

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

73-31,464

BENEDICT, Elizabeth Aileen, 1941-
SURREALISM IN THE NOVELS OF MIGUEL
ANGEL ASTURIAS.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1973
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© 1973

ELIZABETH AILEEN BENEDICT

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

SURREALISM IN THE NOVELS OF MIGUEL ANGEL ASTURIAS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

ELIZABETH AILEEN BENEDICT

Norman, Oklahoma

1973

SURREALISM IN THE NOVELS OF MIGUEL ANGEL ASTURIAS

APPROVED BY

Lowell Dunderberg

Boase A. Clement

Seymour Feiler

James H. Abbott

Melvin B. Tolson, Jr.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was completed under the direction of Dr. Lowell Dunham, Chairman of the Department of Modern Languages. I thank him for his concern and constancy. He generously offered me both his time and support, and willingly assisted me in completing this dissertation. I wish to express my gratitude for his suggestions as to subject matter, resource material, and approaches to the subject.

I also extend my sincerest thanks to the other members of my committee who gave their advice and suggestions for improvement of this manuscript and to my friends and family who offered encouragement.

A special note of thanks to the one who keeps the sun shining and my sky blue.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II.	ENLARGEMENT OF THE CONSCIOUS UNIVERSE.....	12
CHAPTER III.	DREAMS.....	68
CHAPTER IV.	STYLE.....	96
CHAPTER V.	CONCLUSION.....	132
	SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	138

ASPECTS OF SURREALISM IN THE NOVELS OF MIGUEL ANGEL ASTURIAS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The most impressive and striking aspect of the writings of Miguel Angel Asturias is a brilliantly fertile and seemingly unlimited imagination. In formulation and execution of his narrative there is powerful unbridled imagination flowing in a surrealist vein. The subject matter deals most emphatically with all things Mayan or of the Mayan homeland, Guatemala. Asturias is an author par-excellence of this region and people, and his immediate desires rest with no other. The green Guatemala of the Mayan Indians, their ancestors, and their present-day pure-bred and mestizo descendants, surges forth in nearly all his writings and offers a point of reference and departure for the surrealist creative process characteristic of Asturias' writings. The nature and function of surrealism in his novels comprise the subject of this study.

Miguel Angel Asturias, the man who in 1967 received the Nobel Prize in literature, spent the formative years of his life under the oppressive dictatorship of Estrada Cabrera in Guatemala. These years were to be significant in the literary composition of Asturias. He was born in 1899, one year after Estrada Cabrera first took office. Until 1920 this Guatemalan legendary figure maintained his dictatorial power

by means of repeated fraudulent elections, and thus all during Asturias' youth this same ruthless man held the supreme reign of the land.

Miguel's father was a magistrate-educator who disagreed with Estrada Cabrera early in the era, and around 1902 Asturias' family moved from the capital city to the inland town of Salamá in order to escape direct contact with the dictator. This move proved to be of developmental importance in the thinking of young Miguel. His grandfather lived in the area, and through him Asturias was introduced to the land and its inhabitants. Long afterwards he recalled the significance of this period in life:

For the first five years of my life I lived on my grandfather's estate. There I got to know the Indians. I learned their language and their legends. I saw their healers and their sorcerers at grips with the Christian devils and the Indian demons. I steeped myself in the culture that the Spanish conquerors tried to destroy but which still survives in poverty and backwardness. Then began my life-time passion for my country and my people, the foundation of my writing life.¹

They returned to Guatemala City in 1907, living, as so many others did, under intense fear of Estrada Cabrera's whimsical ruthlessness. Terror reigned in Guatemala. The country was cut off from the rest of the world. Estrada Cabrera was reelected to office in 1916, but in late 1917 his downfall was heralded by an earthquake which leveled the city. The destruction seemed to prophesy a new era. It awakened the people to reality, and shook them out of their lethargy. It stirred them to action. Because the earthquake had ruined their homes, people met people in common shelter grounds and through this renewed people-to

¹Dymphna Cusack, "Miguel-Angel Asturias: Nobel Prize Winner, 1967" Meanjin, Vol. XXVII (1968), p. 239.

people contact there was formed a coalition to overthrow Estrada Cabrera. The earthquake brought about a long-neglected sense of national unity which culminated in 1920 with the ousting of Cabrera when the Unionist party had him declared insane and incompetent. Asturias was then twenty-one years old.

At twenty-four, in 1923, Asturias received his law degree from the Universidad Popular de Guatemala, submitting a thesis on El problema social del indio which won him the Gálvez prize. Commenting on this law thesis Verdugo writes:

El estudio abarca el panorama completo de la situación del indio guatemalteco: indaga el origen de la situación del indio y su problema social, entroncándolo con la situación en que lo colocara la dominación española durante la conquista y la colonia. Examina la evolución de esa situación durante la República y en la actualidad. Estudia la vinculación del problema con factores económicos y con los aspectos legales y políticos que lo determinan. Intenta una comprensión antropológica, estudiando aspectos biológicos y psicológicos del nativo. Concluye proponiendo soluciones basadas en la educación y en la devolución de la tierra y en la reactivación biológica mediante un nuevo cruzamiento con inmigrantes europeos---

His interest in the Indian, aroused at an early age, continued during his studies for his law degree and was later to form much of the subject matter for his literary career.

Soon after graduation--after losing his first law case--Asturias set out for Europe. In 1923 he arrived in a war-torn Europe. His first visit was to London where he frequented the British Museum, devoting many hours to the Mayan Room. But as with many artists he soon felt the beckoning call of Paris. There he began formal studies in the mythology

²Iber Verdugo, El carácter de la literatura hispanoamericana y la novelística de Miguel Angel Asturias (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1968), p. 26.

and anthropology of Central America. His professor was Georges Raynaud, a recognized authority in the field who had labored some forty years in translating the Popol Vuh into French. Asturias had the greatest admiration for Professor Raynaud who stimulated the interest he found in the young Guatemalan. Later Asturias, along with the Mexican González de Mendoza, translated into Spanish Raynaud's French versions of the Popol Vuh and the Annals of the Cakchiquels. These translations familiarized Asturias with two books which had considerable influence on his writings. To an equal degree Asturias was influenced by the intellectual climate of Europe and France during his stay in Paris.

France has always been one of the innovating countries in literary thought, and through the course of time it has produced an impressive list of distinguished artists. France of the 1920's was no less productive even though it, along with the rest of Europe, was in a period of reconstruction and recovery from war. The Great War had left a broken Europe. People who had relied so blindly on industrialization and science now questioned the reality of their existence. The war had been devastating. It had not only crumbled buildings, laid waste to the land, and left over eight million military dead, but it had undermined people's beliefs and shattered their former self-confidence. It was an economical, political, moral and most importantly, psychological experience which left Europe traumatized.

The years from about 1915 during the war until the post-war year of 1922 produced a negative artistic movement called dadaism. It flourished because of the war. Its followers, with Tristan Tzara as the principal spokesman, perceived the nonsense of war and sought a means to

express their disdain for an irresponsible society. Dadaism demonstrated mocking contempt for the world into which it had been born. It has been viewed as nihilist in character because it set about demolishing all existing ethical and artistic standards, but " . . . Dada's essential quality found expression in a systematic opposition, a refusal to compromise, a denial of restraint . . . Dada questioned the very basis of society, setting out to awaken in its public a critical attitude calculated to produce beneficial results."³ In its nonsensical mimicry it sought to destroy the fragmented war-besieged world and the remaining beliefs. It completely undermined the old and offered nothing as a replacement. Its entire philosophy echoed the emptiness and sense of loss felt within its creators. It was negative-oriented, self-destroying and short-lived. However, Dadaism did serve to clear the way for the surrealists who searched for even greater realities than men had known before the war. Surrealism rose from the ashes and swept into the vacuum left by the dadaists, filling it with positive intention bent on the creation of a new and authentic vision of life. "The surrealists reaffirm the Dadaists' concern for the value and role of human destiny within the social and cultural framework of the modern world, holding society responsible for aggravating, if not for creating, man's unhappy condition."⁴ Unlike the dadaists, the surrealists searched for identity and harmony by incorporating the entire sum of their being and thoughts into one all-en-

³J. H. Matthews, An Introduction to Surrealism (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), p. 20.

⁴Ibid., pp. 42-43.

compassing unit. Asturias, a positive thinking action-oriented man, found a common meeting point here with the surrealists in the post-war years and later.

The standard bearer and chief exponent of surrealism was André Breton. The surrealists attempted to mend the shattered world by releasing dormant sensibilities. Freud had seen aspects of the hidden world of the subconscious. The artists drew upon this psychoanalytical insight and saw a world comprised of the totality of all knowledge and possible thought and imagination. For the surrealists, fantasy, imagination and reality were all contiguous and mingled freely with one another to form a dynamic whole. Breton published his first Manifeste du Surréalisme in 1924 in which he expounded on his interpretation of this new school of thought: "Je crois à la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont le rêve et la réalité, en une sorte de réalité absolue, de surréalité, si l'on peut ainsi dire."⁵ Later in his Second Manifeste du Surréalisme (1929) he reaffirmed this belief: "Tout porte à croire qu'il existe un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement."⁶

The first elaborations of these thoughts were to be heard in the

⁵ André Breton, Manifeste du Surréalisme (1924) cited in Ramon Guthrie and George E. Piller, Prose and Poetry of Modern France (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 290.

⁶ André Breton, Second Manifeste du Surréalisme (1929) cited in Ramon Guthrie and George E. Piller, Ibid., p. 294.

1920's in the Parisian literary cafes and gathering places for artists and intellectuals, as well as in the contemporary literary journals. Asturias became familiar with the new ideas through reading these publications, and he became personally acquainted with many of the literary and intellectual elite of the day:

Mientras estudió en la Sorbona, leyó y conoció a Anatole France, Valery, Pirandello [sic], Marinetti, Joyce, Maeterlink [sic], Ortega, Bretón, Aragón, Eluard; y asimiló las cualidades propias de la cultura universal que ellos representaban.⁷

This was truly an impressive group of intellectuals with whom Asturias enjoyed companionship, and they were influential in the formation of his thinking and style. The contemporary ideas of surrealism embodied a means to achieve the complete fulfillment for which Asturias searched. Through surrealism he could express the innermost thoughts and ideas as part of the total existing reality. Surrealism went beyond mirroring the outside reality. Asturias had felt the need for this expansion:

A pesar del éxito con que se vieron coronadas los estudios antropológicos realizados junto al sabio Raynaud, Asturias sintió que la última esencia de la naturaleza del nativo se escapaba y adquirió la certeza de la imposibilidad de aprehenderla totalmente por clasificaciones racionales. La presencia de lo mágico y misterioso que en la realidad se le mostraron subyugando sus experiencias infantiles y adolescentes, antes que desvanecerse mediante la investigación científica, adquirieron mayor evidencia.⁸

Asturias was both at one with, and apart from, his fellows in Paris. He shared with them the eagerness for life, but perhaps for a different reason. Asturias had his own personal memories of tragedy. Whereas the French and Europeans counted the lives lost in the war,

⁷Verdugo, p. 26.

⁸Ibid., p. 27

Asturias numbered the lives lost under the dictatorship of Estrada Cabrera. The Europeans mourned the destruction of their land; Asturias agonized over foreign exploitation of Guatemala. The French cursed the German attempt at oppression and dominance; Asturias grieved for the oppressed Indian. Nevertheless, Asturias shared with his comrades in Paris the search for harmony, and he developed a surrealist approach for the exposition of his central themes: dictatorship, foreign investors, Guatemalan nature and the Mayans.

Surrealism allowed the opening of the mind, the freedom of expression, and a means of depicting the quintessence of Guatemalan life which forms the keystone for his literary architecture. The green vegetation, rich flora, and abundant fauna of Guatemala are for Asturias --as they had been for centuries for the Mayans--sources of poetic inspiration, exploration, imagination. Asturias draws upon the natural wealth of Guatemala, which he calls his "mundo vegetal" and lets his mind wander. He calls upon surrealism to provide the means for this mind-releasing and mind-enriching adventure by which he unites the mysterious and the magical with reality.

Although surrealism is often thought to be more a vehicle of poetry, the possibility of using it in the novel has been demonstrated by several novelists. It is the reflection of an attitude and intention rather than a step-by-step procedure or technique which become a determining factor in accepting a novel as one reflecting surrealism. Breton in his Manifeste du Surréalisme (1924) made a list of his contemporary surrealists and some precursors, and in each he perceived a different reflection of surrealism. Matthews, a dedicated scholar of surrealism,

has also found in the novelists different or distinguishing aspects of their work which makes them surrealists.⁹ J. K. Huysmans, in his nineteenth century novel En Rade (1887), mingled dream and reality in a surrealist mode. Another precursor was Raymond Roussel who claimed that in his work imagination was everything. Roussel perceived that through verbal associations he was led into a realm of imagination, rich in possibilities but hermetic in nature. Other novelists participating directly in the surrealist movement, each in a specific vein, were André Breton, Maurice Fourré, Alain Jouffroy, Joyce Mansour and Julien Gracq. All these novelists have drawn upon some of the principles of surrealism and upon their own imagination, and they have combined selected principles with personal imaginings to produce surrealist novels. There is not one in which all the various aspects of surrealism can be found. The surrealist believes in man's liberty as a precious possession and it would be contradictory to this basic concept of freedom to demand a work of art containing all the characteristics of surrealism. Because of this unlimited freedom, it is pure pretense for anyone to expect to delimit the boundaries of surrealism. What is found in all these surrealist novels is a sense of grappling with more than the apparent reality reflected in many meager day-to-day existences.¹⁰

The techniques of style used to depict the surreal are often used in many other contemporary literary movements, but the ultimate

⁹J. H. Matthews, Surrealism and the Novel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966).

¹⁰Ibid., (Matthews' study embraces in detail this brief discussion of the French surrealist novelists.)

goal of the surrealists is the distinguishing factor. Surrealists seek the union of all real and concrete with the surreal and abstract to form a more perfect state of existence. Technique becomes secondary as a means to an end and is not the end in itself for " . . . in active Surrealism, the stress is upon life and thought, not upon literature and language."¹¹ The specific stylistics or techniques include: direct or indirect interior monologue, as most clearly evidenced in the writings of Joyce; counterpointing of apparently unrelated things and ideas, achieved by simultaneous narration on different levels; free association of ideas echoing the liberation of the unconscious; a labyrinth of ideas and narrative; fragmentation of chronological time to achieve a sense of oneness; use of classical and inventive modern myths in order to explain man's basic questions concerning the meaning of existence; allegory, symbolism, and extended imagery and metaphors; a collective protagonist or a group-representative individual, as seen in the Mayan civilization focus in Asturias' narrative; cinematographic techniques including flashbacks, panoramas, close-ups, montages, fade-outs, slow or fast projection, and multiple view. These stylistics are aimed at the presentation of the surrealist metaphysical attitude toward the whole of human existence and through these techniques the artists achieve an intense and intimate communion and reconciliation between the human personality and the essence of the universe.

In each surrealist artist, various distinct surrealist characteristics emerge as dominant. This study will analyze the progressive de-

¹¹ Matthews, An Introduction to Surrealism, p. 50.

velopment of three notable characteristics in the novels of Asturias:

- 1) Imaginative enlargement of the universe known to the conscious mind by means of myth, religion, precognition, nahualism, and fantasy;
- 2) Dreams of the most bizarre, nightmarish, and chimerical nature as revelatory of true internal reality and of undiscovered aspects of a wider external reality; and, 3) Poetical style featuring internal rhythm, rich imagery, automatic writing resulting from the unleashing of restrictive thought patterns, repetition, and an artistic use of humor.

CHAPTER II

ENLARGEMENT OF THE CONSCIOUS UNIVERSE

Imagination, the enlarged universe of the conscious mind, is the best instrument for effecting the complete fusion of the fantastic and the real which is the avowed ultimate goal of the surrealist efforts. The surrealist, aware of a greater depth to the whole of existence, employs his imagination to explore the previously unexpressed latent surreality. It is more than mere suggestion of other possibilities. All fiction writers use imagination, but unlike the surrealist they cling to known conscious realities and seek to justify any deviances from it. The surrealist explores all the possible limits of the conscious world and succeeds in greater involvement through an awareness of a more complete reality which encompasses the whole of known, universal, and imaginative thought and symbolism. Thus, he enlarges the real immediate world and uncovers deep within his own mind other factors contingent on logical reality. These may include the world of ghosts, apparitions, daydreams, visions, other similar psychic phenomena, time awareness, remembrances and future insights, religious divinations, myths, and other fantasies, all of which are part of the totality of man's thought and existence. The surrealist extensions of the conscious mind are often labeled irrational, unreal, inexplicable or even absurd. All these observations are justified in light of the evidence presented and indeed such terms as irrational, unreal, inexplicable, absurd, bizzare are necessary for describing these surrealist productions that defy logical verbal expression. The indefinite must be relied upon to criticize

the undefinable.

Asturias realized the importance of the limitless activity of the expanded conscious mind, and he capitalized on its value as a medium for expression and for problem solving. The Guatemalans live with these undistinguishable realities, thus "el instrumento de revelación del ser americano debía constituirse con factores no solamente lógicos y racionales, sino intuitivos, superracionales."¹ In the analysis of his enlarged universe Asturias begins with realities and works inward toward the unveiling of the "ser americano."

Conscious extensions of the mind result from a desire for completeness and the need for explanation of activities which do not lend themselves to the rational and logical Cartesian method of analysis. Surveying the use of these expansions reveals that they simultaneously disguise and disclose the truth. One step beyond this expanded conscious world are the dreams. The demarcation line between the two is not sharply defined, and they converge upon one another from time to time. If one studies the bas-reliefs on the archaeological remains of the grand Mayan civilization, one finds in the frets a profused entanglement, resembling the surrounding vegetation. Figures merge with one another, symbolism and hieroglyphics fuse into the picture, men and animals share the same body, and the chain continues unbroken. It is difficult to separate and isolate one specific figure. This enmeshment is comparable to the various aspects of surrealism found in Asturias'

¹Iber Verdugo, El carácter de la literatura hispanoamericana y la novelística de Miguel Angel Asturias (Guatemala: Editorial Universitario, 1968), p. 27.

novels. Within the realm of the enlarged conscious universe Asturias makes specific use of myth, religion, visions, fantasy, nahualism, and the forces of nature. He sees in each of these activities a point of departure for further exploring the "ser americano."

Myth in Asturias' work has a dual aspect. He uses ancient established myths and he creates new myths. His use of inherited myths and legends has been studied to great length by Richard Callan.² Asturias' interest in new myths to reveal a change and to expose his attitudes coincides with his studies in the Sorbonne and with the revived interest in the 1920's in the use of myth as a vehicle for artistic expression. Jung has said that myths are first and foremost psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul.³ Thomas Mann saw myth as representative of an eternal truth in contrast to an empirical truth. Kierkegaard observed that a myth presents outwardly what occurred inwardly.⁴ All these observations have validity for the surrealist. Anna E. Balakian asserts that "the surrealists on their road to the absolute are in search of new myths to symbolize the new visions."⁵ The myth itself is not always beautiful; what it points to is its merit.

²Richard J. Callan, Miguel Angel Asturias (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970).

³Carl Gustav Jung, The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung, edited with Introduction by Violet Staub de Laszlo (New York: The Modern Library, 1959).

⁴Rollo May, "The Function of Myths in Dreams and Psychoanalysis" in Dream Dynamics, edited by Jules H. Masserman. Science and Psychoanalysis, Vol. XIX, (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1971).

⁵Anna Elizabeth Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (New York: Noonday Press, 1959), p. 200.

The myth is a vehicle for expression of another potential truth.

Asturias' first novel El Señor Presidente was written around a new myth figure, the all-powerful dictator Estrada Cabrera who became a myth in his own lifetime. The factual events used in the novel are few. Most of the novel is pure plausible and dramatic fiction, but some facts can be determined. At one point there is mention of a newspaper headline: "Sigue la batalla de Verdún ...",⁶ and later there is a notice of the reelection candidacy for the President.⁷ History records that the Battle of Verdun was fought in 1916, the same year Estrada Cabrera last ran for reelection. Other than this slight reference, Asturias carefully avoids precise time or specific place reference. The novel could take place anywhere, at any time.

The creation of the myth of Mr. President grew out of stories of dictators and tyrants Asturias shared with his Latin American friends and books he had read. The resulting presidential character type was more than just Estrada Cabrera. Mr. President was a character representative of all oppressors. The novel is based on reality, but Asturias enlarges, rearranges and creates a shadowy, wrathful, cunning, designing, life-demanding, god-image President whose power is felt throughout the novel. He is not actively present in much of the narrative. Very little is revealed about the physical aspects or the daily life of the President, but the awesome and distasteful psychological make-up of the man haunts

⁶Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras Completas, prólogo de José María Souviron, Tomo I: El Señor Presidente (Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1968), p. 398.

⁷Ibid., p. 428.

the narrative. He is the great puppeteer whose hands dexterously and whimsically manage the fates of all.

The construction of the novel resembles a play. The opening of scene one (Primera Parte) is on the streets near the Portal del Señor, apparently in the capital city. It is nighttime. The church bells are ringing:

¡Alumbra, lumbré de alumbra, Luzbel de piedralumbra! Como zumbido de oídos persistía el rumor de las campanas a la oración, maldoblestar de la luz en la sombra, de la sombra en la luz. ¡Alumbra, lumbré de alumbra, Luzbel de piedralumbra, sobre la podredumbre! ¡Alumbra, lumbré de alumbra, sobre la podredumbre, Luzbel de piedralumbra! Alumbra, alumbra, lumbré de alumbra ... , alumbra ... , alumbra ... , alumbra, lumbré de alumbra ... , alumbra, alumbra ... ⁸

There is suggestive foreboding in the semantics, in the repetition of words, in the low vowel sounds u and a, in the alliteration of l, br, dr, and m, and in the drumming dirge-like rhythm. A mood of sorrow and dread has been set with a few suggestive and selected words. Slowly the wretched poor, the first puppets, come to life on the stage. Their degenerate condition is acutely emphasized. Suddenly at dawn violence strikes when the idiot Pelele kills his tormenter, coronel Parrales Sonriente. This is the catalyst for the remainder of the novel. The first two parts, set in some unknown year, move quickly but deliberately within one week's time span: Primera parte--21, 22, 23 de abril; Segunda parte--24, 25, 26, 27 de abril. The last part is slow and agonizing: Tercera parte--Semanas, meses, años The planning perfectly harmonizes with the absurdity of the entire situation. Within the seven days dating from the killing of Parrales Sonriente, under the President's

⁸Ibid., p. 175.

machinery, scores of people have suddenly had their lives drastically changed or threatened or they have been murdered. The last part parallels the plight of Miguel Cara de Angel who has quickly moved from being the favorite of the land to the most unjustly condemned criminal. The Third Part ends with the extinguishing of Miguel's desires, hopes, dreams and life. The concluding brief Epilogue returns to the opening location on the street near the Portal del Señor. An insane puppeteer is running through the streets. The novel ends on a tone similar to the opening one with a background of the eight o'clock chimes and a fervid prayer characterized by the petition of the word por:

--Por los agonizantes y caminantes ... Porque reine la paz entre los Príncipes Cristianos ... Por los que sufren persecución de justicia ... Por los enemigos de la fe católica ... Por las necesidades sin remedio de la Santa Iglesia y nuestras necesidades ... Por las benditas ánimas del Santo Purgatorio ...
Kyrie eleison ...⁹

The historical fact that the puppeteer-dictator Estrada Cabrera was declared insane in 1920 seems to be an artistic point of departure for the novel's end. Symbolically, the insane puppeteer is the string-pulling, manipulating dictator. The closing episode also contains an indirect reference to Estrada Cabrera's puppet power being undermined by the earthquakes of 1917 when the puppeteer's wife tells the police:

"¡Figúrese como estará de loco que dice que vio toda la ciudad tumbada por tierra como el Portal!"¹⁰ Under poetical rearrangement, true incidents become symbolical. This is an example of Asturias' use of factual symbolism.

⁹Ibid., pp. 461-462.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 460.

It is reality juxtaposed for dramatic effect. Unfortunately for those not acquainted with the historical events of Guatemala, this clever disguising of a known fact becomes too hermetic to be effective and loses its meaning. But the myth of El Señor Presidente lives on. It is not merely one of Asturias' literary creation; it is a real system perpetuated in Latin America and in other countries where fear, political stagnation and corruption exist.

Asturias creates the mystery of the myth of the dictator by limiting direct reference to the President. When the President does figure actively in the narrative, descriptions such as his apparel being "Traje negro, sombrero negro, botines negros"¹¹ or "El silencio reinaba en torno suyo"¹² serve to intensify the magical aura surrounding the man. He can enter and leave unnoticed like the wind: "Lo que ninguno pudo decir fue por dónde y a qué hora desapareció el Presidente."¹³ Only one chapter is devoted to the figure of the President as a man. In this encounter he is drunk and his real self steps forward. In his inebriated state he recalls his formative years in his pueblo natal:

Un columbrón a las calles que transitó de niño, pobre, injustamente pobre, que transitó de joven, obligado a ganarse el sustento en tanto los chicos de buena familia se pasaban la vida de francachela en francachela. Se vio empequeñecido en el hoyo de sus conterráneos, aislado de todos, bajo el velón que le permitía instruirse en las noches, mientras su madre dormía en un catre de tijera y el viento con olor de carnero y cuernos de chiflón topeteaba las calles desiertas. Y se vio más tarde

¹¹Ibid., p. 430.

¹²Ibid., p. 266.

¹³Ibid., p. 393.

en su oficina de abogado de tercera clase, entre marraneras, jugadores, cholojeras, cuatrerros, visto de menos por sus colegas que seguían pleitos de campanillas.¹⁴

This is the background history of an economic, social, and political struggle which spurred him on to acquire power. It is a psychological look at the creation of an inferiority complex stemming from rejection, and the formation of vengeful hatred. The secret envy and ambition grew into a mighty and silent power. His very presence distresses people around him who " ... no apartaban los ojos del Señor Presidente, sin atreverse a saludarlo cuando él los miraba, ni a retirarse cuando dejaba de fijarse en ellos ... " ¹⁵ Only once does the President give his personal assessment of his role as President, saying first " ... me ha tocado gobernar en un pueblo de gente de voy [sic] ... , ... gente que tiene la mejor intención del mundo para hacer y deshacer, pero que por falta de voluntad no hace ni deshace nada, que ni huele ni hiede, como caca de loro. " ¹⁶ He sees the human stagnation in his country, but instead of calling upon the people to contribute their efforts to a united advancement, he assumes the role of superhuman, saying: " ... nadie hace nada y, naturalmente, soy yo, es el Presidente de la República el que lo tiene que hacer todo ... Con decir que si no fuera por mí no existiría la fortuna ... " ¹⁷

This is the major thesis towards which Asturias aims the myth of

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 396-397.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 418-419.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 431. (Note: The voy means that they are people who are going to do something, but never do.)

¹⁷Ibid., p. 431.

the President. The people have allowed and perpetuated the myth until it has assumed accepted dominion over the entire populace and has turned against their welfare. The President is a product of a stratified system and a society which does not safeguard its own rights. With the enlightened approach of a surrealist, Asturias confronts his people with their responsibility, their duty, their need to build a new system and a new understanding by presenting them with a mythological-type monster.

The prima facie myth in Hombres de maíz is taken from the Popol Vuh which records the Mayan genesis myth that "Only dough of corn meal went into the flesh of our first fathers..."¹⁸ This myth is the tenet on which Asturias builds the case against foreign exploitation of the land and the people. Corn is sacred and should be grown for sustenance only. Cultivation of corn for capital gain is sacrilege: "Sembrado para comer es sagrado sustento del hombre que fue hecho de maíz. Sembrado por negocio es hambre del hombre que fue hecho de maíz."¹⁹ This wanton disregard for native beliefs is basis enough for an Indian uprising. Still there is deeper resentment, which dates back to the Spaniards' arrival, of foreign intervention into the life style and home grounds of the Mayans. The original corn myth is only an explanation for surface attitudes but the real problem is deeper set. Asturias creates his own myth which formulates the subconscious desire of the Guatemalan Indians.

¹⁸Adrian Recinos, Popol Vuh, The Sacred Book of the Quiché Maya, English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley from the translation by Adrian Recinos, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 167.

¹⁹Asturias, Hombres de maíz, p. 469.

It is a sketchy myth of the superhuman Gaspar Ilóm who does not die. He lives on, overcoming death and passing into the mythical realm as a heroic stalwart of the Indian rebellion. He hovers over the novel as a shadowy figure and his attempted assassination by poison becomes the cry for retaliation. The Indian firefly witches impose a curse on the non-Indians. Thus, Asturias forms another myth to explain the atavistic infertility of the children of those participants in the poisoning of Gaspar Ilóm. Through this myth Asturias has designed a surrealist elimination of intruders upon Mayan soil. Their extinction will come about by means of a sterility curse cast upon them by the supernatural guardians of the corn and men, los brujos de las luciérnagas.

Asturias creates still another myth in Hombres de maíz, a legend myth concerning the woman who leaves her husband. María Tecún disappears mysteriously. Her husband, Goyo Yic, cannot look for her because he is blind with cataracts. He knows her only by his other senses, but to explore the unfamiliar regions into which she might have gone, he decides he must have his eyes restored. He consults a local healer who removes the cataracts and returns vision to Goyo Yic. María Tecún has slowly turned into a legendary figure, and later becomes a myth to explain what happens to lost wives. Her disappearance has been an inspiration for Goyo Yic who otherwise would have remained a blind beggar. A version of the story is as follows:

... los casos de mujeres que enferman de locura ambulatoria y escapan de sus casas, sin que se vuelva a saber de ellas, engrosando el número de las "tecunas," como se las designa, y el cual nombre les viene de la leyenda de una desdichada María Tecún, quien diz tomó tizte con andar de araña, por maldad que

le hicieron, maldad de brujería, y echó a correr por todos los caminos, como loca, seguida por su esposo, a quien pintan ciego como al amor. Por todas partes le sigue y en parte alguna la encuentra. Por fin, tras registrar el cielo y la tierra, dándose a mil trabajos, óyela hablar en el sitio más desapacible de la creación y es tal la conmoción que sufren sus facultades mentales, que recobra la vista, sólo para ver, infeliz criatura, convertirse en piedra el objeto de sus andares, en el sitio que desde entonces se conoce con el nombre de Cumbre de María Tecun.²⁰

This is the mythical version of what happened to María Tecún and of how Goyo Yic recovered his sight. On both accounts, the story is not true; but the local people cultivate the legend until it becomes a myth to explain a rock that looks like a woman. Later María Tecún reappears in the novel and explains that she only left Goyo Yic because she was tired of always being pregnant, but by this time the myth of tecunas, runaway wives, is firmly established and will not be dismissed by fact. The legend-myth of María Tecún serves to initiate the incident of Nicho Aquino, the correo-coyote. His wife too has left him mysteriously, without a reason being given. She then is called a tecuna, according to the established myth. The real explanation of María's disappearance and the true person in the rock is revealed at the very end of the novel,²¹ destroying the assumed myth.

The major myth developed in the banana cycle novels is an old Mayan belief that the dead cannot lie in peace until they have received justice. They lie waiting for the day of justice, with their eyes open. The first indication of this occurs in Viento fuerte with a native's observation that " ... la tercera generación es la encargada de hablar

²⁰Ibid., p. 635.

²¹Ibid., p. 786.

por todos, por los vivos y por los enterrados."²² The next more definitive statement is found in the sequel novel, Papa Verde: "... nuestros pechos quedarán bajo la tierra en quietud, hasta que llegue el día de la venganza, que verán los ojos de los enterrados, más numerosos que las estrellas, y se beba la jícara con sangre."²³ The overt action of this belief occurs in the novel of the same name, Los ojos de los enterrados in which the people seek justice by means of a workers' strike. The myth is only an underlying belief, not an active force in its own right. It holds a psychological power over its perpetuators but Asturias does not develop it in a surrealist light.

Asturias confesses that Mulata de tal is purely enigmatic in content.²⁴ It is impossible to single out any one thread of thought and follow it through from beginning to end, but some basic ideas are evident. Asturias says that "basically Mulata is a retelling of the myth of the sun and the moon."²⁵ He points out that Mayan myths hold that a union of the sun and the moon would produce monsters, and this is the reason the Mulata gives Yumí for her sexual position preference:

No es luna de miel, sino luna de espaldas y ni bien se hizo la reflexión, aquella se soltó a llorar. Efectivamente, eso era ella. La espalda de la luna y por eso no podía mostrar su cara en el amor. ¡Nunca, repetía, llorando en el lecho, verás, Yumí, la luna de frente, siempre de espaldas!²⁶

²²Asturias, Obras Completas, Tomo II, Viento fuerte, p. 176.

²³Asturias, Obras Completas, Tomo II, Papa Verde, p. 292.

²⁴Luis Harss & Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream: Conversations with Latin American writers, (New York, Harper and Row, 1967), p. 97.

²⁵Ibid., p. 97.

However, despite all this, Asturias has a propensity to toy with his readers, to make them guess the answers to many of the puzzles which he himself has not resolved, and so he admits about his figmented Mulata: "She always gives him her back. We don't know why . . . ".²⁷ Here he reinforces the novel's purely enigmatic surrealist content. He has created his own myth from the old one, but it is indeed more complex and the meaning is not obvious, even to the author. Art can have beauty without reason, and this is what a reader must keep in mind when Asturias creates unexplainable figments.

In Mulata de tal Asturias presents a complex problem involving the conflict between the Christian conceived evil forces and the evil forces of the Mayan pagan beliefs. The former he embodies in Candanga, the latter in Cashtoc. In resolving this clash of powers Asturias becomes a literary myth-maker, creating a dream-like mythical world much akin to the Popol Vuh into which he can project any fancy or turn of his own imagination.

In addition to the myth of the Mulata, Asturias borrows the myth previously used for Hombres de maíz. The Popol Vuh, the first handbook of Mayan mythological creation, states that after several disappointing attempts to make god-fearing and god-respecting men that the gods made men of corn. The corn-devil Tazol, the first figure of Mayan mythological origin in Mulata de tal, is made of the waste product, the left-over part of the corn, the dry leaves which cover the precious kernels of which the men were formed. The reason for Tazol's

²⁷Harss & Dohmann, Mainstream, p. 97.

devilishness is implicit to this legend of men being made of corn because Tazol is made of the inferior part of the sacred corn. Tazol is introduced as "un cuerpo invisible que formaba el viento y que le caía encima con peso de red cargada de hojas de maíz, sólo las hojas, sólo el tazol y tan parecido al tazol, que así lo llamaba: Tazol."²⁸ Tazol is jealous of man's substance, of man's beauty, and of man's soul, so he preys on the weaknesses of man, much like the devil who tried to tempt Christ with the riches of the world:

--Yumí, amigo, éstas son tus riquezas, pero ... -- y guardó silencio largo, como pensando, pero lo que hacía era complacerse en los rastros de la cara de aquel que envejeció de dolor, dada que gustaba alimentarse del sufrimiento humano, del orgullo pulverizado en la cara del hombre, criatura quebradiza como la cáscara de un aquella bella criatura formada con la carne de las mazorcas, y de allí nacía su enemistad, en ser Tazol, la hojarasca inútil, lo que ya seco no sirve o sirve de palpitante de los bueyes, mientras el hombre era la masa palpitante de los granos, la risa de los granos, cuando eran dientes, o su llanto, cuando eran lágrimas.²⁹

This then is Asturias' imaginative explanation of Tazol who is an original member of the Mayan, à la Asturias, demonic hierarchy. Tazol is the antithesis of corn-man, the substance rejected when man was created, and he is the first negative destroying force introduced in Mulata de tal. But Tazol is only one aspect of the pagan polymorphic idea, incorporately called Cashtoc. It is Cashtoc and his legions and the Christian Satan Candanga who are the principal rivals in the new myth of Yumí's night-mare odyssey.

Just as the Mayas believed in polytheism, in Mulata de tal

²⁸Asturias, Mulata de tal, p. 11.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Asturias creates a poly-demonic hierarchy whose principal leader is Cashtoc: " ... Cashtoc, el Gran Demonio, ante el que se posternaban todos los demás, incluso Tazol ... ".³⁰ Tazol is on par with Yumi' in regard to his status. Both are minor members of a greater whole. Yumi' is only one of many men with similar moral frailties, representative of the Christianized-Indian, for whom both pagan and Christian religious concepts lay claim and for whose soul the two opposing religions war with one another. Cashtoc, much like the Popol Vuh's gods who destroyed their first creations because the creations did not pay homage to their creators, wishes to destroy man. Yumi', in his desire for gold and in his lack of reverence, typifies the men who have become self-centered, egotistical, individualistic. Men have forgotten the communal ways of their ancestors and they have forgotten their original gods, and according to Cashtoc, man no longer deserves to live:

... cara cuadrada de Cashtoc, el Grande, el Inmenso, demonio destructor del hombre y de todo lo hecho por el hombre, enemigo de la vida, sin ser amigo ni partidario de la muerte, pues no se proponía acabar con la creación, sino borrarla, para qué la criatura humana, para qué lo creado, para qué la existencia ... ³¹

On the other hand, Cashtoc's rival Candanga, following the Catholic religion's opposition to contraception, wishes man to multiply in order to populate his hell. In Mulata de tal Asturias invents his own interpretation, myth, of the fall of God's Angel Candanga. Asturias' story is as credible as the Biblical one and perhaps easier to accept and understand. His version closely identifies itself with the Guatemalan

³⁰Ibid., p. 117.

³¹Ibid., p. 150. [Note: the qué is accented because it implies an incompleted question. The suspension dots and the accent marks follow the original text.]

land and its products. According to Asturias' mythopoeic version, Candanga was expelled from heaven for indulging in snuff, and when he fell, he threw the tobacco plant seeds down upon the green land, Guatemala in the making: "... y arrojé las semillas al mundo vegetal de aquel continente que surgía arrebatado."³²

When Candanga and his cortege arrived on earth, they found the plant and its seeds in the possession of Cashtoc, his consorts, and the corn-men. Tobacco now was regarded as sacred and Cashtoc refused to return the plant to Candanga. The latter proceeded to show the various ways in which the poisonous plant could be utilized for sensual gratification, and in his explanations he tricked Cashtoc's giants into smoking a cigar backwards with the lighted end in their mouths, later changing them into living volcanoes. Here is an incidental mythic explanation of the creation of volcanoes.

Candanga was unable to rescue the tobacco plant from Cashtoc, so he retired. But centuries later when the Spanish conquistadors brought Catholicism to Guatemala, Candanga reappeared as the Christian devil. This time the earth devil Cashtoc released the tobacco plant to Candanga, knowing that it would be his vengeance upon the white man. Cashtoc knew that the weak white man would cling to the poisonous tobacco. This was the American Indians' retribution upon their conquerors, for truly, as the myth bears out, the white man has propagated the use of tobacco to his own detriment. Tobacco has become one of Candanga's consorts for keeping a hold on man. This new myth delightfully explains another

³²Ibid., p. 261.

present-day truth.

Asturias creates a mythological cosmos similar to that existing in ancient Greece in which the gods warred, played devilish tricks, competed for honors and toyed with man. The creatures of Asturias' imagination, like the inhabitants of Olympus, change forms and regenerate. The images they present for consideration, plus the worlds they inhabit in Mulata de tal, are projected in the mind like a surrealist painting. Their exact forms are not definite, they are colloidal in body, and their features are distorted. They do serve remarkably well to portray, surrealistically that dark world of man's mind which is infested with non-specific images of evil forces, especially prevalent in the mind of the credulous and superstitious Indian who believes strongly in the existence of a nahual spirit.

Asturias' use of and reference to the Indian concept of the nahual is a notable extension of the conscious world in Hombres de maíz and Mulata de tal. Nahualism is a phenomenon of centuries-old belief. The American Indian, living in such close communion with Nature, sees himself reflected in an animal which becomes his protector. Each Indian finds for himself a specific animal with which he feels a kindred relationship. Nahualism is an extension of the conscious world, tending toward religion and myth, but it is a distinct concept, as explained by a Catholic Father in Hombres de maíz: " ... los "nahuales" o animales protectores que por mentira y ficción del demonio creen estas gentes ignorantes que son, además de sus protectores, su otro yo, a tal punto que pueden cambiar su forma humana, por la del animal que es su "nahual,"

historia ésta tan antigua como su gentilidad."³³ It is a magical union that man shares with his guardian animal:

El guerrero indio huele al animal que lo protege y el olor que se aplica: pachulí, agua aromática, unto maravilloso, zumo de fruta, le sirve para borrar esa presencia mágica y despistar el olfato de los que le buscan para hacerle daño.³⁴

The following comment gives another insight into the phenomenon of nahualism:

El nahualismo. Todo el mundo habla del nahualismo y nadie sabe lo que es. Tiene su nahual, dicen de cualquier persona, significando que tiene un animal que le protege. Esto se entiende, porque así como los cristianos tenemos el santo ángel de la guarda, el indio cree tener su nahual. Lo que no se explica, sin la ayuda del demonio, es que el indio pueda convertirse en el animal que le protege, que le sirve de nahual.³⁵

It is a somewhat inexplorable lycanthropic-like change closely associated with black magic and a leap of faith, and it is blindly accepted. Its insistence on another reality and its pure lack of logic is appealing to the surrealist writer. Asturias knew of nahualism long before he had ever heard of surrealism, but coupled with the ideals and philosophy of surrealism nahualism becomes an important artistic device in Hombres de maíz.

The first instance of nahualism is the local healer who has a deer as a nahual, the Curandero-Venado. The fleet-footedness of the deer enables the curandero to be in a variety of places by quick transformation. When Calistro kills the Curandero, he is told that he has also killed the Venado: "Eran uno. El Curandero y el Venado de las

³³Asturias, Hombres de maíz, p. 635.

³⁴Ibid., p. 473.

³⁵Ibid., p. 638.

Siete-rozas, como vos con tu sombra, como vos con tu alma, como vos con tu aliento."³⁶ Asturias further explains the transformation:

El que tiene la gracia de ser gente y animal, al caso de perder la vida deja su mero cuerpo donde hizo la muda y el cuerpo animal onde lo atajó la muerte. El Curandero se le volvió venado, al Calistro, y allá al darle yo el postazo, dejó su forma humana, porque allí hizo la muda, y aquí vino a dejar su forma de venado, donde yo lo atajé con la muerte.³⁷

Asturias points out that everyone talks of nahualism but nobody knows what it really is. This confusing explanation of what happened to the Curandero-Venado is adequate testimony that the phenomenon cannot be defined, but the surrealist in his dismissal of common sense accepts the fact that if it can be imagined it can happen.

Nicho Aquino, the Correo-Coyote, is another person who shares an intimate relationship with his nahual. Nicho is a postman who has a coyote as a nahual. People spread the rumor that he runs so quickly with the mail by changing into a swift running coyote. There is something special about men who have a real nahual for they are in intimate communion with nature, and according to the supernatural happenings Asturias records in Hombres de maíz, they are favored by the brujos de las luciérnagas. Nicho Aquino is approached by one of the brujos who leads him into a subterranean cave, telling him:

... vas hacia las desembocaduras ...

---Ando buscando mi mujer ...

---Contigo viaja todo el mundo tras ella, pero antes de seguir adelante hay que destruir lo que llevas en esos costales de lona ...³⁸

³⁶Ibid., p. 518.

³⁷Ibid., p. 519.

³⁸Ibid., p. 752.

Nicho is told everyone is looking for his tecuna, perhaps meaning everyone is searching for love. However, before reaching the more beautiful world he must destroy the letters he carries in his bag. They are symbolic of realities and of the closed world. He must free himself of these ties with the outside world in order to enjoy " ... los secretos del mundo que está oculto bajo los cerros."³⁹ This command for releasing the ties to the ordinary world is compatible with the ideal of surrealism.

Nicho is led into another world and he slowly takes on the form of a coyote. His guide reveals to him that he is the Curandero-Venado: "El brujo de las luciérnagas que le acompañaba, desde que se encontraron en la Casa Pintada, seguía a su lado y le dijo ser el Curandero-Venado de las Siete-rozas."⁴⁰ Soon there is no question as to the effected change into a nahual being: "Ojos de animales del monte tenían el Curandero y el Correro, venado y coyote."⁴¹ "Los que bajan a las cuevas subterráneas, más allá de los cerros que se juntan, más allá de la niebla venenosa, van al encuentro de su nahual, su yo-animal-protector, que se les presenta en vivo, tal y como ellos lo llevan en el fondo tenebroso y húmedo de su pellejo."⁴²

Asturias explains that men go to this cave to meet their animal nahual with whom they have lived so many years. Some theories of

³⁹Ibid., p. 757.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 756.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 758.

⁴²Ibid., p. 758.

psychoanalysis imply that men have a cave vision in which their other self lives. This interpretation is also indicated in Hombres de maíz:

... la luz que rodea al hombre, que ha estado dentro del hombre, la luz que por humana permite ver al nahual separado de la persona, verse la persona tal y como es y al mismo tiempo su imagen en forma primigenia que se oculta en ella y que de ella salta al cuerpo de un animal, para ser animal, sin dejar de ser persona.⁴³

Another suggested nahual in Hombres de maíz is Goyo Yic-Tatacuatzín. Goyo Yic, when he recovers his sight, begins to sell small articles from town to town:

De noche al regresar a la posada en sus recorridos de pueblos y ferias, paraba en cada pueblo donde había feria, contemplaba a la luz de la luna su sombra: el cuerpo larguirucho como ejote y la tilichera por delante a la altura de la boca del estómago, y era ver la sombra de una tacuatztina. De hombre al hacerse animal a la luz de la luna pasaba a tacuatztina, a hembra de tacuatztín, con una bolsa por delante, para cargar sus crías.⁴⁴

This is only a possible nahual. Goyo Yic never makes the transformation into a tatacuatzín, but the suggestion of such a possibility is surreal in composition and imagination, and this half-way created nahual is another reflection of Asturias' creative mind in the realm of nahualism. Nahualism does not actively reappear in Asturias' novels until his novel Mulata de tal in which nahualism is everything.

Mulata de tal is the most challenging to understand of all Asturias' novels. It is artistically conceived, hermetic in character, elusive, and perhaps the most highly poetical of all his works, with the notable exception of El Alhajadito. Mulata de tal is Asturias' richest novel in imagery, imagination, and symbolism, and it is the most closely-

⁴³Ibid., p. 760.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 591.

woven novel dealing with the national Guatemalan spirit.

Hombres de maíz was the predecessor of Mulata de tal, but, like Asturias' other novels, Hombres de maíz also dealt with concrete national problems. Mulata de tal is not concerned with the concrete but rather with the essence of man, with man's psychological self. Before one can read this novel with any degree of enjoyment, Asturias demands blind acceptance and unharnessed imagination when confronted by the unusual events, and logic must be surrendered. This novel belongs to the surreal where reason must be dismissed and empirical proofs must be discarded. Mulata de tal is bizarre, absurd, illogical, unconventional, beyond ordinary reality, and one of the supreme examples of surrealist art. It abounds with irrationalities related to the Mayan paganistic evil forces which come to life in the novel. These are the same atavistic figures which Mayans still have in the collective unconscious, and which continue to survive in the face of modern civilization. Christian evil forces also come to life and act in the novel. These are the atavistic figures the Spaniards brought with them to Guatemala and which now inhabit the collective unconscious. The present-day Guatemalan, a mixture of Spanish and Mayan, has both these atavistic figures in his collective unconscious, and it is here where the conflict between these two forces takes place.

The most exaggerated form of nahualism is the entire novel Mulata de tal. Nahualism is the primogenitor of this overstatement of the transformation/transfiguration found in Mulata de tal. The abstract theme concerning the conflict over religions is present in concrete form, with adherents of both sides forming the unusual characters. However all

the narrative takes place in the realm of surreality and Asturias uses existing reality only as a backdrop for the narrative and for establishing a common ground for communication. Asturias' focus in Mulata de tal is upon the world of demons, annihilation of death/life concepts, fusion of the animal-vegetable-mineral worlds, unlimited imagination, and metamorphosis as the only true reality. Metamorphosis is a concept that directly descends through the Mayan historical-mythical concept of a continuum of life in which each person carries with him bits of the past, and the past then becomes more meaningful and significant than any present or future. When man may continue after death in the form of another worldly aspect such as an animal or a plant, the spiritual world is not separate but rather an integral part of the complete unity of this one world, so that death rarely seems final. Similar to cartoon characters who never perish regardless of the seriousness of their accidents, Asturias' creatures regenerate with new life and return to action despite the apparent finality of their demise. The awareness of constant life is evident in the repetitive regeneration and/or transformation of the characters Yumí, Niniloj and the Mulata who undergo all sorts of fantastic and often deadly situations and yet revive. Asturias warns in the novel that Yumí will regenerate life, even if he is cut to pieces: "¡No lo despedacen! ¡Es de balde! ... Sus pedazos se juntarán, es unible, y revivirá."⁴⁵, and it is also revealed that "Se troncharon tus sueños y la vida sigue que corre ...".⁴⁶ There is an expression of

⁴⁵Asturias, Mulata de tal, p. 174.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 172.

this life continuum concept in Yumí's use of his friend's names, the ones who perished in the small pox epidemic: "Mientras yo viva y me llamo como ellos se llamaban en la vida, no habrán muerto. Es una forma de magia lógica."⁴⁷

Nahualism in Mulata de tal is not the traditional human-animal transformation, and the transformation is not to a protecting spirit within another form of life. In Mulata de tal Asturias evolves the transformations mysteriously and often suddenly. At one time Yumí's wife Niniloj finds herself transformed into a small dwarf, and unexplainably a washerwoman notes that Niniloj's nahual is a spider: "Su nahual es una araña del tamaño de un pollito, explicó la lavandera."⁴⁸ In another reflection of nahualism Yumí and his dwarfed wife meet some salvajes who are men-boars:

Los Salvajes son hombres que estaban bailando una danza disfrazados de jabalíes, al compás de enormes tambores. Mientras bailaban bebían chicha por guacaladas, borrachera que no les agarró por caerse y levantarse, hasta quedar tirados en los caminos, sino por saltar, y saltar cada vez más alto, lo que disgustó a Tazol, quien los atrajo al monte cerrado, donde, pobres varones, ya no pudieron quitarse el disfraz de jabalíes y así quedaron, y así engendraron sus hijos, con jabalíes hembras que Tazol les presentó.⁴⁹

Whereas this appears to be a type of nahualism, it is a more permanent condition similar to the centaurs of Greek mythology. Considering that this condition occurs in Asturias' mythical Mayan lands, this duality of physical existence seems to be an evolution of primary nahualism, and it

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 220.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 67.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 80.

echoes the man-animal creations found in many of the carvings and bas-reliefs of Mayan archaeology.

Other unusual examples of extended nahualism appear in this unreal narrative as Yumí becomes a giant, then a dwarf, and then is transfigured into the pock-marked Indian-Candanga and later a porcupine in which form he wages a combat with a Catholic Father who has become a spider wearing a cassock. Asturias utilizes the original concept of nahualism in exaggerated illogical forms which follow a surrealist pattern. He also encompasses the world of precognition into this new surrealist art.

The surrealism of extended imagination embracing the para-psychic world is present but not fully developed in El Señor Presidente. The most apparent form is a type of déjà-vu or brief psychic perception in which glimpses of forthcoming inalterable events are seen. Asturias writes of Pelele: " ... el idioto luchaba con el fantasma del zopilote ..." ⁵⁰, and again just prior to his death Pelele is "como pescado muerto en la ceniza." ⁵¹ These hints are death notices, and Asturias includes other such revelations in the novel.

There is visionary foreshadowing in the episode of Nina Fedina and her baby. Long before any real trouble arises, her husband sees in a surrealist vision that "el fantasma de la muerte se alzaba de la cuna de su hijo, como de un ataud" ⁵², and the vision becomes a skeletal form of his wife. The author interpolates this view of the destined future

⁵⁰Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 188.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 217.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 226 - 227.

into the narrative without any separation of reality and fact from the ghostly superreal, giving no explanations. Furthering the death notice Asturias notes that Nina Fedina finds "la carne es heladiza"⁵³ in the jail, and in the darkness "más bien se siente muerta."⁵⁴ Nina Fedina is interrogated and Asturias lengthens the time span here by emphasizing the repeated questions. Emphasis on death is reinforced by the agonizing situation in which she hears her hungry baby cry and she mentally counts the minutes. The same question, "¿Dónde está el general?", is repeated over and over. Asturias creates his surrealism both in the foretelling of the baby's death early in the novel and in the acute over-dramatization of the time factor. The technique is similar to a cinematographic slowdown of time to increase awareness of the impending and irreversible death:

---¿Dónde está el general? ¿Dónde está el general?
 La una ...
 Las dos ...
 Por fin, las tres ... Su hijito lloraba ...
 Las tres cuando ya debían ser como las cinco ...
 Las cuatro no llegaban ... Y su hijito lloraba ...
 Y las cuatro ... Y su hijito lloraba ...
 ---¿Dónde está el general? ¿Dónde está el general?⁵⁵

The senseless cruelty and stupidity is unjustified but Asturias uses it to strengthen the case against dictatorship by presenting an innocent baby's death as a result of his mother's clash with the authorities.

Also in El Señor Presidente Camila perceives the foreshadowing of Miguel's future: "... sintió frío al enfundar las manos en las

⁵³Ibid., p. 277.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 280.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 287.

mangas ... Sus pasos se oyeron a lo lejos como en un subterráneo."⁵⁶ Miguel also experiences similar uninterpreted premonitions of his fate: "Quiebrahuesitos en el subterráneo oscuro ...".⁵⁷ Later in a visionary recreation of the Popol Vuh's Tohil dance demanding human sacrifices, Asturias writes "una palpitación subterránea de reloj subterráneo que marca horas fatales empezaba para Cara de Angel."⁵⁸ These are visions into his future underground confinement. In addition to the Tohil dance transposition, Asturias creates another inspired symbolic transposition which reminds one of Echeverría's El Matadero and Quiroga's La gallina degollada. This combination is seen in the episode involving the cook (representative of the President) and the chicken (representative of Miguel). The episode involves a surrealistic enactment of the tragic fate awaiting Miguel. There is interaction of the scenes. Miguel is preparing to leave and he exchanges rhapsodic phrases of amor and mi cielo with Camila. At the same time outside the cook is trying to catch the chicken. Its death symbolizes Miguel's train trip for freedom as "El pollo corría, se arrastraba, revoloteaba, se somataba por escapar a la muerte."⁵⁹ At the same time its capture foreshadows Miguel's eventual capture:

... El pollo dio contra el muro o el muro se le vino encima.
 [like an execution wall] Las dos cosas se le sentían en el
 corazón ... Le retorcieron el pescuezo ... Como se volara
 muerto sacudía las alas ... "¡Hasta se encució, el desgraciado!"

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 445.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 353.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 443.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 438.

gritó la cocinera, y sacudiéndose las plumas que le monteaban el delantal fue a lavarse las manos en la pila llena de agua llovida. [This is like Pilate washing his hands after Christ's sentence to crucifixion] ⁶⁰

During his trip, the train also sings a song of death to Miguel.

Asturias artistically produces the effect of the train's movement, its lulling action, and its suggestive rhythm which leads Miguel to the words cada ver, which suggest cadáver:

Al paso del tren los campos cobraban movimiento y echaban a correr como chiquillos uno tras uno, uno tras uno, uno tras otro: árboles, casas, puentes.

. . .

Uno tras otro, uno tras otro, uno tras otro ...

... los ojos perdidos de sueño y la sensación confusa de ir en el tren, de no ir en el tren, de irse quedando atrás del tren, cada vez más atrás del tren ... cada ver cada vez, ... cada ver cada ver cada ver ...⁶¹

He arrives at the two words cada ver, very similar to cadáver. Later Miguel finds himself incarcerated in a subterranean prison cell, thus giving substance to the premonitions both he and his wife experienced. Toward the end Miguel is called a cadaver while he is still alive, " ... ni él ni su figura ... Ni él ni su cadáver",⁶² and there is diminishing of sunlight symbolizing his life, "la luz se iba. Se iba ... Aquella luz que se estaba yendo desde que venía."⁶³ He has clung to life through the remembrance of Camila, " ... lo único, y lo último que alentaba en él era la esperanza de volver a ver a su esposa, el amor

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 438.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 439.

⁶²Ibid., p. 457.

⁶³Ibid., p. 456.

que sostiene el corazón con polvo de esmeril,"⁶⁴ but when lies and slander shatter the purity of love, he dies.

Thus the precognition or visionary activity in El Señor Presidente gradually ushers in forthcoming unalterable events which are surrealistic insights into future states of being. Similar visionary activity in Hombres de maíz is limited to two notable episodes.

The first episode in Hombres de maíz which illustrates visionary activity involves Calistro's vision which his family uses as a motive to slaughter the eight members of the Zacatón family. The Curandero has given Calistro a potion to drink which will cause him to reveal the people responsible for his mother's illness. This is induced visionary activity:

A instancias del Curandero habló Calistro, habló dormido.
---Mi nanito fue maleada por los Zacatón y para curarla es necesario cortarles la cabeza a todos éstos.
Dicho esto, cerró los ojos.⁶⁵

He has the vision, the revelation, under the influence of some type of witch's brew. Obviously the action to be taken to cure his mother is drastic and out of proportion. At the end of the novel the Curandero discloses that Calistro acted under his influence: "... la degollación de los Zacatón que yo, Curandero-Venado de las Sieta-rozas ordené indirectamente por intermedio del Calistro Tecún, cuando los Tecún tenían a su nana enferma de hipo de grillo."⁶⁶ This disclosure invalidates Calistro's vision as any function of precognition.

The only real vision in the novel is Benito Ramos' extra-sensory

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 457.

⁶⁵Asturias, Hombres de maíz, p. 514.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 786.

perception vision. Benito Ramos, at a distance of several leagues from Coronel Gonzalo Godoy, envisions the colonel's death. It is rumored that Benito Ramos has a pact with the Devil: "Eso tiene de bueno hacer pacto con Satanás. Saber las cosas antes de que sucedan."⁶⁷ Gonzalo Godoy meets his death in the Tembladero. Benito Ramos describes the scene which takes place in El Tembladero using effective opposites: "Paz en medio de la tormenta. Calma en medio de la tempestad. Sosiego en medio de la mayor tremolina."⁶⁸ These clashing opposites effectively establish an eery setting for the colonel's supernatural death. The ensuing lengthy account of the death scene is surrealistic in origin and content, with many sensory appeals of smell, touch, and sight, and in it Benito sees three circles that close in on Gonzalo Godoy.⁶⁹ Benito later offers the condensed version of the vision:

Vi patente, en el embudo de El Tembladero, como te estoy viendo aquí a vos, que el Coronel Godoy y sus hombres estaban rodeados por tres círculos mortales. Contando de donde él hablaba con sus soldados, sin darse cuenta del peligro que los amenazaba, hacia afuera, el primer círculo era de puros ojos de buhos, sin buhos, sólo los ojos, los buhos no estaban, y si estaban, parecían tamales deshojados; el segundo lo formaban caras de brujos sin cuerpo, miles y miles de caras que se sostenían pegadas al aire como la cara de la luna en el cielo; y el tercero compuesto por rondas de izotales de puntas ensangrentadas.⁷⁰

This is intense visionary activity for not only does he see the action

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 558.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 559.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 558-560.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 708.

but what he sees is not of the ordinary everyday world. The colonel's death is another activity of the brujos de las luciérnagas, the same ones responsible for nahualism in Hombres de maíz. Benito's vision is detailed and precise but yet its content is surreal.

The visionary activity in the banana cycle novels, which are not primarily members of Asturias' surrealist activity, is limited to those insights pertaining to the future destruction and revenge of the wind and the masses, but Mulata de tal is the visionary activity of the mind of Miguel Angel Asturias. The novel itself is a visionary insight into other possible worlds, completely removed from existing reality. No specific visions manifest themselves in this novel but rather each incident evolves spontaneously into another. As in many other of his novels, Asturias is Nature's ally in the creative process, and at all times he shows a deep respect for the wonders of Nature.

Nature is the great provider and the eternal mother of life. It is composed of all the living and the dead of this earth. Man is only one minute fraction of this living whole, and as a single tissue cell can die without the whole body perishing, so can man die without Nature following suit. Man lives as a tragic figure in this gigantic and complex personage called Nature. Nature is his lifebread and yet Nature is impassive to his life, to his sorrows and his trials. Nature, regardless of man's fortunes, will continue, for if it dies so will, inevitably, all life. So man is not the dominator of Nature, he is not Master of his fate, he is not immortal, and the impassivity of Nature disturbs man. Asturias is well aware of man's dilemma, and he writes:

Anduvo por donde vivió con la Cardenala Cifuentes.
 Nada había cambiado. Todas las cosas iguales.
 Los árboles, las piedras y parecían ser las mismas
 iguanas las que ahora, después de nueve años, se
 asoleaban, y los mismos pájaros carpinteros los que
 cantaban, y las mismas ardillas las que, cosquillosas,
 subían y bajaban de los árboles, y los mismos conejos
 los que se escabullían ...⁷¹

Faced with the ageless continuance of Nature, man suffers the anguish of his mortality. Thus, Asturias perceives in Nature a type of force beyond controllable reality and its mysterious ways are an inspiration for him. Man must die but Asturias invokes the wisdom of the ancient Mayans and often he retires man into a dream world, a world of the disappeared. In this way, it is possible for man to overcome the finalizing factor of death, and this gives him, in a sense, a type of regenerative power which is so characteristic of Nature.

The references to Nature's species, its meteorological occurrences, the natural disasters, and many other phenomenal aspects of Nature are an integral part of Asturias' writing. A small compendium of Guatemalan flora and fauna could be extracted from his works. His writings reflect the same respect and perception of Nature as found in Gallegos and Rivera. Asturias, remarkably familiar with the natural species of Guatemala, is a spacious, soil-conscious man, enamoured of his native Guatemalan landscape. His Guatemala is made up of " ... mares, montañas, volcanes, lagos, ríos inmensos con olor a frutas líquidas ... "⁷², and he sees the wild untouched vegetation as a Gothic entanglement with entrancing beauty which, when tamed and cultivated for banana plantations, becomes green

⁷¹Miguel Angel Asturias, "Juanantes, el encadenado", El Espejo de Lida Sal, (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, S.A., 1967), p. 45.

⁷²Asturias, Viento fuerte, p. 211.

geometric squares. Nature is the harmony and heartbeat of Asturias' works, and he has no liking for depressing, cold cities or for city life. In the city man becomes an anonymity pushed from one dismal place to another, walking in the shadow of polluted air and crowded to discontentment:

Solo entre millones de habitantes esperando la señal de la luz que le diera paso al automóvil en que iba y que tomó al salir de la estación en Chicago, adonde fue en ferrocarril desde Nueva York.
 ... Desde la cama seguía los ruidos de la inmensa ciudad que iba despertando bajo una colcha impenetrable de neblinas oscuras.
 ... agradecimiento a la vida por habérselo llevado lejos de aquellas ciudades, al mundo vegetal de sus bananas.
 ... El reloj. La carrera para tomar el elevador y descender. La puerta. La calle. La lucha para cruzar entre los miles de personas que pasaban, hasta el primer vehículo disponible.⁷³
 ... al detenerse el elevador en el piso 53 ocupó un pequeño sitio entre las cuarenta personas que bajaban, convertido en una sardina ...⁷⁴

This is the description of the city when Lester Mead first went to see the Papa Verde in Chicago. Asturias does not dwell on the city. He can devote page after page to his mundos vegetales but he has no desire or fluency for describing the city. With brief, short, deft, pointed sentences he punctuates the hurried, abrupt, pressured life of the city. Artistically it matches the impersonal attitude of the foreign investors in Guatemala. Asturias pictures New Yorkers as prisoners, "millares de gentes encerradas desde que nacen hasta que mueren en casas y oficinas hediondas, grises ...".⁷⁵ New York is " ... una ciudad que parece creada

⁷³Ibid., p. 103.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 106.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 211.

para usar todas las fuerzas humanas hasta la náusea ..., para devorarnos a todos ... Una gigante fea, sin sentido ...".⁷⁶ Strangely enough, the wild untameable land of Guatemala is, with the exception of the word fea, comparable to this last description of New York. It too uses up human energy, devouring all who try to conquer it.

With Viento fuerte there begins a long detailed accusation against the American-owned fruit company which controls the men and wealth on the Guatemalan plantations. This condemnation yields a series of novels: Viento fuerte; Papa Verde; Week-end en Guatemala; and, Los ojos de los enterrados. As in most of Asturias' writings, there is also a charge against the common people who allow such evils as tyranny and exploitation to exist. The responsibility for safeguarding the country lies with the people. The price that they must pay for neglecting their duty is great.

The banana cycle novels are not rich in the production or surrealist narrative sequences or surrealist images. The surrealist attitude is perceived in the positive emphasis on the establishment of a new system for the banana industry. Asturias realizes that the Americans in control have no intention to allow the Guatemalans to take over and assume responsibility, but he does not advocate physical violence to gain control. In Viento fuerte Asturias suggests that first the existing system must be destroyed but he does not write to encourage open rebellion nor to incite bloody revolution. However, he does indicate change is necessary and his idea of change is realized in Viento fuerte

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 210.

through surrealistic means which are beyond practical controlled reality.

By means of a conversation Lester Mead has with a preacher about the formation of the world, Asturias asks the question whether or not there was a divine plan for the banana plant to make some men rich: "A Lester Mead, mientras evocaba con el pastor las lecturas de la formación del globo terrestre, lo que más le interesaba era indagar el momento en que el hombre contó como aliada a la planta que produce el banano."⁷⁷

Later Lester Mead speaks of the rebellion of the masses to conquer the Papa Verde, the managing head of the fruit company personifying the company. Prophetically, he sees the rebellion as a powerful wind which should sweep down upon the operation and destroy all:

Puede que nosotros no veamos el triunfo, ya que la vida tal vez no nos alcance para acabar con el Papa Verde; pero los que nos sigan en la trinchera, sí, si es que se mueven como nosotros, como el viento fuerte, que cuando pasa no deja nada en pie, y lo que deja, lo deja seco.⁷⁸

This is the first indication of the wind of people rising in rebellion. The ordinary man envisions a human scene of violence; a surrealist like Asturias goes beyond into an imaginary world. In typical rational views of a one-dimensioned world, most people see only one point of view, never imagining there are other possibilities as would a surrealist. Lester Mead Stoner Cosí is the only quasi-visionary in the novel. He sees other worlds and acts towards their creation. He follows the surrealist objectives of freedom and positive action, but even Lester does not imagine the possibility of Nature enacting her own revenge on both the exploited

⁷⁷Asturias, Viento fuerte, p. 102.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 111-112.

and the exploiters. Others discuss the physical possibility of a strong wind wrecking their Pacific coast plantations, but they are little aware of the future truth of their utterances:

---Pero, además, y para mí es lo principal---adujo Walker---, Anderson dejó un estudio de climatología, fuera, naturalmente, de los planos de la región, determinando su topografía, y lo que más privó para que aceptaran sus proyectos es que, al fijar lo relativo a los vientos, pudo comprobar que por este lado de la costa no se produce el «viento fuerte». Y, efectivamente, jamás se ha presentado.

---¡Gran señor enemigo!---indicó el ingeniero Smollet---; nadie que no haya visto lo que ocurre cuando se presenta puede imaginarse lo que es el «viento fuerte». Es algo pavoroso. Con decirles a ustedes que yo, que he navegado mucho y he pasado fuertes tempestades en el mar, uno de los ciclones en Cuba, ninguno de estos fenómenos me produjo el pavor de cuando el «viento fuerte» pegó en el lado del Atlántico hace tres años. Uno siente que lo ahoga, lo asfixia, lo hace polvo. Es un viento huracanado que no sólo sacude y arrebató todo lo que está en la superficie, sino arranca de raíz árboles y edificios. 79

As a prelude to Los ojos de los enterrados and as a preview of the outcome of Viento fuerte, Asturias allows Lester Mead to envision symbolically the later tragic hurricane: "La hora del hombre será el «viento fuerte» que de abajo de las entrañas de la tierra alce su voz de reclamo, y exija, y barra con todos nosotros ...".⁸⁰ Lester is using this metaphor on a symbolic level but later it becomes a physical truth. Nevertheless, Lester sees beyond the concrete and he urges reform before the banana industries are destroyed: "El viento fuerte . . . será la revancha de esta gente trabajadora, humilde, sufrida, explotada ...".⁸¹ In effect the Indian Chamá Rito Perraj is the one who invokes the wind.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 130.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 134.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 136.

Viento fuerte begins with a description of the land along the mid-American Pacific coast as the tired and exhausted laborers work to clear the land for cultivation:

Ya no era fuerza que dieran signos violentos de alegría. Toda la desvelada multitud estaba inerte, suelta, esparcida, después de haber pasado días y noches trabajando. El terreno en que se hallaban, unos sentados, otros acostados, parecía totalmente dominado por ellos. Todo dominado, menos el húmedo, el inmóvil, el cegante calor de la costa. Se impuso la voluntad del hombre. Manos y equipos mecánicos modificaron el terreno. 82

Here in the coastal region Nature is wild and free and the heat and humidity are insufferable. Nature only seems tame but she is hard and unyielding in her demand for human sweat and blood:

El sol de plomo se encargaría de matar los brillos del honor, cuando empezaran los hombres a asfixiarse, sin refresco de sudor en la atmósfera de fuego blanco, y las temperaturas palúdicas desmoronaran todo aquel empuje rebelde, bajo una máscara más amarilla que los odiosos polvos de licopodio que les vendían para echarles en el ombligo a sus hijos. Todos los alzados cuando apretaran el sol y la malaria acabarían por aceptar la befa, la deshonra, el catafalco de la mierda, como decía Adelaido Lucero, para no decir nada cuando perdía los estribos. 83

Nature is a personified opponent of man and she struggles against abuse and exploitation from the hands of man. Like a petty god, she demands sacrifices for all she gives, and often by fire, flood, earthquake, tornado or cyclone she asserts her supremacy over man. For her own sake, Nature often ravages herself. In Viento fuerte, Asturias has chosen the power of a great wind as Nature's tool.

Nature has always been foe and friend of man, and in the last instance, along with death, she is the great equalizer of mankind for

⁸²Ibid., p. 5.

⁸³Ibid., p. 96.

Nature is not discriminatory with man. Nature's destructive powers touch all, and her benevolence is also shared equally. In his banana cycle novels, Asturias uses Nature as a means to destroy the cultivation of the green banana worlds. The destruction effected by the sweeping wind in Viento fuerte is evidence of surrealist activity. The more overt sign is the magical voodoo of the Chamá in the last part of the novel. Asturias writes the surrealist episode employing the magical Indian powers to provide a dramatic and impressive end.

The Indians have always been surrealists, though not formally. Their close identity with Nature and their supernatural beliefs attest to their surrealist ties. The incorporation of Indian magic into Viento fuerte is surrealist in artistic design and intent, but the practice itself is indigenous to the American Indian. The Chamá's summons of the wind is surrealist in his intent to accomplish through Nature what had not been accomplished through the actions of men. The Chamá calls the wind at the request of one individual, Hermenegilo Puac, who sacrificed his life and body to fight against the powerful Papa Verde in far-off Chicago. Hermenegilo Puac visited the Chamá Rito Peraj: "... el Chamá le pidió su vida, y él, Hermenegilo Puac, se la dio, y el Chamá le pidió su cabeza, y él, Hermenegilo Puac, le dio todo con tal que hubiera revancha."⁸⁴ The ritual that the Chamá follows is primitive and effective: "El Chamá sacó las ollas de cal ya preparada y se encaminó al camposanto ... Había que aprovechar el mediodía del nueve de marzo."⁸⁵ He disin-

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 219.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 216.

ters Hermenegilo's body, takes the head, and prepares to call forth the wind: "La pobre resistencia vegetal a los elementos desenfrenados dentro de lo sobrenatural y mágico con la voluntad destructiva del hombre ...".⁸⁶ The Chamá is "... Rito Perraj, el que maneja con sus dedos los alientos fluido y pétreo de Huracán y Cabracan."⁸⁷ Hence the wind blows, stripping trees, causing tidal floods, tumbling houses, and killing many. The land is cleared of the geometric squares and the intruders, and Nature reclaims its wild dominion over the land, but the Papa Verde company still survives, out of danger and comfortable in the United States. The foreign marketeers have not been eradicated by Nature's great wind.

Papa Verde begins with the truth the Guatemalan must face about the American company. When one man is gone the company sends in another, and another, and another. Papa Verde deals more with the company man Geo Maker Thompson than it does with the land he uses, but Geo Maker (symbolic name: Geo=earth; + maker) is an indirect victim of Nature since the Río Motoagua claims Geo's sweetheart Mayarí.

The theme established in Viento fuerte is accomplished in Los ojos de los enterrados. Whereas in Viento fuerte the wind actually did sweep down upon the land and people, in Los ojos de los enterrados the wind is the symbolic wind of which Lester Mead spoke. It is the wind of the workers' strike, the mass rebellion of the people who, in an effort to reclaim their land and their rights, sweep the country like a strong wind. This uprising and uniting of the people is not surrealist although

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 219.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 220.

its beginnings did lie in the realm of futuristic worlds envisioned by Lester Mead. The rebellion accomplished in Los ojos de los enterrados is stark reality: "¡Esperar, como es creencia aquí, que otro Hermenegildo Puac dé su cabeza al brujo, y que se desencadena un nuevo "viento fuerte", es dejar en manos sobrenaturales problemas que tenemos que resolver nosotros con una sola voluntad: la de la huelga!"⁸⁸ The strike becomes the reality rather than supernatural powers, but the strike is described in the symbolic term of a strong wind: "¡El "viento fuerte" que ahora empieza aquí, aquí en esta plaza, que lo oigan los que deben oírlo, no viene a barrer las plantaciones, sino a hacer justicia ...!"⁸⁹ The strike is the will of the people to effect justice:

---¡A la huelga ya! ¡A la huelga ya! ¡A la huelga ya!
Clamor que llenaba las calles, voz que barriía la tierra como un viento arrasador, un viento con rostros, manos, cabezas, ojos, pies, hombros, brazos de gente unida en una sola voluntad, huracanado, cegador, implacable, mudo, sordo, mortal, polvo y residuo de otros vientos. 90

Like avenging Nature the people also rise up to extirpate the foreign powers.

Nature has an affinity with religion in the minds of the Mayan for much of the Mayan religion is based on the unusual phenomena of Nature. Like Nature, by its very essence religion is surreal and beyond the proven world. The religious aspect of Asturias' work follows the aspirations of the Surrealists, and it appears progressively throughout

⁸⁸M. A. Asturias, Obras completas, Tomo III: Los ojos de los enterrados, p. 955.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 955.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 957.

his production. Religion requires abstract faith in the unknown, and the Surrealists share a similar faith in a more enlarged world.

El Señor Presidente is not lacking in the religious aspect although it is more on the concrete level. On the superficial plane the novel has references to the church bells, the priest in jail, Biblical usage of the Songs of Solomon, and minor remnants of Mayan paganistic practices. The discussion of religion in El Señor Presidente along the lines of intense surrealism is limited. In the general area of imaginative symbolic production surrealism is seen in the superimposing of religious episodes on the scenes in El Señor Presidente. This is one of Asturias' favorite artistic devices appearing in many of his writings. He relies markedly on the Christian Bible, the Mayan Popol Vuh, and present-day religious rites in Guatemala. Symbolic use of religion in the description of fictitious events results in a multiplicity of images and a greater feeling for situations, as in the religious parallel Asturias draws with Christ's plea for water on the cross and the imprisoned Italian calling for water in his cell. Similar to Christ's supplication of "I thirst", the Italian calls out in the prison: "¡Agua, per Dio, per favori, agua signori, agua per favori!"⁹¹ This parallel with Christ's agony extends the primary factor and increases the awareness and gravity of the situation.

Asturias again uses the religious beliefs contained in the Popol Vuh as a source for Miguel's vision of Tohil, the god of fire, who in the Popol Vuh demands human sacrifices. In El Señor Presidente the vision of

⁹¹Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 382.

Tohil is representative of the life-death power the President holds over the people. The Popol Vuh relates that Tohil demanded human sacrifices in exchange for his benevolence toward the people. The President too demands human sacrifices. "Tohil exigía sacrificios humanos"⁹², so does the President who is portrayed as a petty god.

The religious aspect does not exist as such in the banana cycle novels, except in the banana worship with the Green Pope in Chicago. The Indians' gods huracán and cabracán are implicated in the violence but focal interest on religion is not present.

Religion as a dominant theme is more evident in Asturias' Mulata de tal than in any other of his works. In this novel he portrays religious differences and struggles which echo the inner strife of the half-Christian-half-pagan Guatemalan native who has both concepts competing for the honors of religious tribute and homage. Surrealism serves as a medium to express the inner strife through a meandering series of ever-changing characters and forms in a bizarre, unorthodox world. The enlargement and distortion of the conscious world begins at the onset of the novel which never recovers a semblance of existing reality after the plunge into the world of surrealism. As previously mentioned, many of the incidents in the Popol Vuh serve Asturias as the basis for this surrealistic world, but the religious conflict is constructed from both the pagan and Christian beliefs. The familiar point of departure into the world of imagination is the age-old pact with the devil, in this case the Mayan Corn Devil, Tazol. Celestino Yumí is the unwitting devil's accom-

⁹²Ibid., p. 434.

plice who is destined to undergo a series of disastrous and transforming events, as whimsical as the imagination of the author. Reality is non-existent in this novel, other than in the mockery and satire of the religious rites.

Asturias focuses on religion in Mulata de tal as an invaluable aspect of surrealism, and he takes the basic abstract theme of Good versus Evil and expands the idea of Evil to embrace both the pagan-Indian and the Christian concepts of Evil. He then places these two ideas of Evil in opposition to each other, and he complicates further the situation by involving the concept of Good embodied in the Catholic Church. All three have corporeal forms in the novel. Thus there is a three-way religious battle on the concrete plane: Pagan-Indian Evil personified as Cashtoc competing with the Christian Evil characterized by Candanga, and the Christian Good in the form of a Catholic priest who combats both these evil powers. Asturias himself has summed up the basic conflicts involved:

In Mulata we have a priest surrounded by the forces of evil. Basically, that's what the novel is all about. The Indian forces of evil: Cabracan, the god of earthquakes, and Huracan, the god of hurricanes, want to wipe man off the face of the earth. For them man is an intruder in the universe. They want to destroy him. That's what we might call the Indian viewpoint. But Catholicism has a different concept of evil. Satan does not want man destroyed. On the contrary, he wants man to multiply in order to increase the population of hell, if we can put it that way. So naturally the two conceptions clash. 93.

The Guatemalan Indian and his close mestizo relatives form the battleground for this clash. They are the spoils of war. The Indian is the puppet of these major power forces, and he is caught up in this

⁹³Harss & Dohmann, Mainstream, p. 99.

struggle for his soul: will he be destroyed, damned, or saved? This is the legacy the Spanish conquerors gave to the Guatemalan Indians when they brought Christianity to the mainland and superimposed its doctrines upon the existing religion of pre-Columbian times. Asturias works with this material in Mulata de tal, borrowing freely from various Indian and Christian sources, but principally from the Quiché-Mayan Popol Vuh and The Annals of the Cakchiquels in addition to the Christian Bible. Working with the two religious traditions Asturias forms a theory in prose about the Guatemalan Indian's religious plight and his inner religious strife. This interiorized clash of values is difficult to comprehend in a simplified manner, but the Indian is like a puppet, pulled here and there, as each side struggles for control of the Indian's religious beliefs.

Expressions of the Catholic-Christian concepts in Mulata de tal are interlaced so tightly with the pagan beliefs and gods that they form a tightly woven, rich, verbal picture-tapestry, baroque in texture, and surrealistic in conception. Christian or pagan, there is always a religious thread present; it never diminishes and disappears but rather it continuously weaves itself in and out among the fibers of the novel, from beginning to end. The extreme complexity of this novel makes it very difficult at times to separate the various religious lines, and to say that one aspect is purely Christian while another is only pagan, or this aspect is Mayan whereas that one is Catholic. Asturias has carefully and intricately blended both Christian and paganism into an almost inseparable whole. This integral unity of the novel is a literary accomplishment which mirrors the reality of the Mayan Indian who has formed a surreal-

istic composite of his religious heritage:

In time pagan and Christian ideology blended until now neither priests nor Indians can define sharply where one religion ends and the other begins. Nor can one say of ceremonies and pilgrimages, "This is purely pagan, that truly Christian." 94

. . . very few Maya could tell you which are the Christian and which the pagan elements in his religion. 95

A religious and carnival tone predominates in this novel which blends the religious, secular, and pagan into a surrealistic graphic echo of devilry conceived in the Indian's mind. Candanga institutes the ignoble trick of putting animal heads on the decapitated saints' statues, perhaps a type of Saint Nahual. This sacrilege offends both the Church and the earth-devil Cashtoc. The Church is the butt of several offenses, but the entrance of the Church into the pagan world is illustrated concretely with the dance the Church performs with the pagan giants. This episode recalls primitive Mayan rituals as the all-encompassing rhythm sweeps the Church up in its momentum and even the church building takes part in the primitive dance:

La iglesia bailaba como gigante al compás de horribles ruidos subterráneos, retumbos del tambor del diablo tamborero.

Bailaba la iglesia y bailaba la plaza. Bailaba la plaza y bailaban las casas y bailaban los cerros. Bailaban los cerros y bailaban los árboles. 96

Asturias has a remarkable knowledge of and a keen insight into both the weaknesses and the strengths of the Catholic Church. In Mulata de tal he satirizes the foibles and follies of Catholicism but he

⁹⁴Vera Delsey & Lilly de Jongh Osborne, Four Keys to Guatemala (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Company, 1939), p. 20.

⁹⁵J. Eric S. Thompson, The Rise and Fall of Mayan Civilization, 2nd edition, enlarged (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), p. 270.

⁹⁶Asturias, Mulata de tal, p. 181.

strongly endorses its basic tenets which he admires. Asturias realizes that basic dogma is essential to any religion and he perceives that somehow doctrine often is smothered beneath all the material items and paraphernalia.

The surrealist use of religion in this novel is very much like that in other novels. Asturias begins with a narrative of the Bible or a basic belief in a story in the Popol Vuh and creates his own from there. This is surrealistic extension of an existing creation. He uses the story of David and Goliath when one of the giants in the Mayan Dance of the Giants is slain: "Los Gigantones lo lloraban con lágrimas de piedra, inclinados sobre el cuerpo del compañero muerto de una pedrada por un chiquillo ...".⁹⁷ Later the head of a slain giant somehow wondrously becomes the head of St. John the Baptist in front of which Salomé dances: " ... con un plato redondo en las manos, y en ese plato, la cabeza del Bautista ...".⁹⁸

The primary point of departure is the New Testament with particular emphasis on the Passion of Christ. The major portion of this novel occurs during the Lenten season, and on Good Friday of Holy Week. Imitating Christ's words to Satan when the latter offers Jesus all the riches of the world, the first priest of Tierrapaulita resists the sexton's temptation of the Devil's tobacco saying: "¡Va de retro!"⁹⁹ Niniloj's feelings resemble Christ's when she learns of Yumí's Judas-like

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 169.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 164.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 171.

treachery: "... se sintió muy lejos, en la infinita soledad del ser que se sabe traicionada."¹⁰⁰ The Mulata, who has been divided into two parts for having married the porcupine, laments her fate with an obvious parody on Christ the King and his crown of thorns: "---¡Soy la mitad de lo que era! ¡La mitad de la Mulata de Tal! ¡Una de cualquier modo vive! ¿Quién me puso esta corona de espinas de puercoespín? ¡Qué más reina quieren! ...¹⁰¹

Thus Asturias' surrealistic use of the Juedo-Christian religion lies in the Biblical parallels employed in the novel to promote different ideas and in his conscious distortion of these parallels. In his enlarged world of imagination, Asturias sees other advantageous ways of employing existing material, and from the old he extends, remoulds, conceptualizes ideas, and presents a surrealistic view.

Of all the authors in the Bible, St. John the Divine is perhaps the most surrealistic. In terminology and style his Revelation is a forerunner of the twentieth-century literary expression of surrealism. St. John predicts the terrors of the Last Judgment. His narration has an unreal oneiric quality which is similar to Asturias' prose. St John speaks of the ultimate destruction of the wicked by fire and brimstone, and makes several allusions to the disastrous ruin of the corrupt city of Babylon. "... BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5) is purged with the mighty purifying fire of God and is destroyed: "Thus with violence shall that great city

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 238.

Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." (Rev. 18:21)

Asturias' Tierrapaulita has all the earmarks of another Babylon. It too is a center of evil and corruption. Concerning the beast and the devil St. John makes the following statements about their death in fire and brimstone:

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev. 19:20)

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are..." (Rev. 20:10)

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone... (Rev. 21:8)

St. John has condemned the very same type of false prophets, devils, and wicked people that Asturias uses in Mulata de tal. Like St. John's mighty fire, Asturias speaks of a white fire which consumed wicked Tierrapaulita:

... de Tierrapaula ... no quedaba nada, cubierta por montañas que se deslizaron como nubes, al chocar el disco de la luna, tan próximo a la tierra ese verano, con los picos más altos de la Sierra Madre, parte de la cordillera andina, deslizamiento seguido de un alud, no de nieve, de luz blanca, fuego de la familia de la nava, "fuego blanco" que peor que la lava volcánica, que es fuego negro, consumía, evaporaba, disolvía y al que los chimanes y agoreros llamaban "lo que nos sobrepasa", y del que la gente de antes decía, sin soltar mucho la lengua, los ojos como moscas pequeñas entre la telaraña de las arrugas, que era un fuego tan terrible que acabo con otras ciudades allí con ellos, a fecha fija, según estaba escrito en los jeroglíficos de la mesa de las astronomías.¹⁰²

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 335.

Asturias' frequent use of the Bible for inspiration clearly indicates that there is a literary connection between Revelation and the conclusion of Mulata de tal. Revelation's "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" is no doubt Asturias' "fire of the lava family, "white fire" that is worse than volcanic lava."¹⁰³ Revelation's Babylon, "Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" is Asturias' mythical evil city Tierrapaulita. St. John's Devil is certainly Candanga, and his beast Cashtoc.

Finally, mention must be given to the unusual use made of the Biblical reference concerning the doubting Bad Thief who was crucified with Christ. Asturias presents the cult of the Bad Thief in both Mulata de tal and El alhajadito. The Bad Thief, who was completely neutral about the question of afterlife, represents a type of compromise between heaven and hell. He is a believer in the material aspects of this life, and having never committed himself to a faith either in condemnation or redemption, his life will simply terminate completely upon death. He does not worry about his afterlife because he does not believe in it:

... Detesto a Lucifer ... ángel tonto que rodó al infierno porque quiso ser Dios, y te adoro a ti, porque, consciente de tu condición humana, reo de existencia amarrado a una cruz, rechazaste la oferta del celestial asilo, seguro de que eras lo que somos, sólo material! ...

... Y allí estás colgado, amarrado, con el dolor espantoso de la muerte, la lengua de fuera como tu última blasfemia y el gesto del que se rebela contra las fuerzas ciegas del destino!¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³Asturias, Mulata de tal, p. 335 (translated into English)

¹⁰⁴M.A. Asturias, Obras completas, Tomo III: El Alhajadito, pp. 999-1000.

Like Azacuán in El Alhajadito, Gabriel Santano in Mulata de tal who is the pharmacist of Tierrapaulita is a believer in the cult of the agnostic thief: "Era devoto del Mal Ladrón, el crucificado materialista, a quien llamaban San Maladrón los que seguían su doctrina de no creer en el cielo ni en el más allá."¹⁰⁵ Asturias is creative in this use of the Biblical figure in this new light, and he stretches the surrealism inherent in the adoption of the story to include all the mind-expanding possibilities contained within the basic tenets of the agnostic thief, especially that concerning the ultimate purpose of life. Gabriel Santano praises San Maladrón because as he states, " ... en ti reconocemos al que proclamó la más grande de las libertades humanas: la libertad de dudar, y porque moriste entre inmortales, orgulloso de ser mortal ...!"¹⁰⁶

Thus Asturias employs religious beliefs and scriptures in his own surrealistic creations. The remaining phase of his enlargement of the conscious world is his use of fantasy and extended imagination.

Infancy is the period for boundless imaginary activity. In the process of growing up from infancy to adulthood, society demands that the mature individual give up as quickly as possible the primary process of magical thinking characteristic of childhood for the secondary process of logic. Unfortunately a great amount of creativity is suppressed and lost in the channelization of the human mind into restrictive limits. Cartwright states that "the truly creative individual is one who is able to free himself from the shared familiar ways of seeing things and thinking

¹⁰⁵ Asturias, Mulata de tal, p. 224.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 225.

about them, and break through to unique individual perceptions and understandings."¹⁰⁷ This includes being able to recapture the former spontaneity and the primary process of magical thinking present in childhood. It means openly expressing Freud's wish-fulfillment through conscious intent rather than finding it only in dreaming activity. The surrealists in their attempt to reach for other worlds find an irresistible contact with the unlimited fantasy world of children. Asturias' El Alhajadito is a delicate and sensitive expression of a child's imagination and outlook on the world about him. Asturias began this novel early in his literary career but left it unfinished for many years before going back to it and polishing it for publication. The novel has an airy light narrative which captures the simplicity and innocence of youth and transports one back to the time when the insect world was an important curiosity and grown-ups were shadowy undeterminable figures. With this novel Asturias captures the child's perspective on his surroundings and he recreates the fantasies and other worlds enjoyed by the creative unharnessed mind.

The protagonist, at times the narrator, at other times the subject of the narration, is a little boy of an unspecified number of years referred to as the Alhajadito. The opening lines of the novel place the action in a corridor of a house: "La casa tenía olvidado, muy a trasmano, un trecho de corredor. No daba a ninguna puerta, a ninguna ventana."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷Rosalind Dymond Cartwright, "Dreams, Reality, and Fantasy" in Jerome Fisher & Louis Breger (eds.), The Meaning of Dreams: Recent Insights from the Laboratory, California Mental Health Research Symposium, (Bureau of Research, California Department of Mental Hygiene, 1969), p.102.

¹⁰⁸Asturias, El Alhajadito, p. 969.

In the corridor the Alhajadito is the master of his ship, captain of his imaginary pirate journeys. At first he laments not being able to stay in his corridor and at the same time be near the Charco del limosnero lake, but then his infantile reasoning and imagination solve the problem: "Eso sí, con el pensamiento podía estar aquí y allá, donde quisiera."¹⁰⁹ Thus through thinking himself there he believes he can really be there. This is wish fulfillment on the conscious level. By means of his imagination the child undergoes many adventures and fantasies. In the magical period of childhood time has only immediate importance: "Todos los niños son ladrones de tiempo. Viven porque se empeñan en hacer suyo el presente que les es ajeno, sólo el presente es tiempo y a ellos que les importa que pase."¹¹⁰ There is a mystery to everything, the mystery of childhood which is forgotten with the maturation and socialization process: "Se tragaba sus pensamientos frente al abuelo y como otras veces, más por tocarlo que por ayudarlo, le tomó del brazo. En su contacto tal vez advinaba el misterio que rodeaba aquel mundo de su infancia."¹¹¹ In this way through the fantasies of the little boy Asturias presents other worlds. There is a circus rivalry, apparently in the imagination of the Alhajadito, with people competing for the position of chief of the circus. This fantasy was initiated by the accidental death of Antelmo Tabarini, the chief of the circus. Another time the boy imagines he sees the unusual events concerned with the bell for Mal Ladrón. The bell is cast

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 977.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 1026.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 978.

within a volcanic crater with materials from pirates' ships and certain unknown magical substances. However, on February 29, el Día del Mal Ladrón, when the people attempt to ring the bell, the bell makes no sound. Instead, each time the bell is struck it emits an odor, and the question then is: "¿Quién robó el incensario de las monjas para arrojarlo al crisol en que se fundía la campana del Mal Ladrón?"¹¹² The agnostic thief has somehow mysteriously influenced the bell and because he has nothing for which he would want the bell tolled, he has caused the bell to remain silent. Asturias writes that the bell sends forth an odor instead of a ringing sound. Here again he takes an aspect of religion and with it in one hand and the concrete bell in the other, he alters and extends known conscious reality.

The second part of El Alhajadito is abstract, surreal, and seemingly unrelated to the first part. In this second part Asturias presents the basic question: "Where are we going or from where are we coming?" Although this is never answered, this question is the principal preoccupation of the passengers on the ship sailing the sea of life/death: "Nos saltaba por el cuerpo el miedo de que fuese un fantasma [speaking of the Párroco captain] y que en aquel navío sin comitre nos llevara a realizar nuestros pobres sueños."¹¹³ The passengers on board speak with the captain, the Párroco, and many relate events of their lives. They all become aware that each man is responsible for his own actions: "¡Se destruyen los sueños, se despierta de las pesadillas, los personajes de las novelas se borran, dejan de existir al doblar la página, pero los hechos,

¹¹²Ibid., p. 1044.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 1049.

los hechos no se pueden borrar ...".¹¹⁴ By means of this ship and this surreal voyage of tragic souls, Asturias presents in a surrealistic fashion the concept of man's duty and need to recognize one's own personal responsibility in life.

The third part of El Alhajadito returns to the narration of the boy and his childhood. As he plays with a blind boy and leads him around, he acts as the blind boy's tutor and offers him explanations about the things around him, but he allows the blind boy to have false conceptions of the world:

Para explicarle la forma de los objetos, encontré un sistema divertido, y es decir que me divertía. Recortárselos en cartón. La luna y el sol redondos. Las estrellas con picos. Las casas, las cruces, la figura de las vacas, todo. ... No sé por qué razón al tocar una cruz el ciego decía: ésta es una casa, y al tocar una casa, creía que era la luna, y al tocar la luna, que era una vaca, y al tocar la vaca que era una estrella. Sí le respondía yo, así es. Qué hermosa debe ser esa gran cruz de oro, exclamaba suspirando, mientras pensaba en la luna. Qué dulce impresion deben de dar estas casas al que las ve, agregaba, tocando las estrellas. ¹¹⁵

With the help of Alhajadito's cardboard images, the blind boy lives in an entirely different, individualistically imagined world. The Alhajadito also enjoys this fantasy because it makes him forget the perpetual question on his mind: Which of the two ladies who takes care of him is really his mother? However the joy of deceiving the blind boy vanishes the day the blind boy comments that Alhajadito is fortunate because he can see his mother. At this point the saddened and confused Alhajadito thinks: "Este no poder penetrar con los ojos el misterio que me rodeaba, destruyó la alegría de mis días de maestro, al darme cuenta que yo era tan ciego como

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 1049.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 1087-1088.

mi amigo. Los dos éramos ciegos."¹¹⁶ The pleasure in unrestrained imagination is somehow lost upon this self-recognition of his own blindness, and he imagines the two ladies in his life as being figures cut out of cardboard, like the images he cut for the blind boy: " ... parecían figuras recortadas de un sueño. ... ¿Quién las recortó tan iguales y las puso en mi manos para que yo, ciego de mí, adivinara cuál era mi mamá y cuál mi hermana?"¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, he continues his friendship with the blind boy and one day the blind boy retells to Alhadjadito what he has overheard regarding the truth of the Alhadjadito and the two ladies:

---Uno de aquellos hombres ... sedujo a la más hermosa de dos hermanas casi gemelas. Le robó la honra y desapareció. Temerosas de lo que tu abuelo haría, escaparon ambas y al volver a la casa paterna, ya venías tú; pero ninguna de las dos confesó a su padre quien de ellas era tu mamá. Un hijo de dos madres deshonoradas! 118

In this way the Alhadjadito finally learns the truth about his two guardians. He then immediately begins to dislike the blind boy who always seems to disclose distasteful truths. The Alhadjadito contemplates drowning the blind boy in the lake, but he hesitates and takes the boy home. However, the next day the blind boy is found floating dead in the lake. The Alhadjadito cannot believe it: "La muerte del ciegucecito no era para mí una cosa real, antes bien se me antojaba como un juego de niños, algo que no había ocurrido de verdad, un sueño."¹¹⁹ Asturias allows the boy still to continue to live partially in the real and partially in the world

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 1090.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 1091.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 1096.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 1101.

of fantasy in which people and happenings belong to the surreal.

Asturias, in his search for the enlarged universe of the conscious mind, uses several available existing means. Myth is his first source for adaptable material since there are qualities inherent in myths which reach beyond the everyday world. He also finds the ancient Indian belief in nahualism a provoking point from which to expand his own horizons. With nahualism he can constantly shape and reshape his characters and give them a sense of immortality which surpasses this mortal world. In a similar light, Asturias finds the use of visionary foreshadowing an effective method for enlarging the normal limited range of present reality. This type of precognition lies in the realm of surrealism. In a different sense, Asturias finds a mysteriously silent partner in Nature. Nature works her wonders either so subtly or violently that Asturias senses that Nature is a type of surrealist force which encompasses a greater reality than that known to man. Likewise in the realm of the unknown and of the surreal, Asturias places the powerful force of religion. Religion, by its very design to explain the unknown, unites itself with surrealism and it harmonizes with one of surrealism's basic tenets, that of searching for the unknown. Asturias finds the other aspect characteristic of surrealism, namely freedom, in the unlimited use of fantasy. He allows his mind complete freedom to explore in the remotest recesses of his imagination and to produce new worlds of fantasy. Through all these conscious techniques Asturias is searching for the greater depth of expression which is characteristic of surrealism. The next step in his creative process leads into the realm of dreams and the subconscious mind.

CHAPTER III

DREAMS

Carl Jung once observed that it is easier to fly to the moon or Mars than to penetrate one's own being. Asturias' narrative bears out this observation:

De muchos sueños despertamos sobresaltados por un conocimiento que no podemos explicar en que forma realizamos acerca de una persona cuyo físico, como el de un fantasma, nos es completamente desconocido. ¹

Dreams have long been a mystery to man who has wrestled with the question of their meaning and significance. For ages men and women have talked about their dreams and it is a rare person who claims never to have had a dream. Indeed, remembered or not, according to electroencephalographic specialists and sleep researchers, everyone dreams, and practically without exception dreaming occurs every sleeping night. It is significant that despite the often nonsensical and bizarre nature of dreams, people continue believing that dreams have meaning and that they are meaningful to daily lives. Philosophers, psychologists, psychiatrists and amateur interpreters all try to extract a message, confused though it may be, from the nightly escapades in the world of dreams. It is one of man's most subjective experiences.

Psychologists reveal that the length of time spent dreaming is often only a few seconds even though it may seem like hours. One goes through stages of sleep during which the brain appears to be closer to

¹Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: Viento fuerte, p. 189.

the conscious level. These are called by electroencephalographers the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) stage of sleep. During this time the eyelids make rapid movements which are distinctively recorded by an EEG. One may also speak or make other recognizable movements during the time in which one is in the REM dreaming stage. Scientific researchers are still trying to determine the exact reasons for dreams.

Of the several existing theories to explain dreams, one of the oldest held by primitive man is that dreams are an account of actual happenings and therefore actions taking place in a dream are in truth factual. The American Indian firmly believed in this, so much so that no amount of reason could sway him from clinging steadfastly to his belief in the truth revealed in his dreams. If he dreamt that his neighbor stole his horses, regardless of the fact that his horses were still there upon awakening, he believed that his neighbor in actual fact had stolen his horses. The neighbor had to be punished for the crime he committed in the other's dream. Fortunately men in modern society have searched for other explanations. The most common is often heard when one says, "I must have eaten too much before retiring." There is some physiological evidence which suggests that a full stomach might enrich the dreaming process, but this still does not account for the psychological content of the dream. Most psychologists find that what one dreams is often determined by the day's activity, by existing illnesses or discomforts, by everyday stress and pressures, or by haunting past experiences. Psychologists find that dreams are highly symbolic and the symbols used are eclectic and specific to the individual. However with some psychoanalytical probing these symbols are rendered meaningful.

Surrealism found its point of departure during the 1920's in the contemporary psychological theories of Freud and Jung. Although Freud's works were not translated into French until 1930, Anna Balakian notes that André Breton personally met with Freud in 1921. Breton, a medical student who had served with the French medical corps during World War I and who was involved in some psychiatric care programs, was an avid believer in Freud's psychoanalytical techniques.² Both Freud and Jung expressed their ideas regarding the phenomena of dreaming, and both had proposed theories of psychoanalysis. Freud and Jung contributed to the release of personal dynamism of instincts, desires, and ideas that were inhibited by social conventions. Although they both believed in the revelatory nature of dreams, they differed in its interpretation.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Freud was actively investigating the nature of dreams along with other psychological phenomena. He developed what today is called Freudian psychoanalysis. He postulated that the subconscious desires expressed in dreams are infantile in nature and sexually-oriented. Freud saw in our other self a suppressed and frustrated being which is actively trying at all times to express itself. His theory is commonly called wish-fulfillment. In his dream analysis he places emphasis on the precipitating factors which lead to the dream. He analyzes the causes and traces them back to unfulfilled desires.

In 1907 the Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist Carl Jung met Sigmund Freud and began under him a discipleship which was abruptly

²Anna Balakian, Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute (New York: Noonday Press, 1959).

ended in 1912 when Jung set forth his own theories of the subconscious and libido. The quarrel among psychologists over the two theories has continued up to the present. Jung founded the school of analytic psychology, differing from Freud's psychoanalysis along several notable lines of thought. Whereas Freud drew a sharp line between the conscious and the subconscious, more or less seeing them as separate entities, Jung saw possibilities of cooperation between the unconscious and the conscious. Furthermore he saw two aspects within the unconscious which he called the personal or individual unconscious, and the collective unconscious which was a disposition inherited from man's ancestors. He believed that all people share with one another a collective unconscious. By this he meant that there are commonly shared experiences emerging from the remote past that perhaps one personally has not undergone, yet with which one is acutely concerned. Jung saw archetypal figures emerging from this collective ancestral unconscious. In his interpretation of the dream he looks toward the outcome. This is one of the most salient points of difference in dream interpretation between Freud and Jung. They have distinct focal points of analysis. Freud looks to the onset of the dream trying to determine the repressed wish that is the underlying cause of the dream. On the other hand, Jung goes one step further saying: "Here we have a dream. We know how it has started, but more importantly, where is it going and what does the dream itself express?" There is a basic attitudinal distinction between the two psychologists. Freud is motive-bound and retrogressive, whereas Jung is goal-bound and progressive. In this philosophical approach is the linking tie of Jungian psychology to the novels of Asturias. Callan's research is based on the

observation of archetypes.³ Asturias employs the dream in an artistic search for other realities. Through it he achieves subtle expression without needing to justify the bizarre occurrences.

Surrealists looked first to Freud but like Jung they carried the process one step further to unite dreams with reality. Dreams are of special importance to Asturias who often uses a nonstructured pattern in his novels which parallels a dream structure. He is a master of the dream sequence form with a genius for the absurd, a combination which provides for mental exploration of many artistic possibilities. It provides for elasticity of thought and allows the author to expand this world of reality into the realm of highly imaginative fantasy and superstition, in which time has no relative or measurable value. In a rococo vein of free-flowing thoughts and freedom of associations Asturias employs the dream sequence to present a bizarre world in which whatever is too mysterious to be said forthrightly may be suggested and explored. This technique often results in an extravagant antirational work which nevertheless is meaningful in its exposition of the intimate democratic human condition and in its timeless universality. The exact character of this drama technique in its explorations of the depths of the human spirit through the dream structure goes beyond classification of mere magical realism. Asturias feels the magical intervals of our existence, but he goes further to probe his delicate intuitions as to the emotional aspirations of the common people in their daily human drama. He searches for the eternal, the unchanged, the enduring aspects of this world.

³Richard J. Callan, Miguel Angel Asturias (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970).

Dreams permit penetration into the essence of the human psyche and thus, with proper guidance, information about man's nature may be achieved. Dreams provide a descent into the psyche where one encounters a world of private symbols expressing another occult part of man's entire being, often quite confusing to the conscious self. Dreaming is another method of recognition, quite apart from conscious thinking or the enlarged universe of the conscious mind. It is an involuntary activity which leads to greater understanding and justly plays an intrinsic part in the total revelation concept of the surrealists.

It is often very difficult to separate dreams from imagination. Both are part of the same mental process. The distinguishing factor seems to be in exercising the will of man. In the conscious imagination there remains control and usually some degree of logic. The mind conceives new universes but with order and reasoned functioning. In dreaming the will of man has little control over the creation of new worlds. Chaotic experiences and absurdity come forth. The surrealistic objective lies somewhere between the dream world and enlarged conscious reality. There is a dichotomy but it is not sharply defined. Automatic writing seems to lie between the two also. Silence, mysterious and alien to man's everyday activity, also floats between the two. Freedom advocates the dream and non-structure but harmony seeks out the order recognized in extended imagination. The surrealistic artist uses both.

It is curious and pertinent that in the Spanish language the word sueño means both sleep and dream. This duality of meaning gives Asturias an advantage in his writing. He can be equivocal. He frequently uses sueño as a purely descriptive word to enhance the slowness of time, mean-

ing dreamy or sleepy. In another instance sueño can mean the restful state of existence or physical sleep: "Por aquí me entró el sueño. Me acosté a dormir."⁴ The use of sueño, both as a word and as a technique, gives Asturias a certain freedom relished by all surrealists. He can plunge into a dream immediately without any other preparation than normal relaxation or the mention of sueño. There is mystery and surprise whenever Asturias uses the noun sueño or the verb soñar, for the results may go either way. Asturias focuses his interest on those instances when sueño triggers an unrestricted writing response leading to the creation of other worlds, for "those dream representations that command the Surrealist's attention are the ones that make us dissatisfied with life, and reveal to us how it may be transformed."⁵

In El Señor Presidente one function of the dream concept is to sugar-coat the bitter reality. The entire novel is a type of nightmare of the human potential for violence. Its journalistic narrative seems beyond truth. It is too real to be real; too unreal to be ignored. Man's mind refuses to accept unpleasantness, tragically apparent in present-day refusal to acknowledge and/or correct inhumane cruelties, atrocities of war, enslavement of poverty, or dangers of pollution. When man isolates himself from unhappiness and suffering he becomes the passive onlooker. He then can analyze systematically the situation, extending empathy and pity to those implicated, but not becoming personally involved. El Señor Presidente is a fictitious documented report of the political abuse within

⁴Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo I: Hombres de maíz, p. 553.

⁵J. Matthews, An Introduction to Surrealism (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), p. 69.

a non-specific country. It is a situation novel which might adequately describe any oppressive cruel dictatorship. There is a nightmare quality in the structure and in the portrayal of events. The opening description of the poor beggars and maimed paupers who gather around the Portal del Señor begins the nightmare of horror and sorrow with: " ... se tiraban al suelo y caían en sueños agitados, tristes; pesadillas ... ".⁶ The despairing tone opening the nightmare seems to go on endlessly, involving everyone in an equalizing dream, significantly revealed in " ... el sueño de los habitantes, iguales en el espejo de la muerte, como desiguales en la lucha que reanudarían al salir el sol ... ".⁷ In sleep, as in death, all are equal---not so in reality, where men differ. Pelele's dream reveals an essential observation on life, but the symbolism inherent in his dream is beyond the comprehension capacity of an idiot. In his dream he hears a bird sing: "¡ Soy la Manzana-Rosa del Ave del Paraíso, soy la vida los que ven con mi ojo de vidrio ven porque sueñan, los que ven con mi ojo de verdad ven porque miran." ⁸ Those that mirror life only dream, but those that penetrate into the truth of life see life. This philosophical outlook could not be the product of an idiot's mind. It is Asturias' surrealistic outlook reflected in Pelele's dream. It reveals Asturias' intent to seek out the truth. The nightmare of the novel is viewed with that ojo de verdad.

The sequence of events parallels a nightmare. The novel begins

⁶Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo I: El Señor Presidente, p. 176.

⁷Ibid., p. 186.

⁸Ibid., p. 192.

with dread and an impulsive murder. Quickly others are swept up in the action to lay the blame on someone. General Canales, completely innocent and unaware of the murder, is informed that he will be accused of the crime. Miguel Cara de Angel, the President's favorite, secretly arranges Canales' escape on behalf of the President. But Miguel soon finds himself implicated when he wants to help Canales' daughter Camila. Camila, lost without the protection of her father, finds the world has turned hostile and inhospitable towards her. Nina Fedina, another innocent victim, is caught up in the snare. Her baby is allowed to die and she is sold to a house of prostitution. Insignificant and pertinent facts are disarranged and put out of focus in this nightmare, and one senses a continuing danse macabre. There is superficial gaiety in the carnival celebration of the renomination of the President and in the escapades of the bordello, but underneath the smiling mask is fear and corruption. The dream reaches a point of complete abstraction when Miguel is confined in almost continuous darkness, and all sense of time is destroyed. The realization that it is not a dream but factual truth is a rude awakening.

Cara de Angel experiences the world of sleep and dreams during a most distressful night. As so many people do, he goes to bed to forget the trials of the day. His bed is the . . .

... isla blanca rodeada de penumbras y de hechos inmóviles, pulverizados. Venía a olvidar, a dormir, a no ser. Ya no más razones montables y desmontables como las piezas de una máquina. A la droga con las tornillos del sentido común. Mejor el sueño, la sinrazón, esa babosidad dulce de color azul al principio, aunque suele presentarse verde, y después negra, que desde los ojos se distile por dentro al organismo, produciendo la inhibición de la persona. 9

⁹Ibid., p. 312.

Sleep is where you can find the no ser. It is the sinrazón. It is alienation from our experienced reality. Miguel finds it difficult to fall asleep. He goes over the events of the day, but he is in the twilight zone of half-asleep-half-awake, " ... despierto a una azulosa combustión angélica ...".¹⁰ Finally, personified Sleep comes to carry him off in its ship: "El Sueño, señor que surca los mares oscuros de la realidad, le recogió en una de sus muchas barcas."¹¹ "Y los hombres del Sueño le conducían obedecientes a esa barca, hechos diarios de la vida ...".¹² Many surrealists conceive sleep to be a cloak for unreality, and believe sleep to be the necessary preparatory stage for dreams. Dreams that happen in sleep are threadless, as in El Señor Presidente: "... disolución momentánea ... invisible, medio líquido, casi visible, casi sólido, latente, sondeado por sombras azules de sueño sin hilván ...".¹³ Asturias clings to the surrealist automation concerned with the disassociation of ideas as a principle aspect of dreams. Pelele experiences disassociation of ideas, and Miguel's nightmare in which he dreams Camila is dead begins with disassociation of ideas.¹⁴ Upon awakening Miguel thinks: "¡Qué horrible pesadilla! Por fortuna, la realidad era otra. El que regresa de un entierro, como el que sale de una pesadilla, experimenta el mismo bienestar."¹⁵ Camila too has a feverish

¹⁰Ibid., p. 317.

¹¹Ibid., p. 317.

¹²Ibid., p. 317.

¹³Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 353-356.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 356.

dream. In her delirium one suggestive phrase leads to another unrelated suggestive phrase, and on and on:

La enferma seguía delirando ...
 ... Juego de sueños ..., charcas de aceite alcanforado ...,
 astros de diálogo lento ..., invisible, salobre y desnudo
 contacto del vacío ..., doble bisagra de las manos ..., lo
 inútil de las manos en las manos ..., en el jabón de
 "reuter" ..., en el jardín del libro de lectura ..., en el
 lugar del tigre ..., en el allá grande de los pericos ...,
 en la jaula de Dios ...¹⁶

From this automatic state of unassociated phrases the dream progresses to re-enact the activities of her frustrating day. She again experiences the rejection of her relatives. The surrealism here is not only in the meaning of the dream but also in its use of delirious reiteration to intensify the suffering. Asturias provides for free exploration of her psyche as would take place in a dream by employing automatic writing in his presentation of Camila's dream.

Asturias reaches for a more universal concept of life through the dream. There exists an atmosphere of transcendency past the first level of meaning towards a more generalized meaning, that life is like a dream or sleep. Life can be sweet, good, or hellish, confused. It can be a tranquil repose or a disturbing fantasy. As in a dream, the human being is a minute fragment incapable of altering the scheduled programs of events which fate seems to control. Arriving at this philosophical plane of thought, the next step is to question if the real reality is in death. Asturias gives no answer, but he does see that in sleep, as in death, we are and we are not. For the conscious world, the sleeper semi-exists and vice versa. Asturias' use of death often goes hand in hand with his

¹⁶Ibid., p. 350.

dream world. It is the final leap into the world beyond known reality and into the realm of eternalized time.

Death is an accompanying theme in Asturias' nightmares for death stalks within the nightmare, and physical danger leading to death is perhaps the greatest fear of mortal man. The need to justify the absence of life is overwhelming and man in all cultures has sought answers in untested explanations. Christian ethics condemns man to a life after death to be spent either in heaven or hell. Hinduism requires the man with sin to reappear on this earth in reincarnation to live through another life--again, perhaps, a type of hell. The Mayan Indians often relegated the loss of life to the realm of the disappeared. One did not die; he simply disappeared for a while. This, of course, allowed for a perpetual and unbroken continuum of life. Death did not have any relative value for in the mind of the Mayan it existed only as a link in the great life chain of Nature. Asturias exhibits a similar attitude toward death in his Mayan-oriented novels, but in El Señor Presidente death is the finality of each persecuted person's nightmare under the dictatorship. Death haunts the novel and looks for new members. In his other novels also death is a latent potential within the soporific atmosphere Asturias cultivates.

Hombres de maíz is more than artistic magical realism. Like Leyendas de Guatemala it is another composite of "historias-sueños-poemas." It is Guatemalan realism which carries with it a haunting sense of the magic. The novel has a definite sense of the actual, daily existence of the Guatemalan Indian and villager who are imbued with the coexisting magical powers of inherited mysticism, superstition and magic. The dream

quality in this novel begins at the outset with the repetitiveness of the Gaspar Ilóm invocation, "Gaspar Ilóm deja que ...", the sway and rocking rhythm lulling the reader into a receptive state of hypnotic suggestion. It prepares for acceptance of unusual incidents. The soporific atmosphere is established with the references in the first three lines by the personification of the earth. The land has eyes:

... le roben el sueño de los ojos.
 ... le boten los párpados con hacha ...
 ... la chamusquen la ramazón de las pestañas con ^{las} quemas que ponen la luna color de hormiga vieja.¹⁷

Here the words sueño, párpados, and pestañas all focus attention on the eyes and sleep. The ensuing paragraph reinforces this immediate impression of drowsiness. Gaspar Ilóm, questioning himself as to his state of mind, asks if he is asleep. Is it a dream? The creation of uncertainty and a dream atmosphere is firmly established with "La tierra cae soñando de las estrellas ..." ¹⁸, and " ... la acusación del sueño, atado de sueño y muerte por la culebra de seiscientas mil vueltas de lodo ..." ¹⁹. There is accumulation of symbols and ideas suggestive of sleep and dreams. There is repetition as in dreams in which the same symbols and images keep repeating themselves in apparently nonsensical patterns, and the often repeated phrases are unidentifiable references. Asturias never establishes where this "Tierra de Ilóm" is. Thus, the novel is set in a non-specific location, yet it seems to be the center of a significant

¹⁷M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ... Tomo I: Hombres de maíz, p. 465.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 465.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 465.

and bloody massacre of land. How can land be robbed of the sleep in its eyes?, how can land have its eyes opened with an axe?, what are its eye-lashes that are being burned? The land is dormant, quiet, sleeping yet it is rudely awakened from its peaceful slumber. The underbrush is cut down and the remaining stalks of corn are burned off for future planting. Why does Gaspar Ilóm, of the same name of Tierra de Ilóm, allow all this to take place? As the novel continues the meaning slowly develops. Gaspar Ilóm is an Indian, a chief who becomes a superbeing. His land is being used for growing corn, not for sustenance but rather for economic gain. The fields are burned off in the preparatory state, typical Mayan slash and burn agriculture, and then sowed with corn seeds. The conejos amarillos are the young seedlings popping up through the confiscated earth. The implied significance cannot be comprehended without specific reference to the sacred book of the Quiché Mayan, the Popol Vuh, in which men are made of corn. This makes corn a holy substance, not one to be exploited for capital gain. Throughout the series of interrelated stories in Hombres de maíz Gaspar Ilóm is a type of shadowy figure who leads the Indians' revolt against outside tampering with their land and their sustenance crops. Gaspar is apparently tricked into drinking poisoned alcohol. Instead of dying completely he lives on because of his superhuman nature, yet his new life is more legend than real. His new life represents a type of curse on his assailants and Gaspar Ilóm becomes a new myth. All those who took part in his original poisoning are brought under a general hex. The immediate participants will be annihilated and the families of the men will be unable to reproduce. By means of this curse Asturias introduces a supernatural element which

leads one into a dream-like atmosphere. The conjurers of the curse are the brujos de las luciérnagas, who at the end of the novel are revealed to be the conejos amarillos on fire: "... los otros brujos de las luciérnagas que recibieron los primeros machetazos dormidos, sin que tuvieran tiempo de convertirse en conejos. Eso eran, conejos, los conejos de las orejas de tuza."²⁰ This one outstanding magical element casts a shadow of doubt on the veracity of the entire novel. The opening lines precipitate the doubt, and the ensuing events reinforce it. Considering Asturias' propensity to deal with dreams, the bizarre events can be interpreted as part of the dream. In this context symbolism becomes an important element. The brujos are the collective unconscious of the Indians who wish to avenge the blatant usury of their land. They are Jung's idea of the inherited potentialities of human imagination which he labeled the collective unconscious. They are primordial and entirely irrational forces, volcanic and illogical to the real world, an inherent part of man's duality.

The Indians begin retaliatory raids on the settlers. Even here Asturias leaves room for doubt as to the reality of the situation, saying "A los ladinos amenazados de muerte por los indios les parecía un sueño."²¹

Asturias uses a surrealistic-impressionistic technique to present the Indian uprising.²² Events happen as in a dream, too quickly, too unexpected, too horrendous. The army troops sent to quell the rebellion

²⁰Ibid., p. 763.

²¹Ibid., p. 471.

²²Ibid., p. 471.

also live in a suspended dream world. They wait for their action in a daydream: "Sentáronse sobre sus talones para seguir horas y horas inmóviles en su sueño despierto."²³ They watch a dog's death with total non-involvement and a sense of dismissed reality.

After suggesting that Gaspar Ilóm is "superior a la muerte"²⁴, Asturias moves the novel on to a different story, that of Tomás Machojón whose son disappears. Rumor has it that this son has become a spirit who rides the flames of the cornfield burnings. As a nightrider issuing from the flames, the young Machojón never appears because it is all fiction: " ... no veían al Macho entre las llamas, porque en realidad no lo veían ..."²⁵. But old Machojón clings to the rumor-belief that he will see his son in the flames, so he burns, and burns, and burns the fields: "Por algo había sido él y no otro el que chamuscó las orejas de tuza de los conejos amarillos que son las hojas de maíz que forman envoltorio a las mazorcas."²⁶ "Por eso son sagradas. Son las protectoras de la leche del elote, el seminal contento de los azulejos de pico negro, largo y plumaje azul profundo."²⁷ This is reiteration of the complaint against wanton burning of the cornfields. "El Señor Tomás, que desde que desapareció Machojón, muerto, huído, quién sabe, se había vuelto como de musgo apocado, sin novedad, sin gana de nada, era esta noche un puro

²³Ibid., p. 474.

²⁴Ibid., p. 484.

²⁵Ibid., p. 498.

²⁶Ibid., p. 506.

²⁷Ibid., p. 506.

alambre que le agarraba la juventud al aire."²⁸ There is a continuance of the dream atmosphere first initiated at the beginning of the novel. The burning of the fields is real but the massive absurdity of trying to see the golden vision of a lost son in the flames is beyond the world of rational reality. It touches on the realm of the lived-through nightmare plagued with all the confusion inherent in the dream. Tomás Machojón becomes a human torch in his desperation to find his son.

Asturias leaves the Machojón family and moves the novel on to the Tecún family. The brothers murder eight members of the Zacatón family in a bizarre surrealist homicide, the motive of which is the blind belief in a revelation of one of the brothers, Calistro. The American Indian---from North America to the Campa tribe of South America---believes dreams are reality. Calistro says his ill mother was stricken by the Zacatón family and this is enough to trigger a mass slaying:

Aúllo de perros que ven llegar la muerte. Gritos humanos. En un decir amén cinco machetes separaron ocho cabezas. Las manos de las víctimas intentaban lo imposible por desasirse de la muerte, de la pesadilla horrible de la muerte que los arrastraba fuera de las camas, en la sombra, ya casi con la cabeza separada del tronco, sin mandíbulas éste, aquél sin orejas, con un ojo salido el de más allá, aliviándose de todo al ir cayendo en un sueño más completo que el sueño en que reposaban cuando el asalto.²⁹

The brutal death is a pesadilla horrible. Calistro later goes insane. There ensues an episode with the Curandero-Venado which, in spite of its confusing mixture of the impossible-unreal with the probable-real, is

²⁸Ibid., p. 507.

²⁹Ibid., p. 515.

convincing. Calistro thinks he has killed the Curandero but is told he has killed the deer: "Lo que no se explica era la muerte del Curandero. Un sueño incompleto, porque junto a él decía ver, sin poderle descubrir la cara, al que de veras lo mató, esa persona era sombra, era gente, era sueño."³⁰

The dream atmosphere is continued in the next section of this novel. In "Coronel Chalo Godoy" the death of the Coronel is witnessed in an extra-sensory perception vision of Benito Ramos. At every point where reality brings to take roots, Asturias inserts elements of unreality which unearth the establishment of reality. As in a dream, he distorts logic by the illogical and the unexplainable.

In the section on "Correo-coyote" Hilario Sacayón believes he has seen the Correo-coyote Nicho Aquino in coyote form in the mountains around the María Tecún rock. He keeps the encounter secret from others so as not to " ... violar la naturaleza secreta de ciertas relaciones profundas y lejanas."³¹ When Hilario goes to sleep, " ... juntábase la imagen del correo desaparecido ... con el sueño que era una especie de coyote suave, de coyote fluido, de coyote oscuridad en cuya sombra se perdían en cuatro patas, los dos pies del correo."³² Thus Asturias perceives dream-sleep as a type of fleeting coyote, quite elusive in its nature.

Another question concerning the dream world arises from the epi-

³⁰Ibid., pp. 531-532.

³¹Ibid., p. 744.

³²Ibid., p. 744.

sode when Nicho Aquino is in the fantasy cave. "Allá, por mucho que el señor Nicho tocara el agua, la realidad era más sueño que el sueño."³³ Nicho questions himself: "¿Pasaron por un largo sueño?"³⁴ The answer is never given. Asturias plunges the novel deeper into the same type of rupture with recognizable reality that characterizes the automatic narrative of many of his writings. As the brujos de las luciérnagas dance before the Curandero-Venado and the Correo-Coyote, the revenge against the poisoners of Gaspar Ilóm is reviewed:

¡Fuego de monte matará a los conductores del veneo!
 Quemados murieron Tomás Machojón y la Vaca Manuela
 Machojón. ¡Fuego de séptima roza matará al Coronel
 Gonzalo Godoy! Quemado, aparentemente, murió en El
 Tembladero el Jefe de la montada [Coronel Godoy].³⁵

In the cave, Nicho inquires about María Tecún and he learned that María Tecún was not one of the Zacatón family. The Curandero ordered the execution of the other Zacatón who were beheaded because they were sons and nephews of the pharmacist who prepared the poison drink for Gaspar Ilóm:

... María Tecún ... no es tampoco de apellido Zacatón y por lo mismo está viva: de ser sangre de los Zacatón habrían cortado su cabeza de criatura de meses en la degollación de los Zacatón que yo, Curandero-Venado de las Siete-rozas ordené indirectamente por intermedio de Calistro Tecún, cuando los Tecún tenían a su nana enferma de hipo de grillo. Los Zacatón fueron descabezados por ser hijos y nietos del farmacéutico que vendió y preparó a sabiendas el veneno que paralizó la guerra del invencible Gaspar Ilóm, contra los maiceros que siembran maíz para negociar con las cosechas.³⁶

³³Ibid., pp. 750-751.

³⁴Ibid., p. 757.

³⁵Ibid., p. 763.

³⁶Ibid., p. 786.

The Curandero-Venado continues explaining that the rock known as María Tecún is really María la Lluvia, the wife of Gaspar Ilóm known as la Piojosa Grande: "... en aquella piedra se escondía el ánimo de María la Lluvia."³⁷

Nicho returns to reality from the fantasy cave and later he becomes a hotel owner. Goyo Yic and María Tecún, reunited, return to Pisiguito. The curse of the brujos is carried out and expires, so then Goyo and María have many children. The novel ends on a note of unreality: "Viejos, niños, hombres, y mujeres, se volvían hormigas después de la cosecha, para acarrear el maíz, hormigas, hormigas, hormigas, hormigas ...".³⁸ Certainty and reality are never established in Hombres de maíz. Regardless of the tardy attempts made at the end of the novel to justify and explain many of the unusual happenings, the novel remains in the realm of surrealism in respect to its incidences of oneiromancy and its soporific atmosphere.

Whereas El Señor Presidente has a nightmare construction based on the socio-political scene in the Guatemala of Asturias' childhood, the nightmare construction of Mulata de tal provides a setting for the inner personal conflict of the Indian and it echoes the grand disturbance within the Indian's mind. Psychologists have hypothesized that when man dreams he is trying to order and solve his problems. Mulata de tal is a literary expression of this scientific idea. Within the phantasmagorical dream of the novel the struggle for power ensues among the demons and the

³⁷Ibid., p. 786.

³⁸Ibid., p. 788.

supernatural, the priests, the Indians and villagers, and Nature itself. Often direct references to this being a dream in a nightmare are contained within the novel, and the inevitable question of reality or unreality arises. The exact specific significance of the novel is vague. Asturias may be talking about death, dreams, reality, absurdity, or he may simply be creating an aberrant and warped surrealistic conception of a basic psychological clash of religious teachings. He hints at the true nature of the novel when he cautions that one should not believe that all fiction can be reality. Towards the end of the novel all the horrors of this fantasy-filled narration are tied together into the holocaust which concludes the work. Throughout the novel applicable clues as to the surrealistic nature inherent to the novel are found, but in the final chapter Asturias writes that "... todo esto es tan cierto como un sueño ...".³⁹ He adds that "... se volatilizaban los sueños y no quedaba nada ..." and that "... de sueño que no se duerme, de sueño despierto ...".⁴⁰ Concerning the chimerical Mulata Asturias concludes that her power was "... de medianera entre lo real y lo irreal ...".⁴¹ In reference to the story which held that Yumí's skeleton was made of gold, Asturias states that it was "pura leyenda."⁴² Seemingly tying onto his original moon myth source for the novel, Asturias enigmatically observes that everything was "... suspendidos de hilos de luz de luna,

³⁹M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: Mulata de tal, p. 292.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 292.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 295.

⁴²Ibid., p. 297.

visibles, y de los hilos invisibles de lo que se esperaba que sucediera ...".⁴³

This revelation of the novel's surrealistic oneiric quality does not appear during the concluding lines alone. There are other illusions such as when Yumí speaks to Tazol about the mysterious disappearance of his wife Niniloj and says: " --- ¿Dónde estabas, Tazol, mal enemigo, mientras yo buscaba, ya no en la tierra, sino en mis sueños, a mi mujer?"⁴⁴ Or when Yumí discovers his wealth but doubts its reality: "El corazón que se le había ido chiquitando de pena, se le iba inflando de gusto, y que miraba ... si no era un sueño ... si no le mentían sus ojos ..."⁴⁵. And when Tazol tells Yumí how to invent a story explaining his sudden intuition as to where to find his wife, the insight comes in a dream: "---Contarás ... que tuviste un sueño muy raro, pero muy significativo. Que escuchaste que te llamaban, y la voz que te llamaba era la de tu mujercita, la Niniloj ajena ...".⁴⁶

The key passage that ushers in the ethereal, unreal world which comprises the remainder of the novel is a description of a symbolic fire which burns just prior to the real fire which destroys Yumí's wealth:

¡Incendio! ¡Incendio! ...

Un incendio sin llamas y sin humo, de fuego fijo, estabilizado fuera del tiempo en el mundo del sueño real, de las cosas reales, palpables, verdaderamente reales, y sin embargo, sueño, sueño, sueño ... 47

⁴³Ibid., p. 295.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 30.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 36.

This is the world of the surreal in which anything the mind can conceive may take place. Asturias makes frequent allusions to the hazy limbo of the subconscious world of sleep and its peculiar effects upon man:

... máscara de carbón de madera fragante con lunares luminosos.
 Por ella sabemos que estamos ausentes de lo que pasa detrás de
 nosotros, seguidos por las semillas del sueño en la gran
 oscuridad de la vida. 48

Dreams can produce a variety of impossible metamorphoses or transformations which are recognized as pure inventive fiction, yet plausible in the surrealistic frame of reference. Comparable examples of this type of absurdity are the cartoons in which anything may happen. Animals talk, trees dance, rocks jump, and man can undergo the most devastating disasters and still survive. The very same occurs in this grotesque novel. The truth of reality is put in question by the novel's inherent surrealism, and even Asturias' characters in the novel seek explanations of the bizarre:

---¡Como si hubiera sido parte de la neblina!
 ---¡Exacto, como si hubiera sido propiedad de la neblina! Pero sólo había sido un sueño ...
 ---¿Un sueño?
 ---Un sueño que el diablo que obligó al borracho aquel que se volvía de piedra, y cuando era piedra quería ser hombre, y cuando hombre quería ser piedra, a hacer el camino de las nueve vueltas ...⁴⁹

One character realizes the effect on man of sleep and dreams:

"Otro seré, porque cada día soy otro. Ninguno se acuesta ni amanece el mismo si ha pasado por el sueño."⁵⁰ A dream can reveal, seek to explain,

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 133.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 219.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 221.

attempt to justify or conceal basic reality and truth. A very deep and complex psychological process is involved, and at times a nightmare serves to cloak undesirable reality:

Mejor la pesadilla. Pestilente y rocoso, la pesadilla explicaba en parte lo que la liviana claridad, colada por las rendijas de las puertas, contradecía a sus ojos de agua negra, a zancadas el respirar, la mente expuesta a lacónicos rayos de pensamiento, bascoso, con hipo y el estómago vacío. ¿Y los párpados? ¡hay algo peor que el infierno, perder los párpados! ¿Con qué se cubriría para seguir soñando o figiéndose que soñaba, que era un castigadora pesadilla lo que la luz le revelaba? 51

The numerous examples of surrealism in a dream world indicate that here in Mulata de tal Asturias is seeking a more universal concept of life through the dream and the soporific atmosphere.

The dream pattern inherent in almost all of Mulata de tal is broken in the last words of the novel. The perplexing ending describes the priest Chimalpín miraculously saved from the holocaust of Tierrapaulita, and then abruptly Asturias changes everything, and the priest awakes to find himself in an ambulance on the way to a hospital. Suddenly the locale of the novel shifts from a mystical, dream-like, rural, vague setting into a modern twentieth-century world, quite comparable to awakening from a feverish nightmare and viewing the light of reality. But even this unfitting attempt at reality is extinguished in light of the unexplainable rare sickness from which the priest suffers. He is getting bigger, like some type of pachyderm. Perhaps the priest has incurred the curse of the Christian Devil Candanga or perhaps he has finally trapped the Devil within himself. The exact nature of his condition remains a

51 Ibid., pp. 243-244.

mystery just as the verses of the song he has taught his catechumens for their first communion with which Mulata de tal concludes:

¡Yo soy feliz,
yo nada, nada espero,
porquieee el azul
del cielo, es ya mi casa! 52

This disturbing conclusion perhaps signifies that Chimalpín is going to heaven, but the precise meaning is not there. It remains to be dreamed, perhaps by the reader.

The use of dreams in Asturias' banana cycle novels is minimal but dreams in all instances serve not merely as interesting additional narrative but rather as a means of exploring more of the surreal world and of presenting unconventional ideas which go beyond normal extension of the conscious imaginary world.

El Alhajadito is an attempt to transport one back to those days of childhood when the child discovers and creates his own world. This novel abounds in primary imaginative process examples and the transitions from real to imaginary are so imperceptible that the imagination process flows freely without disruptive transitions. It is often difficult to determine whether the child is daydreaming or physically really dreaming under the conditions of sleep. The general atmosphere of the novel places it in that hazy limbo of the surreal as Asturias writes in the opening lines: "Estaba en su corredorcito. Nada era real. Imaginación. Sueños."⁵³ Many absurd and nightmarish episodes occur in the novel such as the incident involving the circus. El Alha-

⁵²Ibid., p. 300.

⁵³M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: El Alhajadito, p. 971.

jadito, the little boy, witnesses the horrible death of the circus leader, Tabarini, by burning. Later there ensues an absurd contest for power over the circus. It finally ends in the marriage of Ana Tabarini and the Domador, but during these happenings Asturias writes: "Sobre la blanca sobrefunda bordada, en lecho de pluma olorosa, dormía el Alhajadito, pálido, cejijunto, y casi adivinábase su vestido negro bajo las holandas de nieve."⁵⁴ Thus all the incidents involving the circus people seem to be part of the little boy's dream. Psychologists have found that lonely children, especially only children, invent imaginary people to fill their empty worlds. The Alhajadito, who is never given any other name, has declared his dominion over a small corridor in his house. When he enters this corridor he is complete master and can invent any number of bizarre happenings:

Atado al corredorcito por una cadena de pasos infantiles, tantas veces fue hasta allí, y tantas no, porque tambien el recuerdo de las vacas que no fue lo ataba, al Alhajadito se relame el gusto a miel de caña que tenía en los labios cuando lo descubrió, aquella mañana, como el único sitio de la casa que por estar abandonado y no tener dueño, podía ser suyo. ¿Qué cosa es la propiedad sino imaginación? Imaginativamente se adueñó del corredorcito. Nadie le disputó el derecho adquirido por su sola fantasía. ¿Que otra base tiene la propiedad, sino la ficción? Lo mío, lo tuyo, lo del otro, pura fantasía. 55

In addition to active imagination, a great deal of sleep and dreams occur in this novel, and the author poses the question: "¿Cómo podía ser que tanta realidad desembocara en tanto sueño!"⁵⁶ The dreams of the little boy are escape mechanisms from his confused daily existence. They

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 1022.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 1037.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 1038.

open other worlds to him. His solitary existence and lack of security manifest themselves in his confession that he does not really know which one of two women is his mother: "No conocí a mi padre y mi madre fueron dos mujeres ...".⁵⁷ The explanation is that one of two sisters became pregnant and they both assumed responsibility for the child. Although the Alhajadito finally learns the truth he continues to believe that all the episodes so mysterious to his young mind were part of a dream:

De modo que mis mamás ... De modo que el corredorcito ..., los criados trenzudos ..., el Mal Ladrón, el circo ..., Ana Tabarini ..., el Negro Pispís ..., el párroco ..., el carruaje del Instituto de Caridad, todo había sido un sueño ... 58

The Alhajadito's world is pure imagination and dreams. The novel's surrealistic characteristics are derived from the chimerical fantasies of childhood. This is a novel in which dreams and extended imagination are difficult to separate for analysis because Asturias has skillfully blended the two aspects into a unified surrealistic work.

The dream aspect of Asturias' narrative is one of his most salient ties with the other surrealistic authors of the 1920's who gained insight into the elusive world of dreams through the psychological studies of Jung, Freud and other active investigators. Asturias uses dreams to develop socio-political and personal problems in El Señor Presidente, and to suggest a nightmarish situation existing whenever there is an absolute dictator in power. In Hombres de maíz and in Mulata de tal Asturias employs the dream sequence to explore atavistic cultural problems which are part of the common Guatemalan's daily exist-

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 1065.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 1101.

ence. Finally in El Alhajadito Asturias uses the dream in the narrative as an example of delicate sensitivity and an avoidance complex in the young boy. Thus the use of dreams serves Asturias in several distinct ways in his development of surreal worlds.

CHAPTER IV

STYLE

Paul Valery was the first of many critics to recognize the magical and unique quality of Miguel Angel Asturias' literary style. His critical commentary on the first publication of Miguel Angel Asturias, Leyendas de Guatemala (1930), praised the young Guatemalan's short stories, by lauding the dream-like quality, the sensitive lyricism and the imaginative interpretation of native themes, calling the enchanting tales "historias-sueños-poemas".¹ Since Valery's open letter of enthusiastic approval, Asturias has received the attention of many other critics who are united in singling out Asturias' high degree of poetic inclination toward extended metaphor, internal rhythm, musicality, subtle word suggestions, repetitiveness, and the general stylistic richness of the Guatemalan's prose. Galo René Pérez has aptly summarized the nature of Asturias' writings as "poetic intoxication"² and Bellini observes that "ante todo la poesía es una constante de toda la obra de este escritor, porque también su prosa es esencialmente poesía."³ Bellini continues that "... en efecto la poesía constituye la raíz de toda su creación artística y se mani-

¹Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras completas, Tomo I: Leyendas de Guatemala, "Carta de Paul Valery a Francis de Miomandre", (Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1968), p. 17.

²Galo René Pérez, "Miguel Angel Asturias" (Américas, Vol. 20, no. 1, January 1968), p. 1.

³Giuseppe Bellini, "La poesía de Miguel Angel Asturias" (Revista Nacional de Cultura, 180, 1967), p. 125.

fiesta en ese sentido lírico-narrativo con que vive su mundo, en una "indianidad" que no es motivo folklórico, sino parte esencial de su espíritu."⁴ However, judiciously Galo René Pérez points out the double-edge of this poetical quality which ". . . lends a certain efficacy to particular scenes in his stories. But it adulterates and weakens others, with equal facility."⁵

Asturias has a distinct robust style uniquely all his own with its marked influence from Mayan thought and literature. Asturias' writing, in style and content, is a present-day reflection of the deep-rooted Mayan tradition of his Guatemalan homeland. In many aspects his style parallels the Popol Vuh and other extant ancient Mayan literature. The American Indian was very cautious in his use of words, for words were power symbols potent in themselves. The Indian found it more prudent to circumvent any forthright references and often to speak in obscure metaphoric language. In many respects Asturias prose echoes not only the Mayan literary traditions but in addition the Mayan psychology. It also reflects the physical jungle density of the rural Guatemalan lands, the vegetation taking over the abandoned Mayan cities, and man's constant effort to push back nature's indomitable overgrowth. His sentence structure is often indirect, his imagery flamboyant but not always decipherable, and his general idea presentation elusive or non-direct. On this point Lyon observes that ". . . Asturias penetrates the most lyric moments of

⁴Ibid., p. 125.

⁵Galo René Pérez, "Miguel Angel Asturias", p. 1.

his continent and blends them into an ever-expanding, never-ending poetic present."⁶ Thus there is an enduring quality to his narrative which suggests permanency, yet at the same time the inner unrest of the Mayan soul also is reflected in the lines Asturias composes. Iber Verdugo notes that "... su obra es una consciente interpretación de la entidad americana y su estilo quiere ser revelación directa de esa entidad que Asturias considera en toda su complejidad."⁷ The shifting and uncertainty of Guatemala's future---socially, economically, and politically---is felt within the lines of Asturias' novels whose stylistic irregularities and innovations often suggest some hesitation and lack of determined direction. Nevertheless, Asturias' prose is strong, rewarding, rich, involved, challenging and has been called a type of baroque literature produced in the twentieth century, which may account for some of the apparent confusion, uncertainty, and non-definable nature of much of his composition.

Asturias began his writing career at an early age while still in Guatemala, but the pure untouched products of this phase of his literary endeavors are limited to but a few poetical selections collected in his Sien de Alondra. He rewrote and polished most of his prose before its later publication, and therefore his writings are marked with the literary influences affecting him as he pursued his

⁶Thomas E. Lyon, "Miguel Angel Asturias: Timeless Fantasy", (Books Abroad, Vol. 42, 1968), p. 187.

⁷Iber Verdugo, El carácter de la literatura hispanoamericana y la novelística de Miguel Angel Asturias, (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1968), p. 353.

higher studies in France, particularly the surrealism then in vogue and the new ideas of Freudian psychoanalysis. The freer and less rigid modes of literary expression characteristic of the early twentieth-century approach to literature are clearly evident in all his prose. Asturias acknowledges that he commenced El Señor Presidente (1946) and El Alhajadito (1961) before he left his native Guatemala for study and travel in Europe. The intervening years from 1920 until the time of publication allowed Asturias sufficient time for meditative thought and stylistic changes. The natural changes in a man's attitude, disposition and personal philosophy as he grows, matures, and ages had an effect upon his writings, and thus the original style cannot be determined. What can be discerned in these two novels is a polished style and a tendency toward the literary techniques of surrealism.

Often Asturias appears to employ the ideas and much of the philosophy behind the stream-of-consciousness novel without embracing all the accompanying mechanical techniques, such as ellisions, parentheses within parentheses, continued non-ending and non-punctuated sentences, suspensions, italics and quotation marks. The goals of the stream-of-consciousness novelist include the reproductions and representation of the ebb and flow of human consciousness. The interest of the writers is often less on particular events than on an over-all speculation upon life. Surrealism in many aspects harmonizes with the stream-of-consciousness novelist's aims in that the surrealists attempt to show the inner life of man, his essence. Much like the development of the stream-of-consciousness novels, the surrealist novel is organ-

ized non-logically so that its pattern may approximate that of the unconscious itself, the inner unknown self.

The distinguishing characteristic of the mentally diseased person suffering from paranoia is the abnormal rationality of his created world. He directs everything toward himself, reaching the extreme of subjectivity which ranges from delusions of grandeur to a persecution complex. Through it all he is mostly logical in his reasoning, even though he usually is false in the logic. He twists actions, words, ideas and feelings into deformed facts which can then fit into his personal jigsaw puzzle. This is, in a sense, the activity of the surrealists. Salvador Dali often pretends to be paranoic in order to capture a mood on canvass. He wishes to express the inner subjective world as it collides with the exterior objective world. The personal subjectivity of material resulting from this paranoic attitude toward art can be incomprehensible to almost everyone other than the artist-creator. An artist first of all creates to express himself and his views of the world. A sensitive artist desires to communicate his attitudes and discoveries. The surrealists seeking the fusion of all realities through selection of universal symbols have many times achieved their goal of communicating man's reconciliation with his universe. If symbols are universal a well-conceived work of art will be communicative. The surrealists use a type of paranoic artistic subjectivity as a mere means to an end---that of attaining the Surreal, or "intense and intimate communion between human personality and the

essence of the universe."⁸ It does not imply any deteriorated mental state on the part of the artist. From this relaxing of the rigid pattern of normal thinking there often evolves automatic writing as the companion activity and vehicle for unrestricted expression. Although Asturias does use some automatic writing, his prose is generally more formally stylized and paragraphed, revealing his remaining ties with the literary examples of his youth in the late nineteenth century.

Automatic writing is the result of unshackled thought. Through it one can explore the interior universe with little or no effort. It is the physical reproduction of mental gymnastics by which man's mind is lifted above all prejudices, all conventions, all controls and restricting bonds, and it is released to soar into a previously unknown world of revelation. André Breton recalls in his Primier Manifeste du Surréalisme that one evening, while in a half-awake state just before dropping off to sleep, a phrase came to him which was grammatically correct but seemingly nonsensical. There was however a logic in the choice of symbols. It was fresh and original in perspective and gave him a glimpse of a greater potential reality held within the mind. From this experience Breton began to advocate and practice automatic writing whereby words, disassociative though they may be, were written down as they entered the mind. Similar to the psychological free association test in which one utters the first word that enters the mind, the results were sometimes disturbing and/

⁸Georges Lemâitre, From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 196.

or self-revealing. This free alchemy of words provides for apparently endless creative possibilities issuing from free association and imagination.

One of the characteristics of automatic writing is the suggestive factor of word sounds. Involved in this are plays on words, puns, palindromes, alliteration, repetition of the same sounds, onomatopoeia, neologisms and neoterisms, and many other similiar techniques. Intelligent and artistic use of automatic writing, not its abuse, can produce excellent results. Asturias finds that automatic writing produces a kind of poetry: "What I obtain from automatic writing is the mating or juxtaposition of words which, as the Indians say, have never met before. Because that is how the Indian defines poetry. He says Poetry is where words meet for the first time."⁹ This is accurate self-description for in Asturias' writing there is a fresh approach to word usage, extended metaphor, amusing onomatopoeia, continuous rhyme and rhythm, and reiteration and repetition. Several of these distinguishing features are in Asturias' style and approach to writing, and can be interpreted as aspects contributing to his creation and accomplishment of surrealistic worlds.

Asturias' most distinguishing characteristic in style is his poetry along with poetical repetition and/or reiteration of words and phrases. The use of this poetic repetition, adopted from ancient Mayan poetry in which it also plays an integral part, has the tendency to lull the reader into receptive state. The dream atmosphere and mood is

⁹Harss & Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 81.

partially created by this counting-of-sheep repetition. Three of Asturias' fantasy novels Hombres de maíz, Mulata de tal, and El Alhajadito plus his political-fantasy El Señor Presidente rely in their opening lines on this repetitive device to establish a soporific atmosphere of disbelief and surrealism. El Señor Presidente begins with the gloomy tolling of the bells opening a Poe-like horror story:

¡Alumbra, lumbré de alumbra, Luzbel de piedralumbra! Como zumbido de oídos persistía el rumor de las campanas a la oración, maldobestar de la luz en la sombra, de la sombra en la luz. ¡Alumbra, Lumbré de alumbra, Luzbel de piedralumbra, sobre la podredumbra! ¡Alumbra, lumbré de alumbra, sobre la podredumbra, Luzbel de piedralumbra! Alumbra, alumbra, lumbré de alumbra ..., alumbra ..., alumbra ..., alumbra, lumbré de alumbra ..., alumbra, alumbra ... 10

In El Señor Presidente Asturias creates a suppressing ever-present sensation of fear by the explosive impact of loaded words and by juxtaposition of brief rapid half-uttered aposiopetic phrases closely followed by long continuing heavy sentences. There is a menacing and somber atmosphere of terror hovering even in the smile-provoking lines, as in the following description of a priest answering an urgent call:

El cura vino a rajasótanos. Por menor corren otros. "¿Qué puede valer en el mundo más que un alma?", preguntó ... Por menos se levantan otros de la mesa con ruido de tripas ... ¡Tri pas! ... ¡Tres personas distintas y un solo Dios verdadero-de-verdad! ... El ruido de las tripas, allá no, aquí, aquí conmigo, migo, migo, migo, en mi barrigo, en mi barriga, barriga, ... De tu vientre, Jesús ... Allá mesa puesta, el mantel blanco, la vajilla de porcelana limpiecita, la criada seca ... 11

¹⁰Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo I: El Señor Presidente, (Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1968), p. 175.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 341 - 342.

In this nonsensical accumulation of words and inferences there is a definable poetical rhythm. José Antonio Gallaos points to Asturias' poetical preoccupation in El Señor Presidente, noting "... que con frecuencia es músico-poética, mero juego de sonidos, afición, discutible ...",¹² and to his brilliant style as a "mezcla de lirismo, ensonación y elementos telúricos combinados con tonos ancestrales y subconscientes ...".¹³ One characteristic note in Asturias' poetic prose is his narrative rhythm which carries the reader along the path into the worlds he creates. Corvalán notes interior tension in El Señor Presidente and that "el lenguaje es el elemento donde primero se evidencia esta tensión interior," a type of twentieth-century baroque. He concludes that this novel as a whole is "una estupenda creación verbal."¹⁴ This interior tension is felt in the following lines describing the poor section of the city at night:

La impresión de los barrios pobres a estas horas de la noche era de infinita soledad, de una miseria sucia con restos de abandono oriental, sellada por el fatalismo religioso que la hacía voluntad de Dios. Los desagües iban llevándose la luna a flor de tierra, y el agua de beber contaba, en las alcantarillas, las horas sin fin de un pueblo que se creía condenado a la esclavitud y al vicio. 15

In his creation of a twentieth-century baroque novel such as

¹²José Antonio Gallaos, "Los dos ejes de la novelística de Miguel Angel Asturias" (Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, Vol. 52, 1962), p. 128.

¹³Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁴Octavio Corvalán, Modernismo y vanguardia, coordenadas de la literatura hispanoamericana del siglo XX (New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1967), p. 200.

¹⁵M. A. Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 225.

El Señor Presidente, Asturias relies on techniques used by the surrealists in their creation of new worlds. It is not surprising that Asturias has been favorably compared with Quevedo, the master at seventeenth-century baroque artistry in the Spanish language. Francis Donahue notes that Asturias creates a "Dante-Quevedo world of terror, cruelty, opportunism, inhumanity and servility" in El Señor Presidente.¹⁶ Very much like Quevedo, Asturias is a craftsman at the skill of word-weaponery and thought-manipulation. He is capable of compacting startling explosive power into neat sentences composed of imagery, suggestion, and metaphoric richness, such as in the following description of the nightmarish sleep overtaking Cara de Angel:

El Sueño, sueño que surca los mares oscuros de la realidad, le recogió en una de sus muchas barcas. Invisibles manos le arrancaron de las fauces abiertas de los hechos, alas hambrientas que se disputaban los pedazos de sus víctimas en peleas encarnizadas. 17

In additional comments on Asturias' unique style, Galo René Pérez mentions "unlooked-for and uncommon use of words, including brilliant alliteration," "a balance between crushing reality, exaggeratedly repulsive, and delightful poliferation of poetical forms," and "an ineffable wedding between the world of perception and the world of dreams."¹⁸ With specific insight into the essence of Asturias' writing Pérez further notes that here is:

¹⁶Francis Donahue, "Miguel Angel Asturias: Protest in the Guatemalan Novel", (Discourse, Vol. 10, 1967), p. 90.

¹⁷M. A. Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 317.

¹⁸Galo René Pérez, "Miguel Angel Asturias," p. 4.

. . . a writer who enters the marrow of the language to make words give up their most hidden meanings. The writer's hand is felt in the novelty of the adjectives, the vivid descriptions, the spontaneous scintillation of the dialog, the adaptation of language to the different human strata, in the Quevedian sense of humor, in the unexpected freshness of his lyricism. 19

At all times there is a musicality and rhythm in Asturias' prose. He rarely writes straightforward simple narrative but rather his sentences usually have some inverted, altered or compounded word and thought patterning which distinguishes them from the ordinary. The opening paragraphs of El Señor Presidente describe the wretched beggars of the cold and lonely city whose church does not even offer any warmth and comfort:

Los pordioseros se arrastraban por las cocinas del mercado, perdidos en la sombra de la Catedral helada, de paso hacia la Plaza de Armas, a lo largo de calles tan anchas como mares, en la ciudad que se iba quedando atrás íngnima y sola. 20

And in the face of an indifferent society Asturias sees Nature as the great provider and protector of its species, so, characteristic of much of his Nature-oriented literature, he writes that "La noche los reunía al mismo tiempo que a las estrellas."²¹

Another favorite device which predominates in Asturias' style is the abundant use of onomatopoeia, quite often accomplished by repetition of referent word syllables, such as in the following:

¹⁹Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰M. A. Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 175.

²¹Ibid., p. 175.

El idiota se despertaba riendo, parecía que a él también le daba risa su pena, hambre, corazón y lágrimas saltándole en los dientes, mientras los pordioseros arrebatában del aire la car-car-car-car-carcajada, del aire, del aire... la car-car-car-car-carcajada... 22

The full impact of the other beggars ridiculing the poor idiot is conveyed by the Goya-like grotesque portrayal of untempered laughter.

There is a suggestion of the surreal by the juxtaposition of the sound of laughter and the equally illusive air. He has, as previously mentioned, "... un estilo peculiarísimo suyo, capaz de evocar en la mente del lector una profusión de imágenes que son a maneras de pinturas, investidas con una gran fuerza ...".²³

The scene in El Señor Presidente involving the idiot Pelele, in addition to exemplifying automatic writing combined with paranoic subjectivity, testifies to Asturias' neologistical creativity:

Entre las plantas silvestres que convertían las basuras de la ciudad en lindísimas flores, junto a un ojo de agua dulce, el cerebro del idiota agigantaba tempestades en el pequeño universo de su cabeza.

...E-e-errr... E-e-eerrr... E-e-eerrr...

Las unas aceradas de la fiebre le aserraban la frente. Disociación de ideas. Elasticidad del mundo en los espejos. Desproporción fantástica. Huracán delirante. Fuga vertiginosa, horizontal, vertical, oblícua, recién nacida y muerta en espiral ...

...erre, erre, ere, ere, erre, ere, erre...

Curvadecurvaencurvadecurvadecurvadecurvaencurvala mujer de Lot. (¿La que inventó la Lotería?) 24

Asturias' adherence to the objectives of surrealism is evidenced in the

²²Ibid., p. 177.

²³Manuel Maldonado Denis, "Miguel Angel Asturias: novelista americano" (Cuadernos Americanos, Año 22, 1963), p. 251.

²⁴M. A. Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 188.

"disociación de ideas". From disassociation of ideas and freedom of the mind comes the surrealist's first step in creativity. The description of Pelele's delirious state of mind echoes the frenetic imaginings of a mentally handicapped person. Nevertheless, as illustrated in the question if Lot's wife invented the lottery, from disassociation often comes new association. These new associations are what the surrealists wished to unlock from man's tradition-closed mind.

Asturias often resorts to symbolism for plot and character development. Cara de Angel, a round character according to Forster's definition²⁵, is the most thoroughly delineated one who undergoes personality change. However, the flat character of the omnipresent threatening figure of the president is the most impressive as Asturias succinctly conveys this hovering terror through the following black description, symbolic of black death and black grief:

El Presidente vestía, como siempre, de luto riguroso: negros los zapatos, negro el traje, negra la corbata, negro el sombrero que nunca se quitaba; en los bigotes canos, peinados sobre las comisuras de los labios, disimulaba las encías sin dientes, tenía los carrillos pellejados y los párpados como pellizcados. 26

In contrast to this powerful devil-like sinister character, Miguel Cara de Angel is viewed as the President's subservient confident who cowers in the presence of his master. Asturias dehumanizes Miguel and relegates him to the status of a malcontent dog:

²⁵E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955).

²⁶M. A. Asturias, El Señor Presidente, p. 205.

... acababa de estar a punto de lanzarse sobre el amo y apagarle en la boca la carcajada miserable, fuego de sangre aguardentosa. Un ferrocarril que le hubiera pasado encima le habría hecho menos daño. Se tuvo asco. Seguía siendo el perro educado, intelectual, contento de su ración de mugre, del instinto que le conservaba la vida. Sonrió para disimular su encono, con la muerte en los ojos de terciopelo, como el envenenado al que le va creciendo la cara. 27

In a more powerful way Asturias presents symbolism pertaining to all oppressed people. He never designates the novel's time period nor does he give any name to location. He keeps the action entirely in the real of anonymity which lends to El Señor Presidente the mystery of the surreal or unreal.

The complications and double entendres inherent in Asturias' metaphors, humor, and descriptive passages are aspects which give full body to his narrative and developmental techniques, as well as the silences and/or non-explicit comments which convey incompleting inference-laden thoughts. These characteristics are integral parts of the surrealist's desire to use known reality as a springboard for suggestive exploration into another dimension of possible reality. In Asturias' description of the president's nomination to re-election, four times the people proclaim: "¡Señor, Señor, llenos están los cielos y la tierra de vuestra gloria!"²⁸ Although on surface value this appears to be abundant praise to the degree of sanctification of the president, on a double-meaning level this is caustic and satirical literal truth. Due to the extermination-of-enemies policy of the president many dead indeed are filling heaven and earth.

²⁷Ibid., p. 396.

²⁸Ibid., p. 266.

A review of Asturias' other novels reveals many of the same characteristics found in El Señor Presidente. In Hombres de maíz, one of his fantasy novels of Mayan atavistic composition, Asturias relies heavily not only on Mayan extant source material but also finds inspiration in Mayan literary styles which compound many stories within a whole story and create myths to explain the bizarre.

Very much like El Señor Presidente's beginning lines, Asturias begins the poetical fantasy of Hombres de maíz with rhythmical lulling repetitiveness in the opening lines. The hypnotic effect of the introductory phrases places the novel in the realm of a modern myth, and the established dream-like atmosphere effectively serves as a backdrop to the mythical character of Gaspar Ilóm who appears to be the passive victim of pillage:

---El Gaspar Ilóm deja que a la tierra de Ilóm le roben el sueño de los ojos.

---El Gaspar Ilóm deja que a la tierra de Ilóm le boten los párpados con hacha...

---El Gaspar Ilóm deja que a la tierra de Ilóm le chamusquen la ramazón de las pestañas con las quemas que ponen la luna color de hormiga vieja. 29

Asturias reinforces Gaspar's sleepy inactivity by choosing words referring to eyes and sleep. The reiteration of the lines "El Gaspar Ilóm deja que a la tierra de Ilóm..." reinforces Gaspar's apathy or powerlessness to do anything. Ill fortune is cast upon him three times and each time he remains a type of passive helpless bystander. There is a nodding half-asleep motion to the opening lines which are musical and sleep-inducing due to rather weighty construction; with these lines

²⁹M. A. Asturias, Obras completas..., Tomo I: Hombres de maíz, p. 467.

Asturias begins to build the interior tension in this novel. The repetitiveness, so characteristic of Asturias' prose, is a stylistic quality evincing a strong influence of the Indians' approaches to myth making, story telling, and legend weaving, as witnessed in the following passage from The Annals of the Cakchiquels:

Here I shall write a few stories of our first fathers and ancestors, those who begot man of old. . .

I shall write the stories of our first fathers and grand-fathers. . .; the stories that they told to us. . . 30

Repetition of the same phrase or idea characterizes the whole of The Annals of the Cakchiquels as well as the style of the Popol Vuh and other extant Mayan literature. In these mythological histories of the Mayan people there is a constantly reiterated idea that in the beginning all that existed was the great nothingness, a void, but later creation:

Then the earth was created by them. So it was in truth, that they created the earth. Earth!, they said, and instantly it was made. 31

In Asturias' own creation he relies heavily on the effective myth-making device of continual reinforcement by repetition. Bertrand Russell, a contemporary of Asturias and a fellow recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, commented on the effect of repetition: "Ready credulity in the face of repeated assertions is one of the curses of the modern world." Yet, establishing the faith and confidence of each

³⁰The Annals of the Cakchiques, translated from the Cakchiquel Maya by Adrian Recinos and Delia Goetz, (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 43.

³¹Popol Vuh, The Sacred Book of the Quiche Maya. English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley from the translation of Adrian Recinos, (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p.83.

reader are the goals of most writers.

Another marked stylistic similarity between Asturias' writing and the Mayan Indian literature is the accumulation of adjectives and nouns in a series, separated only by commas. This seems also to be a device for intensifying the reader's credulity and influencing judgments. Asturias uses this accumulation technique most frequently in triplet word phrases or in groups of three modifiers, as in the cited opening lines of Hombres de maíz and in the following example selected at random from Viento fuerte:

Toda la desvelada multitud estaba inerte, suelta, esparcida ...
 Todo dominado, menos el húmedo, el inmóvil, el cegante calor de
 la costa. 32

Speaking about the workers in the banana plantation he emphasizes their belabored bodies by referring to the condition of their hands: "Sus manos callosas, sudadas, endurecidas por el trabajo ...".³³ Again the use of triplet word phrasing.

Asturias also uses the effective device of pitting contrasting ideas against each other in the same sentence, creating a type of balance scale. With harvests and food staples he also sees hunger: "... hombres y cosechas, hambre y alimentos";³⁴ in an overburdened and broken animal he still sees life: "... la pobre bestia fabulosa, dominada, destrozada y siempre viva ...";³⁵ and even in the foulest of water

³²M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: Viento fuerte, p. 5.

³³Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴Ibid., p. 5.

³⁵Ibid., p. 5.

he sees its need: "... corriente de agua turbia, sucia, menesterosa."³⁶

Selective contrasting is a useful tool in propagating a particular issue and in supporting a particular point of view.

Automatic writing, discussed in relation to El Señor Presidente, is a salient aspect of other novels by Asturias. For Asturias it was a means of freeing and revealing innovative images, symbols, and ideas. The episode in Hombres de maíz in which Correo-coyote Nicho Aquino is led into the fantasy cave world of the brujos de las luciérnagas attests to Asturias' creative flair rooted in automatic writing:

... sustancias ígneas, volcánicas en presente vegetal, por el mundo pretérito de los minerales rutilantes, fulgidos, repartidos en realidad y en reflejo por todas partes, arriba y abajo, por todas partes. 37

With this spontaneity of description, Asturias has created a world, beyond actual reality, which is in tune with surrealism. There is an aura of mysticism and suspense in the "mundo pretérito" of this fantasy mirror-like cave in which the substances whirl and seem spontaneously to create themselves.

Many critics have noted Asturias' propensity to make maximum use of the sense of smell as an intangible means of communication and recognition. The elusiveness inherent to odors and smells makes this sense a good tool in surrealism. Much can be expressed by mentioning an odor or smell, yet each reader is required to call upon his own experiences with the odor or smell in order to find meaning in the

³⁶Ibid., p. 5.

³⁷M. A. Asturias, Hombres de maíz, p. 751.

particular description or metaphor. For example, what does oldness smell like? The reader must have some vague referent in order to appreciate the etherial description, "... el tufo a meado de la eternidad en la vejez de las cosas abandonadas ...".³⁸ What kind of abandoned things? Furniture? Towns or cultural complexes such as the Mayans abandoned? Papers? Old people? Each referent will cause each reader to have a truly individual interpretation of this description. Asturias is not always so vague in his use of smells. Old land, long washed with waters from the same stale river, is his "... tierra maicera bañada por ríos de agua hedionda de tanto estar despierta ...",³⁹ and in an earthy comparison matching gratefulness with the earth Asturias writes that "El agradecimiento debe oler, si algún huele tiene, a tierra mojada."⁴⁰ This is a reflection of his teluric attitude toward life and human values, for above all Asturias is a poet of the rural land and the indigenous people. He is not a writer of the city nor of man-made technological or scientific accomplishments but rather finds his poetic inspiration in the Mayan tradition and the Guatemalan land which vitalizes his works. Even in El Señor Presidente, ostensibly situated in the capital city, he makes little mention of the city proper and the emphasis of his sympathies and energy is placed on the common people. The land and its inhabitants are the staples of his creativity.

³⁸Ibid., p. 630.

³⁹Ibid., p. 466.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 500.

His sentence structure may be bountiful like nature itself, and often he compresses a multitude of species into one syntactical unit as in this paragraph from the opening lines of Hombres de maíz:

---La tierra cae soñando de las estrellas, pero despierta en las que fueron montañas, hoy cerros pelados de Ilóm, donde el guarda canta con lloro de barranco, vuela de cabeza el gavilán, anda el zompopo, gime la espumuy y duerme con su petate, su sombra y su mujer el que debía trozar los párpados a los que hachan los árboles, quemar las pestañas a los que chamuscan el monte y enfriar el cuerpo a los que atajan el agua de los ríos que corriendo duerme y no ve nada, pero atajada en las pozas abre los ojos y lo ve todo con mirada honda ... 41

This paragraph is one of many which clearly situate the novel Hombres de maíz in a limbo-like teluric setting. The reader is pulled toward surrealism by the implied meanings which at the same time are based on both general and specific earthy elements---tierra, estrellas, montañas, cerros, guarda, barranco, gavilán, zompopo, espumuy, árboles, ríos---which express deliberate and concrete known reality. Asturias never pinpoints the actual location of the novel, thus allowing the setting to become a misty part of his new surreal-mythology land.

Hombres de maíz, one of Asturias' first novels, has many indications of being influenced by his exposure to the philosophy of surrealism and to the psychoanalytical teachings of Freud. Specifically, through style, he achieves a type of nebulous ambiguity of meaning, and delves into the recesses of the collective unconsciousness. Asturias capitalizes on the credulousness of the local people and their ability to invent stories to explain the bizarre, as in the

⁴¹Ibid., p. 465.

following description of the area around the fabled rock of María

Tecún:

La ciega voz del ciego que, según el decir de las gentes, dejó las nubes de sus ojos, al recobrar la vista en aquel lugar, para enceguecerlo todo con agua de jabón que no permite detenerse a las imágenes, fijarse en un punto, porque todas van resbanando, desfilando, borrándose como las pizarras de los pedregales de laja negra que simulan cuerpos de lagartos petrificados, y como los árboles desmantelados, sin hojas, que más que árboles parecen cornamentas de animales hundidos en glaciares. 42

Here in one rambling sentence is a labyrinth of ideas and narrative, and the suggestive connotation of one idea leads to the development of another idea. This description, similar to spontaneous speech characterized by uninterrupted flow of ideas, is metaphorically rich and has a graphic or pictorial quality suggesting visual images. Asturias continues his established writing patterns such as repetition and word accumulation in his trilogy novels---Viento fuerte, El Papa verde, and Los ojos de los enterrados---, but for the most part these novels are not of poetical or mystical inspiration. They are politically and economically based, and though the style of writing in these is similar to Asturias' fantasy novels, the prose of the banana-cycle works lacks the ingenuous sparkle and creative spontaneity characteristic of his myth-oriented novels. Asturias does include, however, episodes of delightful imagination and rich imagery, as in the following dynamic episode from Viento fuerte in which he describes the Chamá as the supernal activator of the great wind:

⁴²M. A. Asturias, Hombres de maíz, p. 684.

El viento que clava los dientes en la tierra, sucio, atmosférico, salobre, y desentierra todo, hasta los muertos ... Nada quedará en su sitio. La pobre resistencia vegetal a los elementos desenfrenados dentro de lo natural será abatida por un solo elemento desencadenado dentro de lo sobrenatural y mágico con la voluntad destructiva del hombre, la fuerza de las bestias marinas y el golpeteo incesante de las raíces, los cimientos, las patas de los animales, los pies de los horrorizados habitantes. 43

Again Asturias choses triplet words "sucio, atmosférico, salobre" to give a threatening meaning to the viento that turns into a menacing animal which scratches the earth and without reverence disinters the sacred dead. The wind becomes a single element of nature unleashed within the supernatural and gains a magical evil power. This episode is one of the few links with surrealism to be found in the banana-cycle novels which are not, in general, good examples of Asturias' use of surrealism and inventive imagination. There are however some scenes of electric or unusual imagery, such as the continuing extended metaphorical description of the tropical devouring sun that gnaws away at the laborers:

El sol de plomo se encargaría de matar los brillos del honor, cuando empezaran los hombres a asfixiarse, sin refresco de sudor en la atmósfera de fuego blanco, y las temperaturas palúdicas desmoronaran todo aquel empuje rebelde bajo una máscara más amarilla que los odiosos polvos de licopodio que les vendía ... 44

Asturias, with a strong Guatemalan bias, sees the comfortable foreign exploiter and reaper of the fruit of the laborers' sweat as the "Papa Verde, plantador de bananos, señor de chique y cuchillo, navegador en

⁴³M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: Viento fuerte, pp. 219-220.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 96.

el sudor humano."⁴⁵ Here in a few precisely chosen images Asturias sketches a caricature of the non-involved sinister over-lord, sitting comfortably aloof from the pitiful workers.

Time and time again in other character descriptions Asturias proves his ability to capture with a few words, neologisms, and onomatopoeia the essence of the character, as in the following description of the excited professor in Los ojos de los enterrados:

... como embadurada de palabras por aquel hombre que cuando hablaba parecía electrizado; tic por aquí, tic por allá, parpar-parpadeos superpar-parpadeantes, saltos de hombros, codazos al aire. 46

His physical delineation of characters varies from defining explicit features to giving none at all, but generally the complete psychological characterization remains vague and semi-apparent. This again is a product of the surrealist nature of Asturias' writing. He cannot be accused of being parsimonious with his character delineation but rather he is simply conservative and sketchy. He allows his readers to share in the creative process by requiring each one to attempt to finish the outlined characterizations.

As far as pure stylistic devices are concerned, Asturias more closely approaches the ideas of surrealism in Mulata de tal through the use of external mechanical devices to give enlarged meaning to the ideas presented. Although similar to his other novels in many

⁴⁵M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: El Papa Verde, p. 242.

⁴⁶M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: Los ojos de los enterrados, p. 505.

aspects, Mulata de tal has many passages which present confusing ideas and unusual stylistic usages. The critic Olzagasti observes:

"Asturias no resulta un narrador fácil. Hay que leer siempre con cautela por el trastrueque de sentidos e ideas, creación y combinación de palabras y más que nada por ese tener suspendido al lector entre la realidad y la fantasía."⁴⁷ Asturias offers in Mulata de tal the best examples of his potential for completely liberated ideation and free composition, both in content and style. Towards the end of the novel everything becomes agitated, moves aimlessly, and whirls in the surreal world of apocalyptic design. Asturias' elimination of paragraphs in this section is notable. He chooses elliptical sentences which reveal a type of automatic writing expressing a break with all recognizable logic. The episode involving the priest battling with the evil forces in an unrecognizable world exemplifies mechanical ellipsis used to convey fragmented non-interrupted thought:

...la mula y la tierra..., demonios y animales de pelo largo y corto se amansan hablándoles..., idioma raro..., mular..., incontables arrugas de sombras de bosque colgadas en el vacío sobre el disco de la luna..., la visión invertida, de la tierra al cielo, en pliegues batracios gigantes, cíclopes titanes enmudecidos..., quien hablaba a quien..., ya la mula también hablaba..., cuerda..., se había vuelto cuerda..., ahora el que le exigía que corcoveara era él... 48

The description continues at great length without any paragraphs and very few definitive periods. Asturias calls it "... telepatía de racional a irracional..., comunicación del pensamiento...".⁴⁹ The

⁴⁷Adelaida Lorard de Olzagasti, "Mulata de tal" (Asomante, Vo., 24, 1968), p. 79.

⁴⁸M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: Mulata de tal, p. 324.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 327.

involved rambling description terminates just as mysteriously as it unfolds:

De pronto se palpó la sótana..., tuvo la sensación de que había perdido algo..., de que algo le faltaba..., se volvió a un lado y a otro indagando..., buscando..., y volvió a palparse... No le dio importancia.. No le dio importancia, pero la mula carnívora no estaba... ¿Era eso lo que buscaba?... No quiso confesárselo..., y prefirió santiguarse, pero al levantar el brazo, la mano se le perdió en el aire, no llegó a su frente, se le deshizo, no estaba, como tampoco la mula que no dejó huella... 50

The riddle of the priest and his battles with the mule and the devils is not solved. The reader must continue on his own the automatic writing and finish it as his mind dictates, participating both in modern myth making and the creative process commenced by Asturias.

The title of the opening chapter of Mulata de tal indicates that this novel is set in the realm of surrealism: "Brujo bragueta le vende su mujer al diablo de hojas de maíz." Evidence of automatic writing is often notable in this imaginative novel of devils and fantasy lands, and there is an abundance of creative imagery. As in his previous writings, Asturias' imagery flows from one idea to another, and often his long run-on sentences reflect this stream of thought, as in the following paragraph:

Jamás ojos humanos han divisado un camino, con más hambre, como Celestino y su mujer, que ya se sentían fuera de Tierrapaulita huyendo, comiéndose con los pies aquella oscura faja de tierra, entre peñascos recubiertos de helechos, árboles escasos de ramas y postes de telégrafo con hilos que Cashtoc interrumpía sembrando loritos a todo lo largo de alambres, para que ellos tradujeran al día siguiente, en el romper del alba, con su algarabía y palabrerió, los mensajes dirigidos a Tierrapaulita u originados allí,

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 336.

o cuanto escuchaban a través de aquellos hilos metálicos, cuya vibración dormía perforaba en noches de neblina, con los ruidos de su idioma de brujos, punto y raya, la vagancia pomarosa de aquel ensueño de mundo en potencia, de aquel estado coloidal de fantasmas que llevaban en sus bolsillos relojes de gotas de sereno. 51

It begins with the impersonal "ojos humanos", progresses to the fleeing couple, then to the telluric backdrop with the birds on telegraph wires acting as message-senders, and finally to wizards and the supernatural. The thought progression is almost convincingly logical except real meaning behind the words is lacking when one tries to fit them into known reality. The pressured flight of Celestino and his wife is artistically conveyed through the one-sentence clause-filled paragraph in which Asturias uses pictorial imagery, sensitive metaphors, neologisms, and continual noun and subject change to present a new dynamic world.

All Asturias' novels are characterized by this rich imagery, involved sentence structure, and innovative vocabulary usage. In descriptive phrases, Asturias is prone to use a complex sentence structure which does not always follow the traditional direct presentation, but rather is loaded with Quevedian-type circumlocutions and conceits, baroque-type, involved construction, and imaginative juxtapositions of ideas, words and phrases.

In El Alhajadito, a novel in which Asturias seeks to recover that enchanted world of childhood imagination, the imagery and descriptions are based on the world of fantasy of a child. The small corridor in which the child plays is often the departure point and the

⁵¹Ibid., p. 118.

point of return for these adventures into the fantasy world:

Por el monte, después de gran rodeo, él asomaba al corredorcito, ojeándolo a distancia, igual que si tratara de sorprender a un enemigo. Esta vez se arrojó de pecho al suelo. No era un enemigo solo, sino varios bandoleros. Y avanzó arrastrándose. Codos, rodillas, pecho... El monte en guerra. ¡Al asalto! Ya era suyo el corredor lleno de bandidos. Los desarmaban con su audacia. Huían. Algunos presentaban combate. ¡Pim!, ¡pam!, ¡pum...! Liquidados. Un caballo. La sombra de un caballo de aire entre las ramas. Una vuelta a la tierra en redondo, persiguiéndolos para volver allí, al corredorcito desconfiado, mohoso, pantomimo. 52

Asturias writes the first part of El Alhajadito in the third person singular narrative, treating the child as an object, but in the last part of the novel he switches to the first person singular indicating the child's awareness of self. The last part appears to be a form of diary of past experiences in which remote childhood experiences are mingled with introspective light on the effect of these experiences on adolescent and adult experiences. The adult's own observations reflect this perspective study of cause and consequence:

Muchos años después estuve a punto de desvanecerme en un teatro de Londres. Asistía con amigos a un acto de hipnotismo y de pronto, vi que se transformaban el hipnotizador en el visitante de aquella mañana y la que servía de sujeto para las experiencias en una de mis mamás. La decoración era gris, azulosa, indecisa como la luz en la casa de mi infancia. El hipnotizador ordenaba a la medium que le trajese la caja de sus joyas, y ésta obedecía. Una de mis mamás, aquella mañana, vino con el cofrecito de sus alhajas a donde estaba el visitante, bajo la acción de una fuerza extraña. Y no sé más. 53

Although this excerpt does not illustrate any striking imagery or any overt aspect of automatic writing, it does capture the mental associa-

⁵²M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: El Alhajadito, p. 979.

⁵³Ibid., p. 1070.

tion process which ignites spontaneous thought generation leading many surrealist writers to accumulate one idea on top of another in free flowing associative ideation. It also contains the seeds of possible humor in the repeated enigmatic phrase una de mis mamás. Although the doubt and confusion are perplexing for the child, the reader is somewhat amused.

Although surrealist writers are serious about their underlying intent, they recognize the beneficial value of occasional humor. Without some levity their works would be tasteless and not so colorful. Asturias comes across through his prose as a man endowed generously with a sense of humor, and he uses this humor to enhance his works.

A sense of humor has been defined as that which makes you laugh at something that happens to somebody else and which would make you angry had it happened to you. This is partially true. Satire is a branch of this type of humor which goes beneath surface appearances to expose man's foibles, follies, and inadequacies. Virulent satire is used as a means of breaking down the barrier of prejudice which separates man's conscious from his whole self. Thus through the use of humor the satirist-humorist may delve into the psyche, an ultimate aim also of the surrealists. In producing humor the artist detaches himself from his surroundings and as a spectator sees the proverbial Shakespearean "all the world is a stage" presentation. The actors are viewed as figures with parts to play and masks to wear. Humor grows from this situation. It penetrates the disguise, presents a sense of the absurdity in pretense, and allows the world to be seen from a viewpoint different from the accepted norm. Humor can produce

a temporary dismissal of the accepted social laws and behavior or it can effect a break with the logical. This applies to situation-type comedy which, in the surrealist vein, is often found in the ludicrous situations resulting from the mixture of fantasy and reality. Through destruction of the ordinary, of logic, and of reason, humor plays an important function in the presentation of surrealism. Often it is a bizarre type of humor such as the eccentric humor in Mulata de tal in the episode involving a devil searching for his dismembered arm in a pile of rubbish. The fact that no apparent feeling of discomfort has befallen the devil allows one to focus attention on the absurdity and ridiculousness of the situation. It does take on a humorous light although it does not produce hilarious laughter. Cartoons, in which, for example, the animated rabbit is plagued with all sorts of disastrous events, follow this same line of humor. Humor for the surrealists many times is a sugar coating for the irrational mixture of imagination and fantasy they are concocting. Humor disguises the truth and is an introduction to the world of imagination. However, humor is not a component factor of surrealism as such but rather it is simply a characteristic and stylistic device of many surrealist writers.

In El Señor Presidente humor is not abundantly present. The novel is heavy and serious, and humor would disrupt the gravity of the mood and circumstances which Asturias wishes to present. However, there is one outstanding episode in which Asturias develops humor in the face of a grim murder. Generously-padded Doña Venjamón watches from her window the murder of Pelele on the street below. Her slight puppeteer husband Don Benjamín wishes also to see the action in the plaza below but Doña Venja-

món is so overly obese and covers so much of the area in front of the window that he cannot find any small peep hole:

Don Benjamín no media un metro; era degaldito y velludo como murciélago y estaba aliviado si quería ver en lo que paraba aquel grupo de gentes y gendarmes a espaldas de doña Venjamón, dama de puerta mayor, dos asientos en el tranvía, uno para cada nalga, y ocho varas y tercia por vestido.

---Pero sólo "vos" "querés" ver ... ---se atrevió don Benjamín con la esperanza de salir de aquel eclipse total.

Al decir así como si hubiera dicho ¡ábrete, perejil!, giró doña Venjamón como una montaña, y se le vino encima.

---¡En presta te cargo, chu-malía!--le gritó. Y alzándolo del suelo lo sacó a la puerta como un niño en brazos. 54

The comedy in this episode of this Jack Sprat couple stems from the sizeable difference in these two partners, plus the obvious linguistical humor in the name Dona Venjamón. Not only is there a reference to the Spanish jamona, a fat and middle-aged woman, but also there is the augmentative of Venjamón from Benjamín. Asturias accomplishes the portrayal of the gross disparity between the two by comparing Don Benjamín to a bat and Doña Venjamón to a mountain, and he reinforces this difference by having Doña Venjamón pick up Don Benjamín as though he was her child rather than her husband. In personal mannerisms there also exists a striking contrast as "se atrevió don Benjamin" to speak but in reply Doña Venjamón "le gritó."

An expanded humorous incident in Hombres de maíz concerns the purchase of liquor by Goyo Yic and his friend Revolorio. Together they go to another city and buy liquor which they intend to sell in their home town at a profit. They make a pact that if either wants a drink that it must be paid for first. On the way back home they get thirsty. First,

⁵⁴M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo I: El Señor Presidente, pp. 222 - 223.

one pays the other one six pesos for a drink, and then the other one uses the same six pesos to pay the first one for a drink:

El garrafón, cada vez más exhausto, pasaba de las manos de un compadre a las manos del otro compadre, y los seis pesos, la venta era al riguroso contado, cambiaban también de mano.

---Otro trago, seis pesos...

---Aquí los seis pesos, otro...

---Ahora, mi turno, seis pesos...

---El mío no me lo ha dado, y se lo pagué...

---Entonces son seis de usted y seis míos... 55

The same six pesos keep changing from one man's hands to the other's. At the end of the trip they are both drunk and they have the same amount of money as when they left, minus the liquor and the amount they paid for it. They cannot understand where all the money they paid each other for the drinks went. To add to their miseries, they have lost the bill of sale on the way, and they are convicted of contrabanding liquor and sent to prison.

Asturias' humor is not always set in a situation-type environment. It is often expressed as a passing description. In Viento fuerte Lester Mead speaks briefly with a poor lawyer who is so dressed as to remind one of a clown:

El abogado, vestido con un traje que ya se iba de los codos, camisa varias veces hospitalizada, corbata de mariposa mil veces disecada, apenas detenida del botón del cuello, y zapatos más grandes que sus pies ... 56

Other times Asturias achieves humor through rhetorical dialogue based on the equivocal, as evidenced in a brief scene in El Papa Verde:

⁵⁵M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo I: Hombres de maíz, p. 617.

⁵⁶M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: Viento fuerte, p. 150.

---Su nombre...
 ---Damiana soy yo...
 ---¿Soy yo es su apellido?
 ---No, yo soy Damiana Mendoza...
 ---¿Casada?
 ---Me extraña, con el bulto que ando ya pa no ser casada. 57

The comparison of rich people with poor people has always been an effective topic for the humorists. Asturias interjects this type of humor into El Papa Verde when a local boy compares his poor mother with the rich mother of the American boy Bobby Thompson: "Tiene mamá de lujo ... lo viene a ver de Nueva Orleans; la mía, cuando me ve, viene de la cocina."⁵⁸

Dante condemned the sin of gluttony, but many other authors, including Asturias, find overindulgence in food a source of humor and ridicule. In Los ojos de los enterrados Asturias invents a humorous nickname and applies it to the publican who eats too much:

Juan Nepomuceno Rojas, como le llamaban, aunque por el uso y el abuso que había hecho, como todo buen cristiano, de su tubo digestivo, mejor hubiera sido bautizado con el nombre de Juan Nepomu-ceno-como-desayuno-almuerzo-meriendo Rojas. 59

In another episode of Los ojos de los enterrados Asturias satirizes on impolite smacking-chomping gum chewing. As this appears to have become a trademark by which Americans distinguish themselves in another country, the person who chews the gum in this novel is an American. Asturias composes the description around onomatopoeic reproductions of chewing sounds:

⁵⁷M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo II: El Papa Verde, p. 303.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 413.

⁵⁹M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: Los ojos de los enterrados, p. 350.

---Chacla..., Chacla..., chacla..., chicle... ---se oyó al del chicle hablar y masticar; pero no se entendió lo que dijo, algo así como "míster Lucero tiene mucha culpa... ---chicle..., chacla..., chicle..., chacla... ---saber míster Lucero Bobby corría peligro..." ---cha-cla-chi-cle-cha-chi-chi... 60

The reader of El Alhajadito is amused by the imaginings of the child. Humor is inherent in his illusions of fantasy worlds in which he is complete master. Yet at the same time, these moments of carefree childhood can be steeped in frustration and confusion. On a child's scale of values, happiness and sadness are the two extremes of his emotional states. Both are traumatic experiences which eventually form the psychological make-up of the adult. In El Alhajadito the protagonist undergoes both sorrows and happy times. Humor in this novel results from the child's reflections on his experiences, such as the incessant, innocent and naive wondering as to who his mother really is. It is an ineffable, remote humor which predominates in this novel and only occasionally do any single lines stand out as being humorous in themselves, such as: "Hablaban en chino o, como de a Pispís, en "cochino" porque no se les entendía nada."⁶¹

Mulata de tal is, like El Alhajadito, humorous in its general content and absurd happenings, and is the most surrealistic of all Asturias' novels. Perhaps, due to this novel's rupture with known reality, the reader views it as being more humorous. Its pages are filled with amusing characters reminiscent of a circus sideshow. They are laughable and bizarre. Celestino Yumí is the novel's simpleton.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 493.

⁶¹M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: El Alhajadito, p. 1010.

A ter selling his wife to the devil Tazol he believes he has been abandoned by the devil and shamefully deceived. He tries to kill himself by hanging, but being a blunderer and a fool, he is unsuccessful because he hangs himself from his foot:

---Sí, don, de una pata. Se cuelga de una pata. Y el otro día que alguien que lo vio guindado así, se acercó a preguntarle: "¿Yumí, por qué estás así?", éste le contestó, la cabeza colgando, casi en el suelo: "¡Porque me quiero ahorcar!" ... "¡Ay, Yumí, le dijo el otro, para ahorcarse yo creo que es al contrario, hay que ponerse la sogá en el pescuezo!" Y Yumí le contestó, siempre boca abajo, colgado del pie: "Ya ensayé con la sogá en el pescuezo, pero no me gustó, sentí que me faltaba el aire, que me estaba ahogando..." 62

Asturias also conveys humor directly by the use of his invented neologisms as illustrated in the priest's comments about crazy women and all their gossipy -rreas:

... las locas quenos persiguen a los sacerdotes con su verborrea, el verbo no se hizo carne sino diarrea, su ganarrea, o gana de hacer reo al que no es reo, su midaorrea porque sólo se levantan la ropa y allí va el chorro, su imaginerrea, porque viven imaginando, imaginando ... 63

Examples of humor in Mulata de tal are plentiful. Some are incidental, such as calling the sexton the priest's Pancho Santo or calling dwarfed Niniloj, Lili Puti. Others are language oriented such as the rooster that crowed too soon and had to retract its crow: "Un gallo cantó, pero al darse cuenta que no era la madrugada, sino el claror de la luna y la luminaria de ocote, se tragó el ki-ki-ri-ki, en un sonido al revés, ikirikik, ridículo y forzado."⁶⁴ Many of the devils' ignoble tricks are amusing and keep the novel from becoming weighty as Asturias develops his

⁶²M. A. Asturias, Obras completas ..., Tomo III: Mulata de tal, p. 29.

⁶³Ibid., p. 114.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 162.

exploration into the surrealistic phantasmagorical worlds of petty gods, demons, dwarfs, giants, priests, men and animals. Thus in many instances, humor functions to maintain interest in the events which occur so illogically and so confusingly in Mulata de tal.

The outstanding points in Asturias' style involve automatic writing in which his innovative imagery is original, fresh, and at times exotic, but always distinctively unique. He enjoys working with words as much as juggling ideas. "For Asturias, language lives a borrowed life. Words are echoes or shadows of living beings."⁶⁵ Like the Indians, he senses a rhythm in the combination of words and recognizes the mysterious nature of words which are able to capture the essence of the world about him. The imagery he creates reveals this attention to careful word selection, and to a constant awareness of the denotative, connotative, suggestive, rhythmical and poetical power of words. Combined with his keen sense of humor, he skillfully uses these tools in his search for the greater reality cherished as the goal of surrealism.

Surrealism allows Asturias the artistic freedom he desires and it brings him closer to his native subject matter. The Mayan literature has very many similarities to the works of surrealism. It too is highly imaginative and often vague. In it are also the fantasy worlds created through the use of dreams and extensions of the conscious universe. Characteristic of Mayan literature are the intricately conceived metaphors, the poetical repetition and reiterations, and the highly inventive onomopoeia. Like surrealistic works, rarely does Mayan literature reflect

⁶⁵Harss & Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 81.

concrete reality but rather it exhibits extended imagination in the bizarre world it presents.

Asturias relies on and fuses together surrealism and the Mayan tradition, and he equally uses each. In his works, each overlaps the other so that a sharp demarkation line between the two sources cannot be drawn. In the use of language, the Indian has always employed the ambiguous terms and intricate metaphors characteristic also of surrealism. The Indian has always been highly creative in seeing new worlds and in inventing new life forms. In these aspects, Indian literature and thought are forerunners of twentieth-century surrealism. Asturias in his writing capitalizes on these two literary and thought forms---Mayan and surrealism--- in order to create novels which express the ser americano.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Asturias's use of surrealism dates from his residence and study in Paris in the 1920's where he came in contact with the innovators and philosophers of the age. As a surrealist writer, Asturias exhibits a strong influence from the works of psychologists such as Jung and Freud, and the innovative stylistic freedom of the French surrealists. He however carried with him the uniqueness of the unrestricted nature of his own native Guatemalan landscape, and the fruition of his studies of the mythological fantasies found in extant Mayan literature. Influenced by these sources Asturias' artistic production reflects qualities of surrealism in three broad, semi-related fields: enlargement of the conscious universe through imagination, utilization and invention of dreams, and creative style and imaginative use of the Spanish language.

Asturias' fertile imagination enlarges the universe of the conscious mind. There are many ways in which to expand conscious known reality and to probe into the unknown worlds which comprise a more complete total reality encompassing the whole of known, universal, and imaginative thought and symbolism. Some of these pathways into the extraordinary are: the world of ghosts, apparitions, daydreams, visions, other similar psychic phenomena, time awareness, remembrances and insights into the future, religious divination, myths and other fantasies. All of these are often termed irrational, unreal, inexplicable, absurd, bizarre, and indeed they are in comparison with accepted commonplace uneventful existence. But they do, in fact, open doors leading to another type of cognizance of man's

totality which includes the limitless activities of the expanded conscious mind. In the analysis of his enlarged universe Asturias begins with realities and works inward toward the unveiling of the ser americano. Some of the salient points of departure he uses for further exploration of the ser americano are: myth, religion, visions, fantasy, nahualism, and forces of nature. All these six aspects of the expanded conscious mind are integral components of the Guatemalan's day-to-day activities which Asturias incorporates into the mainstream of his narrative.

Through the dream and the soporific atmosphere, Asturias seeks a more universal concept of life. Although dreams are among man's most subjective experiences, Asturias uses dreams to develop socio-political, national and personal problems of his people and to explore atavistic cultural problems. He finds that dreams permit penetration into the essence of the human psyche where a world of private symbols exists. Asturias is a master of the dream sequence in his narrative and uses it as another method of surrealist recognition of previously unexplored regions. He reproduces and parallels a dream structure by means of a nonstructured narrative and automatic writing. Although this often produces an extravagant and antirational work, it is of significant value in his total surrealist production because it does indeed aid in the attempt to find the other more subjective realities.

Asturias' style as an additive in the creation of surrealist adventures is characterized by a rich vocabulary, innovative metaphors, and regional constructions. His sentence structure is often complex and does not always follow the traditional direct presentation. At times

the descriptive passages tend toward being baroque and often the sentence parts are juxtaposed. This same tendency toward juxtaposition and twentieth-century baroque is noted in his ideas, words, and phrases.

"In his work language is thematic: it becomes a form of research, of inner plumbing that disrupts set patterns of syntax to draw its rhythm and feeling."¹ A complementing factor in Asturias' literary development is his adaptation of the Indian's approach to literature. In the Indian's viewpoint words are important in and of themselves, and Asturias' own personal feeling about words is developed from the Mayan tradition:

". . . words capture the essence of things. To be able to put the exact name on something, says Asturias, means to reveal it, to bare it, to strip it of its mystery."² In preserving the over-all mystery, Asturias probes the inner functionings of the mind through the technique of automatic writing. He often allows his mind to wander without restraint and he reproduces these meanderings. What he achieves is unusual spontaneity of images which lend a magical quality to his works. Asturias maintains that his narrative is much like the Mayan: "The Indian narrative unfolds on two levels: the dream level and the level of reality. Indian texts portray the everyday reality of the senses, but at the same time they convey an oneiric, fabulous, imaginary reality which is seen in as much detail as the other one."³ Thus Asturias' style is an important ingredient in the creation of his surrealist worlds.

¹Harss & Dohmann, Mainstream, p. 81.

²Ibid., p. 83.

³Ibid., p. 79.

Asturias' main themes are three: dictatorial and corrupt government, foreign entrepreneurs and external greed, and modern myths and fantasy stories, many times based on Indian lore.

He wrote El Señor Presidente as a literary vendetta with hopes of purging the country of its unhealthy political condition. Surrealism is apparent in this novel in the grotesque pictures of a reality too horrible to have to be endured. This novel's journalistic accounts are selected for their exaggerated aspects and for the resultant numbing impact. What might be regarded by the reader as a nightmare, is not; it is a stark reality which for the outsider seems to be a surreality or something beyond actual reality. With this surreal disaligned configuration of the political scene, Asturias accomplishes his desired exposition and bares the cruel and despotic government.

In the banana cycle novels--Viento fuerte, El Papa Verde, Weekend en Guatemala, and Los ojos de los enterrados--Asturias uses little of surrealism. His intent in these novels is to unveil and clearly depict the ruthlessness of the foreign exploitation of Central America. An abundant use of surrealism, dependent on sensitive insight as to meaning, would perhaps subordinate the thesis to the style. Asturias does use some aspects of surrealism, such as unusual forces of nature and Indian black magic, but these are enhancers of, not distracters from, the central proposition that the resources of Central America, both human and natural, should not be so mercilessly exploited.

Asturias' most frequent use of surrealism is in his new myth and fantasy narrations---Hombres de maíz, Mulata de tal, and El Alhajadito. Here he finds surrealism a natural accompaniment to new and unusual tales.

Surrealism's ideals of releasing thought and expanding the mind are in harmony with the general imaginative characteristics of myth-making and fantasy invention, and through it Asturias searches for a more complete exposition of the ser americano.

The land and the people become the lifelines of Asturias' creativity in his search to express the ser americano. Surrealism serves as an effective vehicle in his analysis of the collective unconscious. Through his surrealist fantasies and dreams he discovers many of the atavistic cultural problems of his people. In seeking to define the emotional, psychological and material aspirations of his people he uses the multiple facets of surrealism to achieve a kaleidoscopic view of Guatemalan life. Dreams, extended imagination, and undefinable meanderings, all aspects inherent to surrealism, are used to create the montage of viewpoints on the essence of the ser americano. Often Asturias touches upon more universal truths and at times through surrealism his discoveries even lead to more universal questions. What are the eternal, the unchanged, the enduring aspects of human culture and life in general? Where does man fit into the whole of existence? To whom is each man ultimately responsible? Specifically in regard to Guatemala, Asturias chooses the freedom offered in surrealism to attempt to define a Guatemalan, and he finds that a Guatemalan is not a simple Indian or mestizo but rather he is a complex man with both national and psychological complexities as well as a spiritual nature. In El Señor Presidente, Papa Verde, Viento fuerte, Weekend en Guatemala, and Los ojos de los enterrados Asturias primarily deals with concrete national problems but in Mulata de tal, Hombres de maíz, and El Alhajadito he focuses more on the essence of man, his psycho-

logical self, and thus he reaches closer to defining the national Guatemalan spirit. Through surrealism, which allows the opening of the mind and freedom of expression, Asturias finds a means for searching out the quintessence of Guatemalan life.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Works of Asturias

The roman numeral following the dates of Asturias' works indicates the volume of the Obras completas in which the work is found.

Asturias, Miguel Angel. Obras completas, Tomo I, Tomo II, Tomo III. Prólogo de José María Souviron. Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1968.

El Alhajadito, III.

Hombres de maíz, I.

Leyendas de Guatemala, I.

Mulata de tal, III.

Los ojos de los enterrados, II.

El Papa verde, II.

El Señor Presidente, I.

Viento fuerte, II.

Weekend en Guatemala, III.

Asturias, Miguel Angel. El espejo de Lida Sal. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, S. A., 1967.

II. General Bibliography

Books.

Balakian, Anna. Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute. New York: Noonday Press, 1959.

Boodin, John Elof. God and Creation. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.

Brinton, Daniel G. American Hero-Myths: A Study in the Native Religions of the Western Continent. Philadelphia: H. C. Watts, and Co., 1882.

- Brinton, Daniel G. The Myths of the New World. 3rd edition. Philadelphia: David McKay, Publisher, 1906.
- Breton, André. Manifeste du Surréalisme (1924). Cited in Ramon Guthrie and George E. Piller, Prose and Poetry of Modern France. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964.
- Breton, André. Second Manifeste du Surréalisme (1929). Cited in Ramon Guthrie & George E. Piller, Prose and Poetry of Modern France. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964.
- Callan, Richard J. Miguel Angel Asturias. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970.
- Corvalán, Octavio. Modernismo y vanguardia, coordinados de la literatura hispanoamericana del siglo XX. New York: Las Américas Publishing Co., 1957.
- Delsey, Vera & de Jongh Osborne, Lilly. Four Keys to Guatemala. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Company, 1939.
- Forster, E. M. Aspects of the Novel. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1955.
- Gertel, Zunilda. La novela contemporánea. Buenos Aires: Nuevos Esquemas, 1970.
- Harss, Luis & Dohmann, Barbara. Into the Mainstream: Conversations with Latin American Writers. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- Jobs, Gertrude. Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore, and Symbols. New York: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1962.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung. Edited with Introduction by Violet Staub de Laszlo. New York: The Modern Library, 1959.
- Larousse. World Mythology. Edited by Piere Grimal. New York: Prometheuss Press, 1965.
- Lemâitre, Georges. From Cubism to Surrealism in French Literature. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947.
- Matthews, J. An Introduction to Surrealism. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965.
- Matthews, J. H. Surrealism and the Novel. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966.
- Middleton, John, ed. Magic, Witchcraft and Curing. Garden City, N. Y.: The Natural History Press, 1967.

- Moncrieff, Ascott R. Classic Myth and Legend. New York: W. H. Wise & Co., 1934.
- Murray, Alexander. Manuel of Mythology. Philadelphia: H. Altemus, 1897.
- Recinos, Adrian. The Annals of the Cakchiquels. Translated from the Cakchiquel Maya by Adrian Recinos and Delia Goetz. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953.
- Recinos, Adrian. Popol Vuh, The Sacred Book of the Quiché Maya. English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley from the translation of Adrian Recinos. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950.
- Richman, Irving Berdine. The Spanish Conquerors. In The Chronicles of America Series, edited by Allen Johnson. Vol. II. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919.
- Rudwin, Maximilian. The Devil in Legend and Literature. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1931.
- St. Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, St. Bonaventure. On the Eternity of the World (De Aeternitate Mundi). Translated from the Latin with introduction by Cyril Vollert, Lottie Kendzierski, & Paul Bryne. Milwaukee, Wisc.: Marquette University Press, 1964.
- Slochowen, Harry. Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics. Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1970.
- Spence, Lewis. Mexico and Peru. Boston: Nickerson, n.d.
- Spence, Lewis. Myths and Legends: Babylonia and Assyria. Boston: David D. Nickerson & Co., n.d.
- Spence, Lewis. The Popol Vuh, the Mythic and Heroic Sagas of the Kiches of Central America. London: D. Nutt, 1908.
- Stearn, E. W. & Stearn, A. E. The Effect of Smallpox on the Destiny of the Amerindian. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1945.
- Thompson, J. Eric S. The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization. 2nd edition, enlarged. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966.
- Verdugo, Iber. El carácter de la literatura hispanoamericana y la novelística de Miguel Angel Asturias. Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1968.

Articles.

- Asturias, Miguel Angel. "Miguel Angel Asturias on Literature," Arts in Society, V (1968), 352-355. [Interview]
- Auburn, Charles V. "Aperçu sur la structure et la signification de Mulata de tal," Europe, 473 (1968), 15-20.
- Bellini, Giuseppe. "La poesía de Miguel Angel Asturias," Revista Nacional de Cultura, 180 (1967), 125-127.
- Bertino, Cledy M. "Miguel Angel Asturias y el simbolismo mítico de Hombres de maíz," Universidad, 68 (1966), 233-244.
- Butor, Michel. "Le livre et les langues," the fourth in a series of unpublished lectures on Le livre aujourd'hui: situation et perspectives, given at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, April 12, 1971.
- Callan, Richard J. "Babylonia Mythology in El Señor Presidente," Hispania, 50 (1967), 417-424.
- Callan, Richard J. "Fecundity in Two Novels of Miguel Angel Asturias," Dissertation Abstracts, 26 (1965), 4653.
- Callan, Richard J. "The Quest Myth in Miguel Angel Asturias' Hombres de maíz," Hispanic Review, 36 (1968), 249-261.
- Callan, Richard J. "El tema de amor y de fertilidad en El Señor Presidente," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 72 (1967), 194-205.
- Campos, Jorge. "Las nuevas leyendas de Miguel Angel Asturias," Insula, 23 (Jan. 1968), 11, 14.
- Campos, Jorge. "Language, mito y realidad en Miguel Angel Asturias," Insula, 22 (Dec. 1967), 11, 13.
- Campos, Jorge. "Tanta realidad en tanto sueño de Miguel Angel Asturias," Insula, 16 (May 1961), 15.
- Cartwright, Rosalind Dymond. "Dreams, Reality, and Fantasy," in Jerome Fisher & Louis Breger, eds., The Meaning of Dreams: Recent Insights from the Laboratory. California Mental Health Research Symposium. Bureau of Research, California Department of Mental Hygiene, 1969.
- Corrales, Egea J. "Tres escritores hispanoamericanos en Paris: II, M. A. Asturias," Insula, 18 (1963), 12.

- Coulthard, G. R. "El mito indígena en la literatura hispanoamericana contemporánea," Cuadernos americanos, 156 (1968), 164-173.
- Cusak, Dymphna. "Miguel Angel Asturias: Nobel Prize Winner, 1967," Meajin, 27 (1968), 238-243.
- Darmangeat, Pierre. "Hommage à M. A. Asturias et Bartolomé de las Casas," Europe, 473 (1968), 6-10. [Hommage à Asturias]
- de Ory, Carlos Edmundo. "¿Surrealismo en España?," Cuadernos hispano-americanos, 86 (1972), 579-583.
- Donahue, Francis James. "Miguel Angel Asturias: Escritor Comprometido," Dissertation Abstracts, 26 (1965), 2208.
- Donahue, Francis James. "Miguel Angel Asturias: Protest in the Guatemalan Novel," Discourse, 10 (1967), 83-96.
- Donahue, Francis James. "Miguel Angel Asturias: su trayectoria literaria," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 62 (1965), 507-527.
- Foppa, Alaide. "Realidad e irrealidad en la obra de Miguel Angel Asturias," Cuadernos americanos, 156 (1968), 53-69.
- Franklin, Richard L. "Observations on El Señor Presidente by Miguel Angel Asturias," Hispania, XLIV (1961), 683-685.
- Gallaos, Jose Antonio. "Los dos ejes en la novelística de Miguel Angel Asturias," Cuadernos hispanoamericanos, 52 (1962), 126-139.
- Himelblau, Jack. "Miguel Angel Asturias' Guatemala: Artistic Evocations of a Past," Symposium, 22 (1968), 224-240.
- Lorand de Olazagasti, Adelaida. "Mulata de tal," Asomante, 24 (1968), 68-79.
- Lyon, Thomas E. "Miguel Angel Asturias: Timeless Fantasy. The 1967 Nobel Prize for Literature," Books Abroad, 42 (1968), 183-187.
- Maldonado Dennis, Manuel. "Miguel Angel Asturias: Novelista americano," Cuadernos americanos, 128 (1963), 250-258.
- Marra-Lopez, Jose R. "Oda y elegia de Centroamérica," Insula, 16 (1962), 3.
- May, Rollo. "The Function of Myths in Dreams and Psychoanalysis," in Dream Dynamics, edited by Jules H. Masserman. Science and Psychoanalysis, Vol. XIX. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1971.
- Mead, Robert G., Jr. "Miguel Angel Asturias and the Nobel Prize," Hispania, 51 (1968), 326-331.

- Mead, Robert G., Jr. "Miguel Angel Asturias y su premio nobel en los Estados Unidos," Cuadernos americanos, 159 (1968), 215-227.
- Morris, Ira. "Miguel Angel Asturias," Revue de Paris, 75 (fev. 1968), 99-104.
- Navarro, Carlos. "La hipotiposis del miedo en El Señor Presidente," Revista Iberoamericana, 32 (1966), 51-60.
- Navas Ruiz, Ricardo. "Tiempo y palabra en Miguel Angel Asturias," Quaderni Ibero-Americani, 29 (1963), 276-282.
- Noriega, Augusto Enrique. "El Premio Lenin de la Paz," in Colección "MOIRA", no. 2 (Separata de la revista "Guatemala Comercia," no. 19), September 1966.
- Peréz, Galo René. "Miguel Angel Asturias," Américas, 20 (Jan. 1968), 1-5.
- Saz, Agustin del. "Superrealismo y pesimismo de Miguel Angel Asturias," Los Papeles de Son Armadans, 6 (1957), 135-144.
- Selva, Mauricio de la. "Tres novelistas de nuestra américa," Cuadernos americanos, 14 (1961), 283-295.
- Valery, Paul. "Carta de Paul Valery a Francis de Miomandre," in Miguel Angel Asturias, Obras completas, Tomo I: Leyendas de Guatemala. Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1968.
- Van Praag-Chantaine, Jacqueline. "Miguel Angel Asturias, romancier social et visionnaire," Synthèses, 16 (1966), 103-110.
- Verdevoye, Paul. "Miguel Angel Asturias et la nouveau roman hispano-americaine," Europe, 473 (1968), pp. 10-15.
- Verzaconi, Ray Angelo. "Magical Realism in the Literary World of Miguel Angel Asturias," Dissertation Abstracts, 20 (1960), 2763.