

From History—and story—to Political Identity: the Narrative Strategy of General Vicente Riva Palacio in *Monja y casada* and *Martín Garatuza* (By Yun Sook Kim)

As soon as Mexico achieved independence, it became necessary to form in the minds of the people the image of a nation that would acquire autonomous identity at the margin of the colonial inheritance. Thus, after the gun powder and cannons came a struggle where the pens of writers were the main weapons. In this threshold in which the colonial paradigm was falling apart and a new concept of the nation was merely the signature on a piece of paper, Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (1834-1893), proposed the historical novel as the conduit through which the new nationalistic conscience would crystallize. Vicente Riva Palacio (1832-1896), one of the foremost followers of Altamirano's doctrine, carried on his ideals by means of his two novels: *Martin Garatuza* (1868) and *Monja y casada, virgin y mártir* (1868). In both novels, behind a dramatic and even romantic plot, Riva Palacio hid a message for the reader of his times: that it was necessary to overcome the colonial suppositions and look further back, at the primordial instant, where the elements to construct the new identity of the nation were to be found.

Key words: Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, nationalism, cultural paradigm, colonial conscience, historical novel, pedagogy.