her childhood home, the Montaya's didn't want anything to do with the unwed mother and unlucky girl. A bastard daughter was never to inherit land, titles, her father's surname, or even love, which would have been free, had that strain of the Montoya clan been in possession of it (36).

Here we see that Isabela has left her family home and is living on her own. The detail of her job and that it is secured shows that Isabela might be doing well as a single mother. However her family rejects her and Orquídea. There is also an exaggeration of their rejection: "The Montoya's didn't want anything to do with the unwed mother and unlucky girl". The words "anything to do" shows that the Montoyas absolutely do not want to deal with Isabela and Orquídea. This is an exaggeration because it is extreme and it highlights how far the Montayas want to be removed from Isabela and Orquídea. They both are also described as *the* "unwed mother" and "unlucky daughter", meaning that the family solely sees them as that. Their names are not mentioned here to show the negative and one sided point of view that the Montoya family has on them.

Córdova calls this family a "clan" to highlight how close they are with their values and traditions and when they are at risk by the gossip of the town they will do anything to escape that. They do this by not wanting to do anything with Isabela. They "strain" her and perceive her daughter as "unlucky". And Córdova makes sure to portray Orquídea as unlucky in her beginnings.

Orquídea is unlucky because as a "bastard daughter" she is not deserving of inheriting land, titles, father's last name and love. These things that Ecuadorian society believes that

Orquídea is not deserving of are things that identify a “successful” person in Ecuadorian society. Orquídea is expected to not deserve any of that simply because her mother did not marry her father and also because he is not present. This passage is incredibly negative; there is no space for hope. Isabela works “long hours” she lives very close to her immediate family and yet she is seen as the unmarried woman with an unlucky daughter who is not deserving of possessions to get her far in life. This shows how terrible their situation is.

Additionally, the exaggeration of the treatment of Isabela and Orquídea allows the reader to think that they are not normal and that they are unique somehow. Córdova portrays Orquídea as an upcoming social pariah of Guayaquil because she is born out of wedlock; By sometimes referring to her as the “unlucky girl” and the “Bastard daughter”(36). The horrible treatments that Orquídea and Isabela face appeal to our emotions as readers. These details, that are represented through exaggerated word choice, are an example of what makes this novel a *novel*. A novel is a melodramatic art form, and all its entertainment and essence is supported by the hyperboles of words and grandness of the actions between characters. In Jesús Martín-Barbero book *De Los Medios a las Mediaciones*, he explains that melodrama and narration work together akin. He describes this kinship as “too strong and structured”. They work together in a way to create a system of “stereotypes” that have their own functions. These stereotypes work well with archetypes. One of the archetypes that he has mentioned is the “aggressor”, the one who creates drama. The aggressor is also the personification of the bad and in some cases the seducer that appeals to main characters. The other archetype is the character who falls victim to the aggressor. Jesús tells us that the victim to the aggressor is usually a woman and essentially the heroine whose goodness and innocence is personified. (Martín-Barbero,157-159).

How does this all relate back to the Montoyas mistreating Orquídea Divina and her mother? I believe that Orquídea Divina and Isabela are the victims. The aggressors are the Montoya family. It is also clear that Orquídea is the heroine since she is the one who is mostly victimized. The Montoya family treats Orquídea and Isabela horribly because they shun them. They also seem to remind them that Orquídea is undeserving of all the things that can make Orquídea successful in Ecuadorian society. These negative dynamics are an example that ultimately prove that *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* is a melodramatic piece of writing.

As one can see the representations of the Montoya family's reactions to the absence of paternity show that the presence of paternity, in the setting where Orquídea is born, is heavily important and affect Orquídea's independence; Because she is unable to inherit land, titles and even love. How can she develop if the absence of her father is greatly affecting her. Will this be her ultimate destiny? A destiny where she can not develop as a person? I think not.

Part 2: Orquídea Divina's Relationship to Father Analysis

Orquídea's possibility for independence is not altered by the absence of her father because she simply does not let his absence stop her from becoming independent. In this part I will show how she is not affected by her father's presence or lack of presence as well. His presence allows her to recognize her identity as a person of African descent. She also recognizes how his legacy has affected the things that she likes to do. An example of this is her taking pleasure in activities like fishing. All of these factors that she discovers about herself are because of the absence and presence of her father. His role is not to conflict Orquídea any further but to lift her up into being a complex independent character.

Before I analyze how the presence of Orquídea's father impacts her, I will first show how Isabela's relationship to Washington(Orquídea's father) in the novel parallels the societal Ecuadorian norms of relationships in real life. Nara Milanich studies the culture of paternity in Latin America in her article called: "Daddy Issues: 'Responsible Paternity' as Public Policy in Latin America." There is a part where she mentions that people in Latin America limited their marriage pool by marrying within class and race. This applies to Ecuador because Ecuador is a country in Latin America. The way in which this relates to Isabela and Washington is that they are both of different racial backgrounds. Washington is a black man; This is revealed when he is introduced in the novel: "[Orquídea's] father, a Colombian fisherman turned sailor who'd sailed into town only once before, was tall, with deep black skin, and the kind of smile that made women dizzy"(37). As for Isabela's family racial background there is no detail of what it is but I assume she is not of African Descent. Because if she was, the author would have mentioned it like she mentioned Washington's racial background through descriptions of his skin color. I assume that she is of mixed race: Native and white. Now that one knows Isabela is not of the same race as Washington one can conclude that it is not expected for them to marry nor be together in union: hence have children together or be in a romantic relationship. This could explain why Isabela is tentative of revealing Wahington's identity to her parents when she is giving birth.

Milanich also states in her article that:

The origins of responsible paternity lie in the region's unique family patterns and their relationship to class, economics, and the state. Latin America is historically Catholic, but its citizens don't always conform to the nuclear-family structure preferred by the

Church. In the early 20th century, the region had the lowest rates of marriage and the highest rates of extramarital birth in the world. (So-called “illegitimacy” rates ranged from 20 percent to 60 percent of all births, depending on the country; in Europe they were in the low single digits.) Informal unions, female-headed households, and children raised by single parents were common, especially among the poor and working class.

Milanich explains the role of fatherhood in Latin America. The type that she is referring to is known as “responsible paternity”. Which relates a great deal with the novel because the assumed “responsibility” of fathers includes presence. The fathers presence is shown through legitimate marriages and unions. Furthermore, the commonality of illegitimate births across Latin America, including Ecuador, shows that people go against or can not follow these norms because of access and background. Isabela could be one of those people. But why? Why does Zoraida Córdova portray the Montoya family as the minority of the town to be in this situation?: “She [Isabela’s mother who is a Montoya] feared someone would recognize her, seeing her breaking her husband’s decree. This quote shows that Roberta is afraid of her family being seen because Orquídea is born illegitimately. If according to Milanich where she states that illegitimate marriages and births are so common how would people notice the Montoyas? I assume that the Montoyas have a history of legitimate marriage except for Isabela; Since she is the first of her family who has an illegitimate daughter and relationship.

Now that one knows that Córdova draws parallels of reality, Latin American customs of paternity, and exaggerates these customs in the the novel: Isabella's “*forbidden*” relationship to

Washington and Isabela's family *fearful* reactions to Washington's absence as a father; then I can finally show how Washington's literal tangible presence impacts Orquídea Divina

While Orquídea was still living with Isabela excluded from the Montoyas, it is revealed that Washington came into Orquídea's town. Orquídea is seven years old at this time. It seems like Orquídea's father came into the neighborhood to see Isabela. And not so much to see Orquídea, his daughter, because "He was delighted to discover that the woman[Isabela] had struck out on her own but was not yet married."(38). The satisfaction that he feels upon finding out that Isabela is not getting married reveals his motivation. Meaning that he may be mostly curious about Isabela. There is no mention about his emotions or excitement upon going to meet Orquídea.

The narrator shows us how unphased Washington is about meeting Orquídea for the first time when we find that Isabela is not home and he only sees Orquídea. He does not greet her. The lack of descriptions about his emotions illuminate the passiveness of his presence. Córdova sets this scene by making a calm setting. Orquídea is in the comfort of her home enjoying a typical home meal: bread and coffee (37). When Washington entered Isabela's home both he and Orquídea, "recognized each other without needing to speak"(38). This shows that Washington did not feel the need to greet his daughter. The lack of his greetings show his passiveness towards her. The lack of details that can describe his emotions create a passively equal dynamic between these characters. But most importantly Washington is indifferent.

Washington's presence is further passively represented when he gave Orquídea Divina some money right after their lack of greetings. Narrator says, "But then he [Washington] spoke. He did not say his name. He did not ask for hers. He withdrew a salt-stained coin purse from the

inside of his vest, took Orquídea's small hands in his. He placed the pouch on her palm and said, 'Don't come looking for me.'" (38). What kind of father, upon meeting his daughter for the first time, does not ask for his daughter's name? And then tells her that he wants nothing to do with her? His lack of emotions, greetings and choice of words show that he does not care about Orquídea. He further separates himself from her when he asks her to not go looking for him. He also bribes her with money. And this piece of money is a single coin. The detail of the single coin shows how small his gesture is. The smallness of his gesture further portrays him as indifferent. Right after he does this he leaves. And there is no more information/ or mention of Washington after this point.

Washington's lack of recognition to his daughter also parallels Milanich's article on paternity. Milanich states that: "According to the 19th-century civil codes that formed the basis of modern family law in Latin America, men became fathers under two conditions. One was through marriage: Husbands were always considered the fathers of their wives' children. But for children born outside marriage, paternity could only be established if a man formally recognized his son or daughter or made a public demonstration of fatherhood—by showing affection toward his offspring, for example, or providing financial support." If we relate this back to the novel, Washington does not give Orquídea his affection nor verbally declares her as his daughter. This further shows his indifference as a paternal figure in the novel; And at the same time the mystery of Orquídea and Washington's relationship is illuminated. The mysteriousness is what is unsaid in his first encounter with his daughter. Córdova reveals that biological paternity, which is deemed to be incredibly important in South America, is not as important as everyone expects it to be.

Because the father himself does not recognize his daughter. His passiveness is a representation of his type of presence: an unimportant one.

Given Orquídea's father's descriptions is also telling of how Orquídea perceives her father as well. Meaning that his role in her storyline was to make an appearance, and to make Orquídea recognize herself further. One way she recognizes herself through him is that she finds out that she looks exactly like her father. Córdova says that "She saw her own face in a stranger's. Her father" and that he was "tall, with deep black skin"(37). Meaning that she too is of African descent like her father because she sees her face while seeing his face. Her racial identity is revealed and acknowledged to the audience and to herself. She is ultimately represented when she encounters him.

Orquídea also "learned that she was exactly like her father, untethered, belonging to nowhere and nothing and no one, like a ship lost to the seas" (38). Does the narrator mean this literally? As in Orquídea has absolutely nothing, or is it more of highlighting Orquídea's character as an independent person who thrives? I think that Córdova is referring to Orquídea's independence. She has "nothing" but that "nothing" is Orquídea's clean slate. Because she has nothing she is able to move around and change. Like her father's independence. It is also revealed that her father is a "Colombian fisherman turned sailor"(37). We also find out that Orquídea likes to go fishing. Is it a coincidence that Wahington's profession as a sailor coincides with Orquídea's love for fishing? It is clear that she inherited his qualities as a fisherman. The reader can see that Orquídea likes to fish on page 67 when the narrator says that "Orquídea was just an ordinary girl who spent most of her days by the river" it is also revealed that she spent her

time there fishing with fishermen (68). These details parallel well with the details of Washington being described as a “fisherman turned sailor”.

We finally find that Orquídea herself does not claim her father like her father does not claim her. This is revealed later in the novel when she is at the river fishing for some fish to eat with her mother. While fishing in a canoe, she encounters a river monster. The river monster appears and crawls up to her canoe and starts a conversation with her. He asks her what she wants. He says, ““What do you want, Bastard Daughter of the Waves?”” and Orquídea responds, ““My name is Orquídea””. River monster responds and says, ““You do not bear your father’s name. But he is of the sea. A sailor through and through.”” Orquídea responds and says, “I don’t claim him.”” And finally the river monster says, “Ah, but the water claims you. Hence-your title (‘Bastard daughter of the waves’)”(70). Orquídea Divina literally says that she does not claim her father. At the same time the river monster reveals that Washington is of the sea like Orquídea. This conversation reveals and further supports my argument that there is a possibility that Orquídea is indifferent about her father because she does not claim him. She also does not say anything further than that. What is unsaid also proves that she doesn't care about whether her father is in or out of her life.

As one can see, Córdova’s use of representing exaggerated passive and absent paternity in Orquídea’s life reveals paternal figures as unimportant. Additionally Washington is the moron of the novel. He is aloof and passive about his daughter. However, this representation goes on much deeper . Washington’s indifference is also shallow and one dimensional. All the reader can know about him is that he is a sailor who had a one night stand with Isabela. He then becomes absent by leaving Isabela behind with an orchid. And finally becomes present when he comes

back only to be represented as uncaring for seeing his daughter for the first time. His presence however is used to illuminate Orquídea's own views of her father and also her identity. She does not claim him, and there is a possibility that she too is indifferent about his presence. Through his absence and presence she acknowledges herself as a person of African descent and a person who like her father likes to fish. These details are her most important qualities as a young girl. Because of her father's presence we are able to see that his absence is not a tragedy for Orquídea as a character. Instead a lot of her qualities and independence are revealed.

Part 3: Orquídea Divina's Relationship to Stepfather Analysis

The final paternal relationship that impacted Orquídea's independence is Wilhelm Buenasuerte, her stepfather and also Isabela's (Orquídea's mother) first "legitimate" husband. Compared to Washington, a passive presence in Orquídea's presence, Wilhelm is ultimately an active presence in Orquídea's presence. His presence that is active does not hinder Orquídea from being who she is and also doing what she does.

Wilhelm is introduced early in the novel when Orquídea is a preteen. He is a land developer/civil engineer and "Born to a German mother and Ecuadorian father" (48). Prior to being in Ecuador he had been studying in Germany and decided to come back to his "father's land-his birthplace-[Ecuador]to make it better, to make it more"(49). Therefore he is back in Ecuador. It is a hot day and he is sweltering. The place that he is investigating to develop is Orquídea's neighborhood. While walking the roads he finds that there is nothing to develop. He stops along a shore and takes out a handkerchief to wipe away his own sweat. As he is doing so, his wallet falls to the ground and does not notice because he keeps on walking. Orquídea is

behind him walking back home from fishing and notices Wilhelm's wallet on the ground. She picks up the wallet and calls after him shouting that he has dropped his wallet. He turns around and retrieves the wallet from Orquídea and thanks her. He gives her a "five sucre[Ecuadorian currency]note"(49). While this is happening Isabela is looking all over the streets for Orquídea and finally finds her daughter talking to Wilhelm. She then apologizes for Orquídea to him thinking that her daughter is bothering him. Wilhelm listens but can not muster up words because he finds Isabela extremely beautiful. Internally he has an urge to protect Isabela. He calms down and introduces himself to her. And finally finds "a reason to stay"(50) because he fell instantly in love with Isabela.

The representation of his presence in the beginning scene, when the narrator introduces him as a land developer/civil engineer, is active. By active I mean that his presence/personality causes action. The author achieves this by word choice. When he is introduced the narrator says that he is "One of those men who waltzed into small, muddy neighborhoods and provincial towns"(48). The word "waltzed" highlights that Wilhelm is casually coming into areas that are not urban. Small neighborhoods and rural towns are quiet, and there is not as much commotion compared to cities. Then the narrator states that Wilhelm, like other men who are land developers and civil engineers, "laid down concrete foundations for the city, roads and boardwalks. They left their mark"(48). Wilhelm's job as a land developer causes the development of cities: "[laying] down concrete foundations". Why couldn't the narrator just say that Wilhelm laid "foundations" without adding the word "concrete"? The word concrete is specific. It is also hard on the surface. On the other hand the word "foundations" is vague. Therefore the word

“concrete” next to “foundations” creates an image of Wilhelm actively building things. The action of building requires effort and work which is related to activeness.

The word choice of “concrete foundations” is also similar to the word choice “muddy neighborhoods”. The word “muddy” is specific like “concrete”. Mud is loose and weaker than concrete. Mud as a foundation is temporal. It can easily break during natural disasters. The word neighborhood is also vague. But the word mud creates the image of Orquídea’s town as not developed. When one juxtaposes the image made of words :“concrete foundations” with the town that Wilhelm is inspecting: “muddy neighborhoods” ultimately shows that he is there to create change in the town. The “muddy” foundations of Orquídea’s town will be replaced with concrete. Mud to concrete as an image shows change and who is there to make that change? Wilhelm Buenasuerte. Changing the image of the town from mud to concrete again requires action and work. Wilhelm as a civil engineer and land developer is allowed to do that. He is not only changing the scope of the town but also creating “roads and boardwalks”. This word choice shows that the town lacked in those areas. This also creates change. Ultimately the author further highlights his active presence when she states that Wilhelm is the type of person who leaves a “mark”. A person is able to leave a mark when they drastically change their surroundings, and that is what Wilhelm plans to do. In the end, Wilhelm’s motivation to change and lay new foundations to the neighborhood ultimately represents his active presence.

Another example of Wilhelm’s active representation, when he is introduced to the novel, is when he meets Isabela for the first time and desires to save her. Here the author achieves this active presence by exaggerated word choice. Wilhelm’s feelings and desires towards Isabela are immense. Prior to this moment Orquídea gives him his wallet that fell to the ground, and Isabela

is looking for Orquídea. She finds Orquídea and apologizes to Wilhelm saying “I hope my daughter is not bothering you sir” (49). Wilhelm is in awe of her when he sees her for the first time. He thinks that “The woman before him was dressed for an office, with a beauty that was so delicate, he felt the incomprehensible urge to do everything he could to protect it”(49). Isabela appears fragile to him. This fragileness appeals to Wilhelm because he feels an “incomprehensible urge”. The word “incomprehensive” is used to describe something absolutely unknown. The urge is described as that. Why can it not be a simple urge? Why does the author have to use a word that describes something completely mysterious as the adjective to that feeling of eagerness? This could mean that Wilhelm has never felt that type of urge, and he is experiencing something completely foreign. The word choice of “urge” already describes a heavy feeling. When it is juxtaposed with “incomprehensible”, further makes Wilhelm’s feelings extreme. The extremeness of his feelings appeals to exaggeration. Making this little moment actively present. His “incomprehensible urge” is accompanied with the words “do everything he could to protect it”. Knowing that he is experiencing extreme emotions, words like “do everything he could” further adds to extremes. This pair of words are exaggerated too. When one does anything to achieve something: Wilhelm protecting Isabela, requires consistency and effort. This ties to his activeness as a presence. He is present when he meets Isabela and is represented as an active character when the author describes his desires to protect. Protection requires action too. Now that he is introduced as a person “laying foundations” while also being the one to “protect”, Isabela further shows that he is actionable. “Wilhelm Buenasuerte led the charge to developing La Atarazana [Orquídea’s “muddy neighborhood”], starting with the single-road

town where he'd first met Orquídea and fallen in love at first sight with Isabela"(93). This quote is evidence to the results of his active presence. He certainly "developed" Orquídea's town.

I also find that Wilhelm's active presence creates major conflict between Orquídea and her new "home". By her new "home" I mean the home that is created when Wilhelm marries Isabella. As a result of this marriage, he has six children with her. Orquídea has younger step siblings and is introduced to more people who are related to Wilhelm. The city that Wilhelm "laid concrete foundations" in was further expanding/growing. Orquídea at this time is fourteen. Wilhelm also became richer by the day and was able to bring wealth to the new extended household. Isabela benefited from his wealth. Both Wilhelm and Isabela also began hosting parties together. They invited poets, scientists and artists who were in the same wealthy background as them. Despite Orquídea being a child, the adult men who were invited to these parties flirted with her. Isabela took notice of this and forbade Orquídea from attending the parties. Isabela got into the habit of locking her in a room. Then the narrator reveals that Isabela "loses her uterus" and stops birthing children altogether (95). The last child is the sixth. Then Isabela hired servants to cook, clean and care for her children. Since Orquídea was never allowed to attend the parties anymore, she ended up spending her time with the servants taking care of Isabela's sixth child. She also cleaned and cooked with them. She "had to give up her room to the guests and sleep on a cot in the nursery"(95). Her cousins, from her stepfather's side came to visit Isabela because they were concerned for the loss of her uterus . During their time there, they instigated Orquídea's younger step siblings to bully her. Orquídea's peace became interrupted more constantly. She had enough of the bullying and looked for solace in her favorite place: a river where she liked to fish. Being there she is called by an unknown voice. Orquídea is curious

and looks for the unknown voice and finds a strange older woman smoking a cigarette. This woman asks if Orquídea is looking to work and Orquídea says yes. She then leaves with her.

I would like to let you know that when I now refer to Wilhelm I will refer to him through his family. His presence is no longer singular but plural. It has been two years since he met Orquídea and Isabela at this time. Orquídea's new immediate family is bigger. This chapter that I analyze stops talking about him as an individual. I argue that the narrator represents him through his extended family, and children: The Buenasuertes. An example of this is the choice of name for Orquídea's younger stepbrother. His name Wilhelm Jr. And there's even a point in the book where the author just refers to him as "Wilhelm " without the "Jr " part attached after (96). It is clear that her stepfather's presence is present through her younger stepbrother. Another example of this is when Orquídea's cousins are introduced. They are named Mila and Marie but the narrator introduces them as the "Buenasuerte cousins " (95). Seeing that the narrator refers to them as the "Buenasuerte cousins" further connects them to Wilhelm Buenasuerte. Why couldn't the author only refer to them as Orquídea's cousins? If Wilhelm is her stepfather then isn't his family her family too? When the author chooses to introduce the cousins this way, it shows that there is a separation between Orquídea and the Buenasuertes. This further makes it clear that she is not close to them. When they visit he is still actively present, but his presence becomes plural. He remains the main reason for all the created conflict, even though he does not explicitly participate. If he had not married Isabela then his family wouldn't have met Orquídea. And family members like her step cousins and step siblings wouldn't bully her and make Orquídea feel the need to find solace in her favorite river. If she would not have gone to the river she would not have met the strange woman with the cigarettes. Ultimately, if there is no Wilhelm, a

paternal present/ active figure who is also shown through his children, and extended family called the “Buenasuerte cousins”, then there would not be a plot where Orquidea is seen to develop as an independent woman.

I think that it is important to show how conflict is created first before I analyze how the conflict, caused by stepfather (mainly through his family), influences Orquídea’s development and ultimately her outlook on paternal figures. The specific part where one can find that Wilhelm’s active presence creates major conflict between Orquídea and her new “home” is when Wilhelm’s family members pay a visit. They came during “The summer when her mother had Ana Cruz [Isabela’s sixth child], and lost her uterus” (95). The narrator then tells us that Orquídea had to give up her room for the guests: Wilhelm’s family, and sleep in her younger stepsister’s nursery. She also had to take care of her younger stepsister. When she was not doing so, she was helping a servant named “Jefita” with tending the house (95). One can observe that Orquídea’s new home prioritizes Wilhelm’s family guests more than her because she has to give up her room. One can also clearly see that she is taking adult jobs like: caring for her younger sister and if she is not doing that then she has to help the servants. Orquídea is taking an adult role. She is no longer experiencing life as a regular teenage girl. She has responsibilities. This is all because the house that she is in is busy with parties, Wilhelms’ extended family visits, young siblings that need to be taken care of, etc. There is too much responsibility for a child to handle. Knowing that her new family is wealthy and can afford enough servants to take all these roles, why does Orquídea have to do these jobs with them? It is unfair because there are no details of Wilhelm, Isabela, her younger siblings, and extended families doing these jobs. It is clear to me as a reader that all these responsibilities are being put on her. Prior to Wilhelm entering her life, Orquídea

was doing things that she liked to do like fishing and spending time with the people there. The narrator also states that the summer when Wilhelm's family came to stay, "Orquidea lost any chance she had to visit the river" (95). Her responsibilities prevented her from continuing to enjoy her hobbies in her river. The conflict here is that Wilhelm's family came to stay. Their stay is interfering with Orquídea's personal life because she is unable to fish in her favorite river. Instead, she has to take a responsible role of caring for her "colicky"(95) younger sister and tending the house with the servants. Her stepfather's family is present in her home and she has given up her freedom in a way because she can not go fishing!

Furthermore, the conflict of her stepfather's family presence becomes active when her cousins, who are Wilhelm's direct nieces, bully her physically .The conflict is supported by the author's choice of details. These details are exaggerated and appeal to the author's novela writing style. The "Buenasuerte" cousins are around Orquídea's age: fourteen years old. And when Orquídea was cleaning they,

"would stomp around with muddy shoes... threw bloody underwear to be laundered when they caught her in the courtyard. They taught little Wilhelm Jr.[Orquídea's younger stepbrother] and Maricela that Orquídea's skin was made out of polished wood, like a marionette, and couldn't bleed, and so they tested the theory by pinching her so hard they drew blood with their jagged, bitten nails. Mila and Marie stayed for two years."(96)

The actions of these two girls are horrible. The details of them purposely making the floors dirty with mud, and throwing dirty underwear at Orquidea are over the top. It keeps getting worse. These details are build ups. The cousins start out by purposely making everything dirty, to

teaching Wilhelm Jr that Orquídea is resistant to physical pain, to “testing out” this “theory”, to “drawing out blood” from her face by their “jagged” sharp nails to them being present for two years are all negative. Words like “theory” show the extremity of what the cousins are telling Wilhelm Jr. A theory like Orquídea is made of wood is a big claim. Reading that they instigated her younger stepbrother to physically hurt Orquídea captures the essence of their cruelty. The cousins do these things as a pair. The author uses the metaphor of the “marionette” to solidify the dynamics between the cousins and Orquídea. The metaphor is used to highlight the control that they have over her. Their ability to also control how her younger stepbrother treats her further makes Orquídea vulnerable to the Buenasuertes. These negative details like “jagged bitten nails”, and “drew blood” appeal to the senses of the reader. I grimaced when I read this. These vivid, specific details also appealed to my emotions. I feel bad for Orquídea. It stimulates our imagination. These details make it very clear that the Buenasuerte clan are evil people. The reason why I mentioned that this writing style is similar to how novelas are written is because novelas are made to appeal to the emotions and senses and this passage achieves that. There is also no detail of anyone interfering to stop the physical hurt that Orquídea is facing. She is alone. Finally, the detail that they stayed for two years is over the top. This just means that the bullying is prolonged. The cousins, who are direct family members to Wilhelm Buenasuerte, have more power and control. This passage is a direct example of conflict. The Buenasuertes, who are present in this household, make Orquídea’s life miserable.

The exaggerated details of the Buenasuertes’ malice highlight Orquídea as a saint/martyr. Zorraidá Córdova continues to overdraw the cruelty of the Buenasuertes by stating that, “Her siblings-though they were only between the ages of six and one-were her own personal

demons"(96) and also that "Orquídea had been born cursed and adrift, but at least she hadn't been born evil" Here we see that there is a good and a bad. The good one is Orquídea. The bad ones are the Buenasuertes. Córdova achieves this by saying that Orquídea's siblings are her "own personal demons". She also compares these demons to Orquídea herself; even though she is born cursed, she still manages to be virtuous. She is the victim of evil. When we juxtapose the representations of the Buenasuerte siblings as evil creatures next to a saint like Orquídea, then we are reminded that the Buenasuertes are the attackers and Orquídea is the victim.

Orquídea's experience in her home keeps on getting worse. Orquídea is further victimized when Wilhelm Jr. pushes her off the stairs because he did not want to get ready for school. Orquídea hurts her leg and suffers a concussion. No one cares that she is hurt. Wilhelm, her stepfather, continues on with his daily parties with Isabela. Orquídea spends her time healing in her room and when "Wilhelm was tasked with taking up food up to his sister." h responds by saying 'She's not my sister.' He'd repeat the words he'd heard his father use: 'She's a bastard.'"(96). This quote illuminates separation between her and her younger stepbrother. He does not consider her as his own sister because she is a "bastard". Her stepfather is the one who influences her stepbrother to think and say that. This is a direct example of how Wilhelm Buenasuerte creates conflict. Similar to the cousins convincing Wilhelm Jr that Orquídea is made out of wood, the stepfather convinces her young stepbrother that she is not deserving of the "sister" title. This is an example of conflict because Wilhelm Jr. is made to turn against Orquídea. She is ultimately made as a pariah and I would like to reiterate that the active presence of her stepfather is the main contributor.

Orquídea Divina finally has enough of the maltreatment. She escapes from her home on October 9th which happens to be Guayaquil's, a city in Ecuador, Independence day. It is ironic how Orquídea becomes independent on a city's independence day. It is a big deal because Orquídea does not come back after the fact. Since it is independence day everyone in the city including her family are celebrating. Orquídea wants to celebrate with her family but can not because her mother, Isabela, scolds her for wearing a dress that is "too inappropriate" for the occasion. Instead she tells her to take care of Ana Cruz, Orquídea's younger stepsister, until she decides to "calm down and put on something decent"(98). She did not change to a decent dress however. She decided that she did not want to be at the party but when she looked at the Buenasuerte cousins, Mila and Marie, having a great time in their fancy dresses, "All she'd wanted was one day, but no matter how hard she worked, how well she behaved, how much she tried, it wasn't enough. She didn't belong there" (99). This is the part where Orquídea realizes that this new place and home that Wilhelm has drastically changed was not her place anymore. She doesn't feel like herself since she "doesn't belong there". She is also being someone that she is not: "how much she tried". The house chores, caregiving, and the way that she dresses is not enough for anyone in the household that she is in. Guayaquil's independence day is the day she finally realized her worth as a person. It was clear since the beginning that she has been mistreated and by realizing that "she does not belong there" allows her to move forward. When we look at the bigger picture we are reminded that her stepfather, a present/active paternal figure, is the reason for all of that.

After Orquídea realizes that she does not belong she visits her favorite river. While kneeling down in front of it she pleaded and heard a strange voice in the air murmuring "*find*

me” (99). She walked towards that voice and kept on following it until she encountered a white tent. And “Even though the sound of the voice was gone, she knew she was in the right place. Her feet hurt, but she crossed the parking lot, strewn in hay, and stopped in front of a woman draped in red velveteen and smoking a cigarette from a silver holder. ‘Hello. Do you have work?’ [Orquídea asked] The woman smiled with the burden of someone who knows too much. ‘My dear, you are the thing we were looking for’”(100). From this point on Orquídea does not go back to the Buenasuertes. This tent that she found is a circus that is owned by her first future husband named Bolivar Londoño. Orquídea considers this circus the “right place” and when she was walking towards it the narrator tells us that she felt “protected” . How does this relate to her independence? It relates to her independence because she finds this place alone without any one influencing her decision to leave her home.

As one can see, Wilhelm Buenasuerte is at the heart of Orquídea’s plot and character development. The representation of his active presence is highlighted through his extended family. Orquídea faces conflict with his extended family. They bully her and deprive her of her pleasures like fishing. She is instructed to work and care for her younger step siblings. The Buenasuerte cousins visit and physically mistreat her. All of this causes her to have no choice but resolve the conflict. She does that by realizing that she does not belong and goes to her favorite river despite not being allowed by her family. We also see that she does not listen to her mother, when she tells her to change clothes and care for Ana Cruz on Guayaquil’s independence. Finally she physically leaves the setting of conflict and finds a new place away from the Buenasuertes. And finally realizes that the place that she ran away to, is in the right place. This is her place,

where her family is not present. She did this all by herself. We finally see her not being influenced by the world of her stepfather's presence.

Zorraida Córdova uses dialogue between the Buenasuertes and Orquídea to reveal that Orquídea is not resentful and is ultimately unbothered by the Buenasuerte family presence.

The part where one can observe that Córdova shows us that Orquídea does not need nor care for her stepfather is when Orquídea is an older woman. She decides to give back the money that Wilhelm had given her, to Wilhelm Jr. She arranges this when she is about to die of old age and calls all her descendants, including the Buenasuerte family to collect their "inheritance". For the Buenasuertes the inheritance is the five Sucre note that her stepfather gave her when she retrieved his wallet by the shore in her hometown. This is all taking place in the United States midwest. This place is called "Four Rivers".

When the Buenasuertes arrive at Orquídea's home, Córdova uses metaphors to illuminate the unpleasantness/foreignness of their presence. She says: "They looked like intruders. Sparrows among hummingbirds"(75). The word "Intruders" has a negative connotation. This word creates an image that they are strangers to Orquídea's home. As if they are not meant to be there. They are like criminals interrupting a home. The phrase pair of "sparrows among humnbirds" further separates the Buenasuertes from the rest of Orquídea's descendants. Both families are drastically different, but when the author uses a metaphor to compare both families to different species of birds then this shows that they are both different but the same. Meaning that the Buenasuertes are part of Orquídea but not in the same way as her descendants are. The word : "they looked like intruders" confirms that they are estranged.

Zorraidá Córdava starts the use of dialogues when Orquídea responds to the confusion about who the Buenasuertes are. Orquídea says, ““These are the Buenasuertes””... “ “My brothers and sisters””. One of Orquídea’s youngest descendants, Caleb Jr, claims that he thought that Orquídea was an only child. Wilhelm Jr. interjects and says, “ “She ran away from us after mother [Isabela] married our father [Wilhelm Buenasuerte]”” Orquídea responds, ““I ran away because I would have rather taken my chances on the street than spend one more minute under the Buenasuerte roof””. Wilhelm responds by saying that they were all only children and that Orquídea is exaggerating (76-77). As Wilhelm says this, Orquídea notices that Ana Cruz, one of her younger stepsisters, and stepfather are not present. She asks Wilhelm Jr. why that is and he says that they are not there because her stepfather is sick and Ana is taking care of him (77). She states that she wishes that they were there. After that, she gathers the five Sucre inheritance and hands them over to Wilhelm and says, ““Cinco[five] sucres’ her voice regained its clarity. That’s how I met your father and that’s how my mother’s life changed””... ““That’s how my life changed, too. I suppose””... ““I’ve kept this note for decades, sealed, not even spending it when I had nothing else to my name because it carried a promise.”” ““What promise?”” Wilhelm asks and Orquídea responds, ““That I would never be indebted to anyone ever again, especially men like your father””(78).

Many things are revealed in this dialogue. One is that Orquídea did not feel the need to tell her descendants about the past where she lived in the Buenasuerte house. Why? It could mean that this part of her life is not that important to share. She also confirms that she did not want to be there. Through her responses we see her reflect this part of her past. She reveals a lot about herself and what she has thought at that time when she says: “ That’s how I met your

father, and that's how my mother's life changed... That's how my life changed too." She confirms that the active presence of her stepfather was enough to drastically change the state of her present. And when she finally tells Wilhelm Jr, that she doesn't want to owe anyone money, especially her father, shows that she is independent. There was change but not in a way that deterred her. She was able to break free and move forward. And it is also revealed that she actually does want to see her stepfather and stepsister. This just shows that she is not resentful. She expresses that she wants to see them. If we compare this to a scenario where she would be hurt by the actions of her stepfather, it would be expected that she would not even mention him. There is also another possibility to why she asks for him and that could be that enough time has passed for her to move on? But when she gives the five sucre note back to Wilhelm Jr. represents that she has never needed her stepfather. The sucre note could also be a symbol of Wilhelm's desire to protect and save Isabela, including her daughter, but she does not need saving from her stepfather because she gives it back after so many years.

Another example that reveals Orquídea's lack of resentment of her stepfather's presence is when she reacts indifferently to Wilhelm Jr.'s anger after she has given back the five sucre note. Córdova writes that the Buenasertes, "remained still, offended, bewildered. Wilhelm looked like he was about to start foaming at the mouth" and "snatched: the money away, and finally they all left soundlessly, and did not look back" (78). Orquídea responds to this by "[Grinning] deeply with her eyes closed" and says "What is it like to live with rage in your heart" (79). The juxtaposition of the Buenasertes shock and anger with Orquídea's peacefulness and gentleness unveils that she is at ease. Córdova uses exaggerated language to create tension. The three words like "still, offended, and bewildered" describe emotions and body language. The

narrator confirms that they are not happy about her returning the money. Córdova also uses a simile of “foaming at the mouth” to show that Wilhelm Jr. is the most offended by all of this. Through it all Orquídea remains calm and collected because she grins and closes her eyes. This language is used to describe the opposition between the Buenasuertes and her.

As one can see the representations of Wilhelm Buenasuerte’s active presence as a stepfather is used to illuminate Orquídea’s character plot and development. We have seen that his active presence is shown through his family, like his children that he has with Isabela, and his extended family. Córdova also shows us that despite the hurt that active /present paternal figures tend to display in the novel, Orquídea Divina as a daughter can move forward and ultimately gain independence. Finally, Orquídea has shown us that she is not resentful nor bothered, instead she continues to show care and maturity when she gives the five sucre note back to her younger siblings in the future.

Part 4: Analysis of Paternal Relationships in the Bolivar Londoño Generation

In this final part of the chapter, I will be analyzing the impact of paternal representations in the Bolivar Londoño generation. The generation of Bolivars are made up of three men who are all named Bolivar Londoño. There is Bolivar one, the grandfather, Bolivar two who is Bolivar one’s son, and finally Bolivar three who is the grandson of Bolivar one, and son of Bolivar two. Bolivar three is Orquídea Divina’s first husband. When I talk about them as a generation I will be referring to them as the Bolivar triad.

I conclude that the representations of the Bolivar triad generation are essentially negative because we see that this generation of fathers maltreat their sons. The way in which the Bolivar triad are impacted is that Bolivar the third develops into a villain. Because of the negative

representations of paternity. Bolivar the third is ultimately the embodiment of the “aggressor” in the novel.

The choice of the Bolivar triad’s first names alludes to historical figure Simon Bolivar. He is known to be the liberator of South America. He fought for Ecuador, Venezuela and Colombia's independence. Like Simón Bolivar Bolivar the first, the grandfather, is misfortunate in his early life . The narrator says that he is,

Born to a Galician mother and a mestizo father from Cartagena, the first Bolivar was orphaned after a fever swept through their [his family’s] town in one particularly nasty rainy season. His father’s estranged brother had taken charge of the finances after the funeral, abandoned Bolivar in a dingy little tavern called San Erasmo, then he boarded a ship to Santo Domingo and never looked back (183-1840).

Here we see that Bolivar experiences a lot of loss. One of the main losses is his parents. Bolivar the first is then orphaned and his second loss is represented through his uncle taking away his family’s wealth but also, “ [Abandoning] Bolivar in a dingy little tavern called San Erasmo” and finally boarding “a ship to Santo Domingo and never [looking] back” (184) . Bolivar, the first’s uncle, was in charge to be present in his nephew's life. He was supposed to be the new paternal figure, but he is absent because he abandons Bolivar the first.

The descriptions of Bolivar the first’s early life are exaggerated because his uncle literally stole all of Bolivar’s money. He is described to take “charge” of all the finances. The uncle is also represented as separated from Bolivar one. He is described as the “estranged” uncle. The image that this relationship creates is negative. Bolivar 's uncle was also not emotionally present. There is no detail of how his uncle took care of Bolivar at the time of his parent’s funeral.

The above quote also raises questions about Bolivar One parent's race. It is not clear where Both of Bolivar's parents are fully from. There are only small details like his mother being from Galicia, an autonomous community in Spain, and his father being from Cartagena, a coastal city in Colombia. Córdova makes no mention of Bolivar's mother racial identity. His mother is simply from a small obscure town in Spain and his father is mixed race. Does this mean that Bolivar's racial identity does not matter or should not matter for us as the readers? With this given detail there is a sense of mystery of Bolivar's origins. One can not assume his race but knowing that his father is half white and native and assuming that his mother may be white (since she was born in Spain) makes me believe that Bolivar is predominantly a white man. Like Orquídea's father being a tool to acknowledge her race, Bolivar one's parents also are present to highlight Bolivar's racial identity.

Ecuadorian society (in which the Bolivar triad's early life is set in) values norms of legitimate families. And Bolivar the first does not have a legitimate family because both of his parents die when he is young. Right after the narrator gives us the backstory of Bolivar one, we find out that his uncle did not only take away his wealth but also his last name: "Bolivar had nothing but the clothes he was wearing as his uncle had taken everything including their last names"(184). Like I have mentioned earlier, last names are used to represent whether or not a person is an offspring of illegitimate or legitimate marriages.

Córdova parallels the reality of cultural norms of last names with the novel; Because In "Exploring Kinship in Anthropology and History: Surnames and Social Transformations in the Bolivian Andes" author Harry Sanabria writes about the importance of last names. He states that the practice of giving a fathers surname to a child is Spanish. And the Spanish implemented this

practice into Ecuador during the colonial period. He focuses his research on Bolivia but Ecuador is a country that is near Bolivia therefore the norms of surnames can be applied in Ecuador as well. Sanabria states that:

“Birth status- an individual’s marking as a legitimate, illegitimate, or ‘natural’ offspring- was intertwined with honor, sexuality, and marriage as well as the possibilities for achieving wealth, social position, and power. As such, it was paramount in colonial Latin and Spanish America (Twinam 1989; Guiterrez 1991; Socolow 1989). Ann Twinam has pointed out that honor ‘was not only a heritage of racial and religious purity but a family history of proper action, as signified by generations of sanctified marriages and of legitimate births’(1989, 123).

Illegitimacy, in contrast, pointed to uncontrolled sexuality and the lack of honor. It could be a serious impediment to accumulating wealth (only legitimate offspring could claim full inheritance rights) and could seriously undermine social mobility (Twinam 1989, 124; 1999)” (Sanabria).

As it is said in the quote above surnames are essential for people to have a place in society. It brings people power because their last names are “legitimate” which determines their whole identity and future identity.

Therefore when a person is born out of wedlock and it is revealed in the public, then they are immediately seen in a negative light. Therefore Bolivar’s uncle taking away his surname already destroys Bolivar one’s reputation. Bolivar is born under legitimacy as it says “Born to a Galician mother and a mestizo father” however that significantly changes when his parents die out of sickness. Bolivar essentially was going to live a life where he is respected but with him

being orphaned and being abandoned by his uncle and his last name taken away he is left with nothing. This goes to show that the presence of Bolivar one's father is essential for his development.

Essentially there is no story on parental relationships with the first Bolivar. The way in which this relates to identity is that Surnames have a big influence in a character's fate and place in society. Identity is mostly acknowledged by what an individual has in their possession, tangible or not. If an individual has an illegitimate last name then their chances to accumulate wealth is lower than those who have legitimate last names. For Bolivar his surname being taken away took away his power and ability to naturally succeed in Ecuadorian society. He is left with nothing; he is ultimately given the chance to start his life again with a new family, setting and upbringing. However, individuals being illegitimate and also being born that way was very common in Latin America. Since most of the population was made of poor working class people the possibility to own wealth was very low. It was also common for children to be raised by single parents just like Bolivar. He is also forced to create and begin a new identity. He does this by dedicating his efforts to card tricks and gambling in which I will talk more about in the next paragraph.

Even though Bolivar's surname is taken away by his uncle, a paternal figure who was supposed to take care of him, Bolivar deals with this situation very independently. He deals with it by creating his own last name: Londoño. Then we see that this last name has remained the same for generations after him: all his descendants named Bolivar Londoño.

Bolivar one's last name is revived when:

Celia Londoño, the barmaid who found him searching for food in the alley, took him home. Gave him her name, because she'd never had a partner or children of her own. She raised Bolivar in the tavern, and when he got old enough, he was put to work scrubbing floors and keeping the liquor bottles stocked. He had a knack for fighting and for card tricks, but soon enough the card tricks would have a knack for him" (184).

Here we see that thanks to the lady who found Bolivar one, Bolivar one was able to gain a new last name. We also see here that Bolivar has a prowess for fighting and making tricks. These are qualities that make Bolivar one be who he is. If it wasn't for the absence of his paternal figures then maybe he would not discover that he has a "knack for fighting and card tricks"

Time has passed and Celia Londoño, his caregiver, passes away. Bolivar one therefore leaves the tavern and "made his fortune cheating at cards" (184). He got older and found pleasure in spending all his fortune on gambling, alcohol and women. The narrator describes him as "reckless". In this passage the detail of Celia's death is juxtaposed next to what Bolivar one does after her death. Celia as his caregiver dies therefore becomes absent. And because of her death one can observe that Bolivar is able to develop further. And he does not necessarily develop into a positive character. He clearly becomes a character with destructive qualities: his obsession with gambling, women and alcohol. And ultimately this is where his character finally unfolds.

The narrator then introduces Bolivar the second who is Bolivar one's son. It also revealed that Bolivar the second's mother is absent because "Bolivar Londoño (the first) never married" (184). When Bolivar the second is born Bolivar one decides to create a "Two-wagon traveling variety act called The Spectacular" and this act "rolled through town". And finally both Bolivar

one and two became known as a “father and son act” (184). Córdova reveals Bolivar one’s mistreatment to his son through their father and son business. This is where we can see how Bolivar one’s presence as a father impacts his son.

The narrator says that during these acts, their audience did not see that “ Bolivar II was so practiced because if he wasn’t, if he fumbled, the father would beat his son within an inch of his life. After the beatings, he’d have to go back out and perform”(184). Bolivar II’s father had high expectations for him and it seems like his life depended on it. Bolivar one’s use of violence against Bolivar two is an example of exaggeration. This exaggeration is used to highlight how cruel Bolivar two’s father is. It seems like he is being tricked into doing the shows. This quote also reveals how high his father's expectations are. Because if Bolivar two “fumbled” then he would get beat.

It is common to see that in Latin American Families fathers expect a lot from their sons. Sons are supposed to be hardworking, successful, which is rooted in machismo culture. “Machismo” is the Spanish word that describes chauvinism. Regardless, sons are put under a lot of pressure. This dynamic between Bolivar one and two shows that the father who is older holds more power than his son because he beats his son and also there is no detail of Bolivar two resisting the beatings.

In the sociological book named *Men And Masculinity* by Nigel Edley, he explores topics like the male body, men and work, men and fatherhood, male sexuality and male violence. The topic that I have read more about is men and fatherhood. He mainly talks about Europe but I think that some trends in Europe have influenced Latin America. He talks about fathers and their relationship to families and work. He says:

“For instance, it is well documented that in the centuries gone by, it was the father who was assumed to be the primary agent in the raising of the child (Pleck, 1997; Gillis, 1995; Stearns, 1991). The role of the mother, by contrast, was reduced to little more than a human incubator. In effect, her contribution was seen and ‘done and dusted’ once the child was born; thereafter, it was thought to be the father’s job to socialize the infant-to discipline, educate and instill a sense of morality. The major shift in this way of thinking was triggered by the onset of industrialization and the physical separation of work from home (as described in the previous chapter). With the creation of the public and private spheres, many men found themselves spending a significant part of each working day away from the rest of their family” (Edley, 96).

This quote is relevant and very similar to the Bolivar generation. They were all born after the mid 20th century and since industrialization became a worldwide phenomenon I think that this quote further relates to the novel because Ecuador too is industrializing. Therefore these trends in Europe can be seen in Ecuador. In the novel there is no mention of the Bolivar two’s mother because the narrator only tells us that Bolivar did not marry. Therefore the mother is not present. This can show that the mother was the “human incubator” for Bolivar one.

Bolivar also raises his son on his own. He included his work as a showman with his home life. Bolivar two is the representation of Bolivar one’s home life. He as a son is included in his father’s family business. Since Bolivar the first and second spent most of their time attending to their business then this shows that Bolivar one is raising his son at the same time. With Bolivar

the second's father being present all the time shows that he is under watchful eye. Since there is no mother in the picture illuminates Bolivar the first as a single father with a strong presence.

The way in which Bolivar the second is impacted by the constant presence of his father is that he ends up revealing that he does not care about his father's presence and absence. The details of the beatings that he gets are enough to show that he is mistreated by his father. When both father and son were done traveling with their gambling business Bolivar one dies. The narrator says that, "He was found dead exactly where he was left orphaned all those years ago, only this time there was a dagger in his back. His son, who hadn't shed a tear, not a single one, for his father, left with the Spectacular, only to inherit it and rename it the Londoño Spectacular (185). Bolivar the first becomes absent in this passage. His absence is represented through his death. Bolivar the second is unphased by it because he does not even "shed a single tear". It is common for people to cry when their loved ones die, especially a parent; But upon reading that Bolivar is not crying shows that he does not care. He is impacted by his father's inheritance which is the gambling business. His father's absence causes him to move forward by changing the name of the business.

The presence of Bolivar the second's father also shows us that Bolivar the second is not able to see himself as similar to his father. Like Orquídea saw some similarities between her and her father, Bolivar the second does not. The narrator says that,

Bolivar II was just as handsome as his father. But where his father had cared only about his own needs, Bolivar II care too much about everyone else's. He gave too much. Too much of his profit. Too much of himself. A happy drunk. Funny. Gullible. Soft. The

Londoño Spectacular was his gift to the towns and cities they traveled to, and he would have rather earned the smile on a child's face than a dime" (185).

Here we see that Bolivar the second is very different from his father. We see that Bolivar the second is kinder and more considerate. He is also not motivated by money because he simply wants to impress the audience for the sake of seeing joy. The detail that he gives "too much" shows that he is selfless. One would expect that Bolivar the second will be influenced by his father because they spent a lot of time together in their business; But Córdova shows us that Bolivar the second is not influenced by his father, even though Bolivar the first was actively present in his life. This is another example of how unimportant his father's presence is because he was brought up as the polar opposite of his paternal figure.

However, when Bolivar the second has Bolivar the third everything changes: "But all would change with his *son*" (185). The author does not talk about how Bolivar II raised his son. All we know is that Bolivar III has similar qualities to his grandfather. He is just as committed to the Londoño Spectacular as his grandfather. Bolivar III turns the small Londoño Spectacular into a grandiose "full-blown circus" (185). The narrator also says that, "Just like his father, and his father before him, Bolivar III had the same devil in his smile. Sapphire eyes. A jawline that could have been engraved into a coin. He'd shatter hearts in every continent, and on several seas. He'd grow to be charismatic beyond belief" (185). This quote shows Bolivar the third as a fully fleshed out powerful character. I conclude that this is the part where Bolivar the third can be categorized as the archetype of the villain in the novel.

Back to Jesús Martín-Barbero book: *De los Medios a las Mediaciones* he identifies the villain, as the heroine's aggressor, with the following qualities: He says, "El *Traidor* -o

Perseguidor o Agresor- es sin duda el personaje que enlaza la melodrama con la novela negra” and “Su figura es la personificación del mal y del vicio, pero también la del mago y el *seductor* que fascina a la víctima” (Martín-Barbero, 158). This translates into the following: “ The *Traitor* or Pursuer or Aggressor is no doubt the character that launches the melodrama of noir fiction” and that “Its figure is the personification of the bad and vice, but also the one of the wizard and the *seducter* that the victim fascinates over”. Bolivar the third is the sedcutter because he is described as “charismatic beyond belief”. Charisma is associated with seduction because a person with charisma is able to draw in anyone. And who is the person who falls victim by his seduction? The victim is Orquídea Divina.

She meets him when she runs away from her home and encounters the Londoño Spectacular. The narrator says that, “When she was near him, she perked up like a flower toward the sun. Bolivar Londoño III could have had anyone in the circus, but he wanted *her* when no one else had. Didn’t that mean something? When he looked at her, she felt every brick shed built around her heart come crumbling down” (187). The details that state that she turned to Bolivar III like a flower further shows that she is drawn to him. She is deeply affected by the way he looks at her because the wall that she has built: by the description of the “bricks”, tumbles down. She feels seen by him. Orquídea Divina is also vulnerable at this time because she has just ran away from her troubled home. Therefore she is more susceptible to Bolivar III’s seduction. Also Bolivar III wants her and chooses her. He, as a seducter, choses Orquídea to be his victim. Martín-Barbero also states that the victim is usually the heroine. Orquídea Divina is the main heroine of the novel. He says that the victim is mostly a woman. And she embodies innocence and virtue (Martín-Barbero, 159). Flowers are associated with femininity and innocence.

Orquídea is innocent because Córdova uses the metaphor of the flower to describe the state of Orquídea's attraction to Bolívar III. Finally, with the observations that Martín-Barbero described to identify a villain of the novel along with how to identify the victim, who is mostly a heroine, ultimately proves that Bolívar the III is a villain. His inheritance, that was made by the presence of his paternal figures, allows him to develop. With his grandiose circus and his ability to seduce Orquídea Divina, the heroine, proves that he is powerful. And it is all thanks to the legacy of his father and grandfather's presence.

As one can see, in this chapter I have analyzed how the representations of paternal presence affect the two major characters of the novel: Orquídea Divina and Bolívar III. They are affected by how they develop and move on from the lack of presence and active presence that their father's present. Córdova ultimately shows us that the absence of paternity does not deter a character's upbringing. The character either way becomes powerful and independent.

Chapter 2: Representations of Maternity

In the previous chapter I talked about how the representations of active presence in paternal figures affected Orquídea and Bolívar's character, development and plot. Now I will focus on how Córdova uses representations of conflict between maternal figures and women to show that maternal presence has a greater weight on women characters emotionally. I conclude that there are patterns of mistreatment in each generation of mothers for Orquídea's bloodline and each descendant of mothers are hurt and resentful towards their mothers despite the passage of time. I will be analyzing Orquídea Divina's maternal generation. This includes Orquídea's mother, Isabela and Orquídea's grandmother, Roberta. I will not be observing the representations of maternity from the Bolívar generation because the author never explicitly mentions their mothers. Therefore I can not make any meaningful analysis.

Roberta's relationship to her daughter: Isabela, and granddaughter: Orquídea, is a dramatic representation of parent to child relationships. Her presence is quite static; It is mostly represented as active and present.

However, there is a brief moment where Roberta is absent and that is when she disapproved of Isabela's illegitimate relationship and procreation with Washington. Maternal presence is universally deemed as unconditional. Meaning that a mother will always support their child no matter the circumstances. But we clearly see that this is not the case for Roberta's presence at the time of Orquídea's birth; this is the moment where Córdova shows the reader that maternity can also not be unconditional. Roberta shows more care towards her values of traditional family dynamics over her daughter. Because she shuns Isabela after Isabela gives

birth. Isabela has “ secured a job working long hours at a doctor’s office on the other side of the city, and a tiny house in an industrial stretch of land by the shore. Though she lived a stone’s throw from her childhood home, the Montaya’s didn’t want anything to do with the unwed mother and unlucky girl” (36). I talked about this quote in the previous chapter. I’d like to remind you that the reason why Roberta shuns her daughter is because she is following her husband’s orders to no longer be present in Isabela’s life. It is clear that Roberta values following her husband’s orders rather than supporting her daughter. Roberta, not wanting anything to do with her daughter, is represented as absent. Her absence and lack of support shows that she is not a mother that loves unconditionally.

In the beginning of chapter: “The Flower of the River Shore”, Isabela is in the process of getting ready to marry her first husband: Wilhelm Buenasuerte. Orquídea was the one who brought them together. He is introduced as the one who caught Orquídea’s attention as she was working on her daily activity of fishing. He steps into the scene as the “man who would become her stepfather” and secondly introduced by his profession: “A land developer and civil engineer”(48). He was looking for a place to start a new development project and while he was wandering around, he took out his handkerchief from his pocket to wipe off his sweat and as he did that his wallet fell. Orquídea was there to catch it and called him to retrieve it. Isabela was looking for her daughter and found both of them talking to each other. This was the start of their romantic relationship and Wilhelm “found a reason to stay” because he began to desire care for Isabela.

Orquídea’s soon to be stepfather “promised to give Isabela Montoya the world, but Orquídea still wanted her contribution to be perfect. On the big day, mother and daughter sat in

the small room with a vanity. It was the last time they'd be alone together for a while"(46).

What is the contribution? Orquídea wants to help her mother get ready. Córdova makes sure that the reader is aware that Orquídea has glued "pearls to a diadem", sewing it on to a veil for the whole night before (46). Veils are iconic in Christian ceremonies. Their main purpose is to be lifted by the husband to reveal the Bride's purity but contemporarily, they are used as an accessory. These ornaments are of high value, and since Orquídea is the one to have been working on it shows that the contribution is indeed grandiose but given the language of the quote: "she still wanted her contribution to be perfect" Orquídea is tentative about her contributions. This moment is also a chance for them to closely bond as mother and daughter.

The juxtaposition of phrases "[Wilhelm] promised to give Isabela Montoya the world" and "But Orquídea still wanted her contribution to be perfect" shows that Orquídea is comparing two circumstances and is well aware that her stepfather will be getting all of Isabela's attention. Thus him giving her the world is appealing. The word "but" makes the switch to her reality meaning that this could be the last moment of her spending time with her mother for a long while. This is an opposition of circumstances. A new love interest in her mother's life versus herself, the daughter who has been at her side since birth. In the end she yearns to make their moment at the vanity memorable. Orquídea is twelve years old at this time. She is at a stage where she is still dependent on her mother. The word "perfect" also shows the extremity of desire to impress Isabela. Narrator gives us a simple description of their image in space. We as the audience are supposed to imagine two people: mother and daughter sitting down, facing the vanity together alone. Its simplicity is enough to make this moment sacred.

The smallness of the room adds to the closeness of both. It is supposed to bring them together, at least from Orquídea's point of view. Finally, the phrase: "On the big day" is juxtaposed with "mother and daughter sat in the small room with a vanity". There is the wedding: a big event with a lot of people and a small room with two individuals. Words like "mother and daughter" are there to emphasize the importance of being together. The detail of the vanity is to reflect them and a tool that allows both of them to see each other. This small intimate moment is important for Orquídea. The oppositions of phrases like small room and big event as well as Wilhelm's contributions as her mother's future husband and Orquídea's contributions as a daughter are there to represent as detail that Orquídea makes in her mind. Concluding that she cares and considers her mother with great importance. Unlike her encounter with her biological father: passive and not representative of her character, this relationship dynamic between mother and daughter illuminates Orquídea as vulnerable and small. This instance: her attention to details and worry that this preparation for the wedding may be her last moment with her mother, concludes that the presence of Isabela as a mother is pivotal for Orquídea's development as a person. This indeed is the last few moments where she spends with her mother.

Soon after Isabela's union with Wilhelm, Orquídea is driven away by the Buenasuartes leaving her no choice but to leave her mother and new family situation. Isabela finally tells Orquídea that " 'Things are going to be different for us now,' ". Right after the narrator says that "Isabela promised." (47). Isabela said her remark with the purpose of promising Orquídea. Could this mean that her marriage is an attempt to help her daughter? What "things" is she referring to? This quote reveals Isabela's intentions and further shows her closeness to Orquídea. The things that are changing is their current situation. Isabela was single handedly taking care of Orquídea

after she had been shunned by the Montoya's. Her only family is Orquídea but that changes when she marries. Orquídea's unveiled vulnerability is important because it is one of the very few moments where she is expressing an essence other than strength and fierceness. Córdova is illuminating the fragilities of mother and daughter relationships. This ultimately teaches us that the presence of Isabela as a mother has been impactful and meaningful for Orquídea. By making the transition from a single mother to one that can provide more financial stability and a father figure will eventually tether the strong bond that they have created.

Orquídea's special intimate moment with her mother is quickly interrupted by Roberta, her grandmother. She was not even able to respond to Isabela's remark that things would be different. Roberta's entrance to the scene is dramatized: she "waltzed in, clutching a hat box and a smaller ring box. She greeted her granddaughter with a curt nod, then turned to Isabela"(47). The word "waltz" emphasizes that Roberta entered the room casually as if she had not rejected her daughter for years. Córdova could have said "walked in " but uses "waltz" instead to dramatize this scene. Córdova uses the word "walzed" for the second time. The first time was Wilhelm's waltz into Orquídea's neighborhood. There is a connection between the casualness of Roberta and Wilhelm's entry. Roberta too is aloof and unaware of her surroundings. Córdova could have also used the word "holding" to describe Roberta carrying the gift she is about to give to Isabela, but instead uses the word "clutch". Roberta holds her material possessions too tightly to show that the hat and ring box are objects of high value. There is an opposition to actions in this one image frame. Roberta's waltz would be slow, light and dancy while she carries something with a tight, dense hold. Aside from the words "waltzed in" to describe a casual entrance, this word can also be taken literally. A "waltz" is a dance where one steps forward,

backwards, and side to side while holding their partner. Given the various hyperboles and strange magical imagery that the novel has, the waltz as a dance image is not far from normal. Roberta can be literally dancing into the room. It again illuminates the carelessness and aloofness that she exudes. The object that she is clutching is her partner. The objects following her footsteps are waiting to be passed around. The preparedness and lightness of the entrance also shows that perhaps Roberta has been waiting for her daughter to get married this whole time. This waltz is a defining description of Roberta's comeback. She is present once again and it is only when her daughter is getting married. Is Isabela valuable to her mom now?

The gifts serve as a symbol of Roberta and Isabela's mother and daughter relationship dynamic. It is also an evidence of Roberta's contribution as a present mother. Why is she only showing up for her daughter at life changing events? Roberta's absence and naiveness causes her comeback to not be too hurtful or impactful. It is supposed to be lighthearted and nothing needs to be said about it in this story. It is a "read the room" moment for the characters standing by and for the audience as well. Roberta's temporal presence challenges the norms of unconditional motherly love. Córdova shows us that mothers can love their children under certain conditions. Roberta disappeared under a condition she did not agree with, and came back when Isabella was going to be with a man legitimately.

Does Isabela's gender affect her mother's love? What difference would it make if she was a man who was in an illegitimate relationship. Would Roberta still have the same bias? The legitimacy laws that I talked a little about above tells us that legitimacy would most likely impact the offspring. Women are the ones to carry the child therefore it will mainly affect them, but if there was a man involved no one would bat an eye. Most men benefited from these cultural/legal

norms and women would receive the stigma if they didn't stick by it. Therefore Roberta would not be as pragmatic. Gender plays a big role in parent to child dynamics in the novel. This is important because we find that mothers in novels can also reject their typical role as a nurturer who loves unconditionally. The dynamic between Orquídea and Roberta is vastly different however. It is much colder and cruel. It seems like Roberta can forgive Isabela but not Orquídea because she is the “bastard”. “She greeted her granddaughter with a curt nod”. This action is another exaggerated example of parental dynamics. The “curt nod” is negative. It is not meant to make Orquídea feel welcomed. This creates alienation. The word choice for “her granddaughter” is juxtaposed with “curt nod”. These pairs of phrases are opposites once again. It affirms and reminds us that Roberta is greeting Orquídea and it's certainly abnormal. Right after she gives all her attention and directs all her first words to Isabela The action of her “turning” also shows her further getting away from her granddaughter. By doing this she also creates a physical barrier and in body language it can be observed that she only came with the intention of talking to her daughter .

Nevertheless this moment continues its importance because right after Roberta walks in she says the following: “I wore this on my wedding day, and my mother on hers...God has given you a second chance, and so will I”. Does Roberta consider marriage valuable enough to erase all previous prejudices she held against her daughter? There is a family tradition of wearing the ring and lace veil on wedding days and since Isabela is going to marry someone of an upper class background that her family accepts, she is qualified to enter back into the Montoya family by wearing family passed down heirlooms. One clue that we can also gather is that Roberta is religious. The dominant religion of Ecuador is Roman Catholicism. This religion believes in the

doctrine of forgiveness, therefore when Roberta says, “God has given you a second chance, and so will I” shows us that Roberta is forgiving her daughter.

Isabela is surprised that her mother comes back to visit her. She doesn't care about her mother's gifts. Narrator says, “But because it had been so many years since she'd heard her mother's voice that she had forgotten the cadence of it”(47). Roberta too had a big impact on her daughter. Isabela is brought back to a childhood memory where she felt recognized by her mother. She becomes small and vulnerable. Ultimately we see that Roberta's comeback is important for Isabela. Despite her mother shunning her, Isabela chooses to listen, notice and be reminded of her mother.

Now I will show how Isabela's presence impacts Orquídea Divina. Córdova uses word choice and details of Isabelas actions to show us that Isabela is the culprit of the cruelty that Orquídea first receives. Enough time has passed since Isabela's big wedding. However, the close relationship that Isabela had with Orquídea prior to her getting married has drastically changed. Their relationship severed as time passed. When Wilhelm and Isabela hosted their fancy parties, a lot of the guests would confuse her daughter as one of the servants. Isabela never corrected them. There were times where she did not let Orquídea Divina attend the parties because she was afraid of the older men flirting with her daughter: “Isabela believed she was protecting her first daughter from the cruelty of the world she'd become part of. But the first cruelties Orquídea learned were the ones Isabela doled herself”(95). The word “but” is important because it shows us that Isabela, as a mother, is the first one to be cruel to Orquídea. It seems like Isabela is not aware of this fact. It is confusing how Isabela's actions are juxtaposed. It is confusing because her actions do not match up her intentions to protect her daughter. She refuses to correct her

guests when they confuse Orquídea as a servant, which is cruel, and on top of that does not allow her to attend parties. It is one cruelty after another. The narrator then confirms that it is Isabela, a maternal figure, who is causing the most hurt rather than the world that she is protecting her daughter from.

Córdova also uses dialogue to illuminate conflict between Orquídea and her mother. Isabela forbids Orquídea to wear “provocative” clothes. Her daughter doesn't follow this rule and decides to wear what she wants anyway. Isabela sees her and asks her what she is wearing and Orquídea responds by saying, ““You don't like it?”” and then,

Isabela shut her eyes and pinched the bridge of her nose. ‘You look like ripe fruit for men to snatch up. Is that what you want? Is it?’

‘I-’

‘Do you want to embarrass your father and me?’

‘He’s not my father.’

Orquídea felt the sting of her mother’s hand. It didn't stop

Until Orquídea was crying, setting off Ana Cruz’s wailing”...

‘Ungrateful girl. Where would we be if Wilhelm hadn’t been good to us?I’ve tried so hard, Orquídea, but you’re a reminder of the mistake I made all those years ago.’

Isabela was the first to gasp at her own words. Deep down , she didn’t believe she meant it, but the words were spoken and could not be taken back (98).

This dialogue shows conflict because there are negative and hurtful words being thrown around. It is important to take notice that Orquídea is only fourteen years old at this time. She is still a child and in Isabela's eyes she is not because she thinks that grown men would "snatch" her. She is shaming her daughter's clothes and assumes that it is her fault for the existence of morbid men. When Isabela says "do you want to embarrass your father and me" reveals that she cares about what other people think about Orquídea. And for Orquídea through her response we find that she does not consider her stepfather as her own. This infuriates Isabela because she goes so far as slapping her daughter until she can not anymore. Isabela is also projecting to her daughter about her own past "mistakes". We also find that Isabela could be affected by societal pressures of marriage and unions. Everything in this dialogue is dramatic. With the dramatic details of movement, words, and emotions we see that both Orquídea and Isabela have a conflicted relationship. Isabela is portrayed as the aggressor of the novel in this scene: she slaps, and blames all her problems on her daughter. Orquídea on the other hand is the one receiving therefore she is victimized, thus making her the victim.

After the previous incident and one of the Buenasuerte cousins physically bullying Orquídea, we know that Orquídea has found that she does not belong. She runs away and finds a new place for her to start her new adventure. However, she never forgets her mother and despite the amount that time has passed, she does not forget the pain that her mother has caused.

Isabela Montoya does eventually come back. And when she comes back into Orquídea's life, Orquídea reacts very negatively. She expresses resentment and reproaches her mother's actions of the past. Several years after Orquídea escaped the Buenasuerte home we find that she marries Bolivar III. Since she married Bolivar III she also became part of the Londoño

Spectacular. She has traveled the world with the circus and performed as a mermaid. When the Londoño Spectacular toured the world they came back to Guayaquil. While Orquídea is in Guayaquil we find that she is pregnant with Bolívar III's child. She gives birth to Pedrito.

On one of the days that she is taking care of Pedrito she notices Isabela in the distance. When she saw her mother for the first time after a long time she "Remembered the helplessness and anger she'd endured at the Buenasuerte home" and

If Orquídea was honest, her anger toward Isabela went further than that. Standing in front of her mother, Orquídea felt like that unlucky runt of a girl again. A stain in her mother's perfect life. The bastard child left behind by a man who'd used her. Seeing her mother was like pressing on a bruise that never healed. It had festered, rotted. It seeped down to the bone. She'd only learned to live with pain (286).

The quote above is dense. There are so many details that illuminate Orquídea's experience while seeing her mother. Seeing her mother reminds her of her past in the Buenasuerte home. She recognizes that she has been helpless. The narrator interjects and tells us that Orquídea is being honest about her anger. And her anger travels further back into the past. The past is how much she suffered as a daughter of her mother's illegitimate procreation. Orquídea is described like a small animal: the word "runt". She is brought into the past. Isabela's presence is very strong because Orquídea can think of all her past problems. Córdova also uses similes to describe the severity of her mother's effect on her. Her presence is like "pressing a bruise that never healed". A bruise in real life usually heals and when Córdova claims that the bruise never heals then it reveals that Orquídea has not moved on from the pain that her mother caused. The bruise is so deep that it is irreversible. Isabel has left an ugly permanent mark on her

daughter. Because that bruise, that never healed, has “rotted” and gone down to her daughter’s bones. All of these details make Isabela extremely separated from her daughter. The words above are hyperboles meshed into phrases. And when Córdova finally says that Orquídea *only* “learned to live with pain” ultimately shows that Orquídea Divina is the true victim of the novel. All the details embody her as that. Finally, her mother is the villain because she has forever left her daughter with irreversible pain. I believe that Isabela is more evil than Bolívar III because her own daughter is hurt by her. We also learn that Orquídea is extremely resentful. The absence and presence of her mother serves as the deep emotional wound for the heroine Orquídea Divina.

One might wonder if Orquídea does eventually move on from her negative feelings about her mother. She does not. When Orquídea is about to die she still does not forgive her mother! In the contemporary part of the novel, we find that Orquídea is giving back her inheritance to her descendants. One of her family members asks about Isabela. She responds by saying, “Isabela Buenasuerte was not who she was, and I know, in my bones, that I was nothing more to her than a burden. I will carry that knowledge with me to my last moments” (77). Here again she is thinking that she is a burden to her mother. This shows that she has not moved on or changed her views. Orquídea lacks moving forward. She refuses to change her mind because she will carry that “knowledge” with her to her grave.

While concluding this chapter I raised a question. My question is why are there patterns of mothers coming back to their daughter’s life when their daughters experience important moments? Isabela’s mother comes back when Isabela marries for the first time. Orquídea’s mother, Isabela, comes back when Orquídea has given birth to her first child. Why couldn’t these mothers be present in all their daughter’s experiences, big or small. The author does not answer

this question but I think that the mother's do not come back because they simply do not care for their daughters.

Conclusion

As one can see, Zoraida Córdova's novel: *The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina* shows us that the representations of paternal figures cause character independence and complexities for characters like Orquídea Divina and Bolívar Londoño. On the other hand, the representations of absence of maternal figures in the novel, are the cause of emotional conflict for women characters like Orquídea.

While writing this essay I found a lot of themes that I could not fit into this essay because of time and also because it did not relate too much to my main thesis. One of the themes that I found is how a character's gender affects their relationship and power dynamics to the character that they are in a relationship with.

As a teenager I enjoyed reading romance novels and now that I am older I realized that I had an idealized image of how love should look like. I was basing all my beliefs on common romance tropes. I had to actually experience relationships to find what I have been unintentionally learning from those novels. I have confused love with infatuation. As for this novel I think that it talks about serious matters that are not usually talked about in the young adult community and that is abusive adult relationships. Córdova illuminates this by showing us the story between Orquídea Divina and Bolívar III . As a reader I have observed a common theme that recurred throughout their whole relationship and that theme was how gender performance and circumstances affected the way in which both of these characters treated each other. This romantic relationship shows that Bolívar has more power over Orquídea. His absolute power is the cause of their relationship being abusive. Orquídea is also left with his shadow and

her family too becomes haunted by Bolivar. The way in which the difference of power dynamics is shown is through the details of representations of both of their genders. They both come from a similar family background but are shown differently because of the differences of both their genders. Another recurring theme that I have found is that the representations of racial identity are vague. And the final theme that also reappears throughout the book is the representations of the narrator. The narrator clearly takes sides and dramatizes every scene for the reader.

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