71-17,053

SALINAS, Judy Kay Ferguson, 1945-
SOCIAL REFORM IN SELECTED WORKS OF CARLOS FUENTES. [Portions of Text in Spanish].

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1971
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/3003

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

SOCIAL REFORM IN SELECTED WORKS OF CARLOS FUENTES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

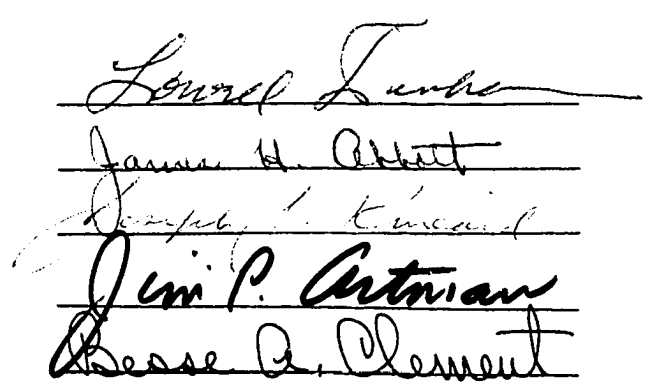
JUDY KAY FERGUSON SALINAS

Norman, Oklahoma

1970

SOCIAL REFORM IN SELECTED WORKS OF CARLOS FUENTES

APPROVED BY



DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Drs. James Abbott, Jim Paine Artman, Besse Clement and Joseph Kincaid for their helpful and constructive criticisms of this dissertation. This work, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Oklahoma, would not have been as thorough and concise as it is, were it not for the careful guidance and advice of these scholars.

I also want to particularly thank Dr. Lowell Dunham for his consistent encouragement, faith, inspiration and unceasing exuberance as a teacher and guide during my attendance at the University of Oklahoma and particularly in the writing of this dissertation. He, more than anyone else in the last six years, has been the determining factor in the continuance of my career. There are not sufficient words to thank him and to express the respect and affection that I hold for him.

Last of all, I wish to thank sincerely my dear friend, Dr. Mostafa Moini, for his helpful suggestions to this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	REVOLUTION: REMNANTS AND REWARDS	15
III.	THEMES OF SOCIAL REFORM	75
IV.	FUENTES, THE ARTIST-REFORMER-CRITIC-REVOLUTIONIST	160
V.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	192
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		195

SOCIAL REFORM IN SELECTED WORKS OF CARLOS FUENTES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The world in which we live is not the best of all possible worlds." is an old, over-worked, worn-out cliché, but it is both logical and truthful. Since its conception the world has been beleaguered with an endless series of profound seemingly spontaneous chaotic crises - environmental, social, political, economic, philosophical, psychological, etc. This volatile state of existence of the complex world must, at this point, be established within some kind of workable developmental framework, in order to examine and understand Carlos Fuentes' philosophy, ideology and literary method of stylistic presentation of contemporary Mexican society. With understanding, he analyzes and dialectically re-creates the evolutionary social development of contemporary Mexico and its people, concentrating on both its revolution and the future phases of social growth to be catalyzed, he believes, by another yet inevitable social revolution. An accurate though poetic summary of dialectical materialism and an understanding of the role of social revolution are attained

in referring to Heraclitus' words that "'the world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down.'"[1]

If we scientifically consider the physical development of the earth and its organic and inorganic components as an accidental agglomeration of events and forces - then we establish evolution, development and progress within both a metaphysical and an idealistic philosophical framework. If, however, we accept that there is an established, scientific pattern of progressive development of both the physical and social worlds - then we establish evolution, development and progress in the world within an historical, dialectical and materialistic philosophical frame of reference. The latter is the most valid and here pertinent both scientifically and rationally. Darwin's theory of evolution verifies and nature testifies to this dialectical framework with its continually interconnected and interdependent evolving patterns of organic life and development. Matter evolves gradually, with man, symbolized developmentally both physically and intellectually by his organ of thought - the brain, representing the highest level of development of matter. Nature has a history of growth and development, as does man as a part of that system. It is herein concluded that just as nature and matter evolve from

---

[1]Joseph Stalin, Dialectical and Historical Materialism, (New York: International Publishers, 1940), p. 15.

a quantitative to a qualitative stage, so does the society of man. His ideas, attitudes and philosophies of life are reflections of the material world in which he lives, and not vice versa. Nature and matter objectively exist independent of him and are thereby not reflections of his ideas or thoughts, but to the contrary, his consciousness reflects the conditions of his material life. In other words, "Everything depends on the conditions, time and place."[1] It is the examination of this material state of life and its effects on man within society which constitute the major theme in the works of Carlos Fuentes.

According to science, humanity as we know it today evolved from a most simple primary form of matter over a long period of millions of years. Keeping in mind, then, the frame of reference already established, we conclude that the consequent expanded society of human beings has yet as a collective organism or as an individual species to achieve the final evolutionary phase as implied in the opening statement - the best of all possible worlds. The developmental stages of society are comparable to the conception, gestation and subsequent birth of a child. The child, as the individual species, is the progressive evolving symbol of the collective organism. A series of natural pre-natal stages are advancing the collective organism toward that final developmental stage. In other words, the world is pregnant with an ever-changing, growing,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 12.

developing entity - a society which is moving upward and onward to embody a culmination of advancing, progressive changes alongside and as a reflection of the simultaneous evolution of the physical and economic developmental stages of the earth. That child is the society of mankind. It is composed of many separate yet related social units which undergo distinct, different levels and intensities of evolution both internally and externally just as is witnessed in the visual history of the evolution of man. The individual social units are the vital organs of the child and as its internal components are undergoing changes on minor yet vital levels.

Now, the world, in order to give birth to this child, is undergoing a period of gestation or pre-natal development during which quantitive changes of matter occur. Dialectics regards the process of development not as a simple, harmonious process of growth but rather as,

> . . . a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open, fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.[1]

As it occurs in the evolution of a species, then so does it occur with the evolution of society from the primitive state through the slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist stages. That is, a new evolutionary manifestation of organic matter

---

[1] Ibid., p. 8.

appears abruptly as a direct result of slow, imperceptible quantitative changes within the species. Both conform to laws of development.

During the pre-natal development of the child, certain signs of life are healthfully awaited - the kicks and movements of the child and even the labor or birth pains just prior to the birth itself. All these are signs of growth and life. The labor pains, since they inherently signal the approaching emergence of a new life, are not only awaited and expected, but hoped form endured, induced, and even joyously welcomed. In this context, then, as slow quantitative changes have passed into abrupt and rapid qualitative changes in accordance with a law of evolutionary development then, ". . . it is clear revolutions . . . are a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon."[1] As such, they are the most vital, strongest and most undeniable signs of and testimony to growth, change and new life. As such, they are the kicks of the new baby as it naturally and healthily undergoes gestation. As such, they are the labor pains prior to birth which serve a double purpose - evidence of the birth and catalytic agents sustaining the birth process itself. Marx accurately defines social revolutions: "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."[2] Just as there are tolerable and intolerable kicks and pains during gestation and birth, so there are different levels and intensities of social revolu-

---

[1] Ibid., p. 14. [2] Ibid., p. 10.

tions converging toward that birth - the birth of a better world.

As a fictional writer, Carlos Fuentes re-creates his society on its intimate formational levels, reviews the historical, economic and social conditions existent prior to the 1910 Revolution and considers the immediately resulting effects and developments in these social areas with a broad presentation of the present state of that social unit both indirectly in his fictional works and forthrightly in his non-fictional works, in accordance with the following summation of dialectical methodology.

> The dialectical method . . . holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena.[1]

As a writer Fuentes also regards the reading public and its collective ability or level of comprehension of his works along dialectical considerations, a conclusion based upon the following further summation of this methodology.

> The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., p. 44. [2] Ibid., p. 8.

Fuentes substantiates this viewpoint in responding to interview questions about this methodology and his opinion of that reading public in Mexico.

> A. . . . if you have a revolutionary view of society, you also have to have a revolutionary form to express it. . . .
> Q. However, a revolutionary form of literature is also a difficult form of literature, is it not?
> A. It is!
> Q. Then you are willing to forego immediate communication . . .
> A. Yes, yes! But it is a bit demagogic to believe that anyone writes for the people; this is a bit vague and demagogic. I write for a public in the hope that this public will be growing and growing all the time - which has been the case in Mexico. Here the formally more difficult novelists of the last five years are being understood by an ever larger public.[1]

In speaking of the entire Mexican public, he adds, "They are developing and they are more capable every day of understanding a revolutionary vision of society through a revolutionary form of expression - which is the only one that can contain such a view of the world."[2] He dialectically considers the public to be undergoing a process of becoming just as does the whole of society.

Like an internal vital organ of the child, the Mexican society historically manifested dramatic testimony to its progressive evolution as an entity. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 fomented within that country a seething internal and external impetus for progressive change within that social

---

[1]Lee Baxandall, "An Interview with Carlos Fuentes," Studies on the Left, III (August, 1962), p. 50.

[2]Ibid.

unit. Whether that impetus for change from a feudally based social, economic and political structure to a contemporary neo-capitalistic structure has been fully achieved and is desirable prominently figures as a major underlying thematic concern of Carlos Fuentes. It is essential to recognize with the perspective of more than half a century that historically this revolution did not successfully function as a healthy catalyst for a complete social evolution, for somehow as a directional force, it lost its pulsating strength of spontaneity and becoming dormant, stagnated the process leaving the society between feudalism and capitalism. A frustration, a sense of bewilderment, and a state of dormancy and deformation resulted. Many of the realistic goals and major functional reforms espoused by the revolutionary factions have not been fully effected to this day and it is this incomplete state resultant from failure which continually gnaws upon the mental and physical make-up of the Mexican - a state manifested in literature by such writers as Azuela, Guzmán, Romero, Gorostiza, Pax, Revueltas and Carlos Fuentes.

The original impetus and resulting effects of the Revolution upon all aspects of the Mexican social system preoccupy Fuentes, as others before him, if not consciously, unconsciously, for although a member of his ethnic group he is a singular creation of that group. As stated, his method is dialectical in that it presents the Mexican man's ideas and attitudes as a reflection of an inseparable result of his

society and its developmental stages. Always careful to distinguish the political or propagandistic writer from the creative writer in his works he answers the following question therein demonstrating his depiction of social development as a dialectical or interdependent and interconnected series of developing phenomena.

> Q. As a creative artist, how do you think a writer should approach social and political matters?
> A. I think that the creative writer should be creative when he is a writer, when he is a novelist or poet, and should be political when he is a political writer. The point is not to mix the two things. One approach is that of the creative writer who cannot be sectarian, or abstract or dogmatic; and another is the approach of the political writer who is defending a cause. One must not confuse these two things; one must be able to give both professions their due.
> Q. And yet you do incorporate important political and social content.
> A. Yes, yes, but as human life! I mean, I hope it is incarnated in people, the true lives of people, in a creative way. In addition, there is this point that one should consider: if you have a revolutionary view of society, you also have to have a revolutionary form to express it. . . .[1]

The social content manifested in the human lives of his fictional characters is representative of the dialectical development of the society in which those same characters live and is thereby, also, to be considered as an integral phenomenon of the development of nature.

Along with an understanding and presentation of the state of bewilderment and frustration resulting from the Revolution and because of its realistic shortcomings and failures, Fuentes demonstrates an intense concern for the

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

state of contemporary society now developing within Mexico. He questions the intrinsic merit for Mexico of the germinating neo-capitalism, for it is a political, economic and social level of existence which shouts imitation, and it is that sense of lack of authenticity which has plagued the Mexican philosophically since the sixteenth century when the mixture of two distinct cultural groups commenced. This philosophical problem of true origin-searching added to the present concern of the individual in relation to all of humanity, and not solely to the composite ramifications of his particular, limited social environment, is a blatant aspect of the works of contemporary Mexican authors and of those of Fuentes in particular. That Fuentes personally feels that capitalism is neither good nor desirable for Mexico and will unmistakably die away is evident in many of his political essays. The national and social phenomena predictive of that change are on display in his fictional novels La región más transparente, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, Las buenas conciencias and Cambio de piel.

We shall explore the major aspects of social criticism in selected fictional and non-fictional works of Carlos Fuentes in order first, in a dialectical manner to point out the multifaceted impact of the 1910 Revolution and the resulting neo-capitalistic economic and social structure upon contemporary Mexican society, as represented by characters in certain characters of the above novels; second, to delin-

eate the kinds of internal and external social reforms espoused by subtle suggestions in these same works; third, thereupon, to infer logically his function as an artist-reformer-critic-revolutionary by means of the demonstrative analytic criticisms outlined forthrightly in his political essays and sketched in nuances in his novels; and fourth, to conclude from the foregoing the elemental and general importance of the posture of the Mexican social unit or vital organ of the child of man's society as represented by the Mexican in relation to and as an integral part of the rest of humanity. Octavio Paz succinctly and most accurately reveals the latent myriad of problems and challenges confronting the contemporary Mexican man within his particular social unit and thereby the same challenges confronting the Mexican society in general, correspondingly emphasizing the broader and more extensive thematic consideration in Fuentes' works, that of the Mexican society's particular status as a result of its revolution and the subsequent bourgeoisie oriented and directed social system. Paz wrote: "'Por primera vez, somos contemporáneos de todos los hombres.'"[1]

Carlos Fuentes is a literary social reformer, budding revolutionist, and an undeniable artist of merit. As an intellectual who recognizes that he, an individual, is umbilically attached and yet pragmatically independent of the main

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, París: La revolución de mayo, (México: Era, 1968), p. 32.

body of his particular social core and that of humanity, Carlos Fuentes relates this Mexican concern of true origin and that of the individual in juxtaposition with the world society by means of a psychologically technical and intricate philosophical style.

It must be realistically conceded that as independent nations Mexico and Argentina are the most progressive and most rapidly developing political, social and economic countries in Spanish America. This position of technological advancement to which Mexico holds partial title is unequivocally reflected in the mushrooming cosmopolitan sophisticated writings of the authors of its literature. Carlos Fuentes is one of the most exemplary representatives of that attainment of literary maturation which inferentially coincides with simultaneous cultural maturation. If it is subsequently accepted, however, that as an independent political, cultural and economic unit Mexico did not fully evolve, and here is meant that the force of the Revolution and its total goals did not afford enough impetus to thrust it into socialism - the fifth developmental stage of evolving society, then, what is it that retards the evolutionary process from continuing within the existing social and economic system or keeps a new revolution from breaking out to thrust that social unit into a new qualitative change? An effort to determine the cause for this lack of development and resulting deformed state of stagnancy of the evolutionary process which has

resulted in the creation of a Frankenstein monster or the bourgeoisie, and a close panorama of its daily effects are manifested in the works of Fuentes. He depicts the Mexican society, catalyzed by the Revolution and initiated into the evolutionary process of successive change as a unified whole but, because the catalyst weakened, it has become an incompletely-formed and in fact deformed organ of the developing child. There is contemporarily added to this peculiar entity the present universal philosophical dilemma of existentialism brought about by the physical imposition of a foreign economic and social class system upon an already class-structured society. It logically follows that it is essential to recognize the status of that developing social unit within a universal framework and to ponder its potentialities and its shortcomings. Since this double theme is a major concern of many contemporary writers and of Fuentes in particular, who are concurrently reflective and refractive instruments and creative directors of the ideas of their society, it is important to understand with perspective the effects of the Revolution and the equally essential effects of modern ideological, philosophical and psychological trends upon the complexities of Mexican society.

The awareness and acknowledgment of reality healthfully summons the need for constant change so that growth may naturally proceed without structural imbalances which tend toward immutability. The acceptance of this task presupposes

effort for changes in all aspects of society or social reforms. Carlos Fuentes is one spokesman of his people who has chosen through literature to challenge for that acceptance of the need for healthy changes. An understanding of the two parisitic-like problems of the Mexican within the existing framework of his society confronted by universal problems and the ideas projected in this work afford the student of humanity a clarified perspective of the Mexican as a singular human entity in relation to himself. It follows that the function of this work has merit on two distinct levels which are vitally inseparable, that of the society and that of the individual.

CHAPTER II

REVOLUTION: REMNANTS AND REWARDS

The 1910 Mexican Revolution was part of that social phenomenon common to many feudalistically structured countries of the world in the early decades of this century, for it was the violent outburst of the socially and economically oppressed for the purpose of bettering their immediate and future daily existence. As a social force a revolution serves to catalyze or bring to a climax the growing tensions and struggles within the existing system primarily based upon the attempt of one particular group to secure and maintain the vital necessities of life for continued existence and survival. The history of the evolution of social systems demanded that these feudal countries pass into the next phase of the evolutionary process. Since this social movement was not an isolated phenomenon but rather interconnected and interdependent with all other natural social phenomena and if we continue to follow logically the dialectical methodology already espoused, then the Mexican Revolution must be evaluated within an historical, social context, and this Fuentes does. It should be reiterated, however, that he does not

stress nor make his works propagandistic, but rather merely re-creates the real, objective, material world and its conditions by means of his characters and the world in which they live, therein manifesting a rich and pertinent content of historical and social significance.

With regard to the Revolution itself, the fundamental proposition of the nucleus of Karl Marx's thought as expressed in the Communist Manifesto best summarizes dialectically the evolution of society along with the history of that development. This historical perspective of society corresponds to the changes and developmental processes of the productive forces of society and their relations, according to Marx. There are five main types of relation of production known to history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist.

> That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of mankind(since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles form a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class - the proletariat - cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class - the bourgeoisie - without at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions, and class struggles.[1]

---

[1]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto, (New York: International Publishers, 1962), p. 6.

The latter part of this statement will be analyzed at length in Chapters III and IV; never the less, this entire statement of purpose and historical theory of societal development must be remembered as a referential framework for the consideration of the individual works by Fuentes. It is the primary point of this proposition that the history of society is advanced by a series of struggles and conflicts between oppressed and ruling classes. We logically accept, then, that the complex significance of the Mexican Revolution, lies within an historical, dialectical frame of reference.

This evolutionary progression manifests inherently different forms and intensities of revolution just as does the child undergoing different kinds and intensities of gestation and birth. The midwife of the child's birth - force - may either perform her duties effectively with or without practical competence. Her preparation and level of competence naturally enhance the outcome of the birth in that it may be either successful or tragic as a result of her participation. Her knowledge would equally seem to ensure a healthy birth. However, this is not always the case, both because of and independent of her abilities and performance. So it was with the Mexican Revolution, for a revolution is only a catalyst, not a guarantee of successful change or birth nor that the baby - society - will live and live healthily. It is mandatory at this point to distinguish the similarities and differences between the Mexican Revolution

and others, for the obvious reason that Fuentes intimates and analyzes that social upheaval both fictionally and non-fictionally and, therefore, we must attempt an understanding of it in relation to the historical development of society as outlined from its primitive through its socialist evolutionary state.

The revolution in Mexico at the beginning of this century was the only means open to the masses to break the stranglehold of the ruling class. As Fuentes syas: "We all know it was the middle class that led the Revolution to triumph in Mexico."[1] This points out that the directive body of the post-revolutionary phase was not made up of peasants of the deprived oppressed masses. However, the peasants of this developing proletarian class formed the bulk of the fighting hordes struggling against the established aristocratic feudal social system initially in power under the direction of Porfirio Díaz. That this peasant class was not the directive force leading the Revolution to its partial triumph is understandable in the light of the unpreparedness of that class to cope with such problems of assuming power and in fact of foreign intervention and influence. The Mexican Partido Revolucionario Institucional which today literally controls all major political activity within

---

[1]Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, "Carlos Fuentes or the New Heresy," Into the Mainstream: Conversations with Latin-American Writers (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 284.

that country and is in fact the power representing the ruling class which developed during and after the Revolution, is an organization basically oriented to the same policy as was Díaz - that of maintaining itself in power. This, too, seems to be a law within the history of social development. It is a bourgeois organization and is thereby a mirror of the material conditions of the society which it reflects. Mexico does continue, however, to manifest continual active remnants of its Revolution. Fuentes relates this environment.

> If a typical neocapitalist country, such as France or the United States, can be governed without revolutionary rhetoric, Mexico hasn't reached that level yet. It isn't prosperous enough. When there's an abundance of goods to be distributed, you can forget about rhetoric. In Mexico the government has to justify itself with a series of myths. We all know it was the middle class that led the Revolution to triumph in Mexico. But this middle class presents itself wrapped in myths. In other words, the ruling class alias the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, alias the President of the Republic, equals: the nation, the Revolution, the glories of the past, the Aztecs, everything. So they have to promote a revolutionary rhetoric that strikes deep chords in Mexico, because it is at the source of political power.[1]

Today there remain remnants of that Revolution as well as of the pre-existing order. There were peasants who successfully led various factions of the revolutionary process, but they were unable to gain control of that movement and consequently install order and government oriented toward the masses rather than for the benefit of a minority. Therefore, Mexico today is a country economically based on capitalism although with certain socialist theoretical tendencies.

---

[1] Ibid.

The Mexican, Russian and Cuban Revolutions differ fundamentally from the revolution of the late 1700's in the United States. It is essential to emphasize these differences in order to fathom comprehensively the varying directions and social systems manifest in each. Equally pertinent in this consideration is the fact that the United States and Russia are the titular representatives of the most recently developed evolutionary social orders, capitalism and socialism respectively. Also essential is the fact that they symbolize for the Third World countries, of which Mexico is one, the principles of imperialism and revisionist socialism. To the Latin American countries Cuba symbolizes living testimony within their own hemisphere of a successful, collective, radical social evolutionary process. That is, Mexico in 1910 socially evolved from a feudal state to a neo-capitalist order and Cuba is the only Latin American country since then to accomplish a successful change of social order for the betterment of the masses. It must be assumed that the rest of Latin America is quantitatively slowly and imperceptibly growing and changing within an imprisoning labyrinth of feudalism and neo-capitalism. It is also essential to point out the similarities in these revolutions, for they form a part of that developmental process or phenomenon and as such are inter-related and interdependent. Recognizing and understanding historically these similarities and differences will subsequently serve as a means to comprehension of the literary

posture of many contemporary Latin American intellectuals and of the position of many active, political and social revolutionaries of the world. All these processes fit within the framework of the laws of development of social systems.

In the following interview excerpt, Fuentes outlines a comparison of the American Revolution with those of Mexico, Russia and Cuba, therein revealing a personal ideological understanding of the development and composite social and political state of the contemporary United States, as well as a dialectical analysis of social development.

> . . . we must have a very clear historical perspective in relation to the Cuban Revolution. One must not forget what revolutions are. The United States had a very peculiar revolution. Representative democracy had been practiced in the thirteen colonies during the whole colonial period. It was easy for the United States to adopt political democracy immediately after its independence, after its revolution. Nevertheless, there were several violent acts that one must not forget in considering the American Revolution. I believe that the pro-British press was suppressed completely in the United States; in the same way, the pro-Batista or pro-Yankee press has been suppressed in Cuba. I mean, once you have a revolution, you are either against the revolution or for the revolution. This is a concrete fact of historical and political life. The United States would not have tolerated a party that was trying to hitch the United States to England again. It didn't tolerate the pro-British press. There were 70,000 exiles from the United States - it had three million and a half inhabitants at that time - who all fled to Canada, which was the Miami of the American Revolution. Lands were expropriated, confiscated, and they were not paid for. But then let us also remember the French Revolution, the Soviet Revolution, the Mexican Revolution - political democracy as the United States understands it did not come immediately in any of these cases. It was absent particularly in a country like Cuba, which had no real practice of democracy, of traditional liberal democracy, in any sense at all. Cuba is a country that is fighting for its national independence, and everything is secondary to this paramount fact. In

> a country that is making a revolution and transforming its structure completely, formal democracy is out of the question for the moment. This is proved not only in Cuba but by all the underdeveloped countries, beginning with the Mexican revolution of 1910. You are fighting for your national independence and for concrete democracy: land reform, literacy, hospitals, housing. You have to have absolute unity of action, for you are fighting against very powerful people on the outside. You cannot permit yourself the little luxuries of primaries and elections. This will come later. Precisely because the revolution is going to transform the social and economical structure, it is going to create the conditions for political democracy. But it cannot put the cart before the horse; this has to be understood.[1]

Herein Fuentes points out natural similarities of all revolutions - the primary importance of national independence and the incorporation of certain dictatorial actions such as suppression and expropriation. Equally, he points out the essential fact of revolutions that a person is either for or against the forces of that revolution once it has begun. The same possibility occurs during the birth process. The mother may struggle against the birth of her child and therein make the birth difficult, painful and even dangerous and tragic, yet she cannot halt the process once it has begun - even the mother's death does not mean the birth will stop. The movement of society and its development is correspondingly parallel in that it is an upward and onward never a backward movement. The child cannot be born or have real life as we know it, outside of its mother's womb without a struggle against its mother, without a pushing and a forceful fighting

---

[1]Lee Baxandall, "An Interview with Carlos Fuentes," Studies on the Left, III (August, 1962), pp. 54-55.

for its own life. This is equally valid naturally and characteristically of social revolutions and their significance for social evolution.

Analyzing these revolutions helpfully affords a most vital means of comprehension of the different social orders and possible problems of their coming into being as a result of the systems evolved. For example, the bourgeoisie, itself a product of a long series of revolutions in the realm of production is characterized by Marx and Engels.

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind.[1]

This is logically supported in that the social reflection of the economic system or modes of production and exchange corresponds in its changes as the conditions of material life change. They are interconnected and interdependent. The tremendous, tragic germ of alienation far more dramatically dominant in this century than at any other time in the history of mankind is blatantly evident as a result of the order

---

[1]Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 12.

established by the bourgeoisie. It equally corresponds to the law of nature of constant change, movement and growth. The ramifications of alieantion of man from himself, from other men, and from his world is a result of the existing order of the capitalist or bourgeois economy. In Mexico, a search collectively and individually for a racial authenticity and identity has been in this century hampered and further deformed by a world-wide lack of unity of spirit and lack of independence and individuality. In changing from a feudal society to a bourgeois, capitalist country, Mexico, like many other Third World countries, has become a mere reflection or image of the United States and its impersonal society.

> The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connnections everywhere.
>
> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. . . . All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introudction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. . . .
>
> The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all nations, even the most barbarian, into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitu-

> late. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image.[1]

Therefore, Mexico - a hybrid country of Spaniards and Indians - is created in the image of the bourgeois civilization in order to survive. Its only other alternative is to initiate another total mass revolution, but this is neither feasible nor likely because there are still slow quantitative movements and progressive stages advancing the society toward another step in that process of social evolution, therefore, the time or level of development is not yet advanced enough. Mexico is eclipsed by capitalism and its primary representative, the United States.

The Mexican government acknowledges and fully accepts the Cuban government representation within its diplomatic system. Mexicans seemingly understand the massive will of the Cuban people to better their daily existence and the success which they have apparently had in accomplishing this. They seem to have assured enough food and basic commodities before unavailable to all. The United States and many Americans, on the other hand, do not understand the problems of communication originating because of the differences in economic and resulting social orders. Fuentes pointed out in his interview with Baxandall that with the exception of Mexico, every other Latin American country until Cuba with

---

[1]Ibid.

its own revolution had "no real practice of democracy, of traditional liberal democracy, in any sense at all."[1] This realization is replete with ideological, philosophical, psychological and social keys for the understanding of the social content contained in Fuentes' fictional novels. Fuentes continues his interpretation of why the United States has neither understood the motives nor the necessity for the Cuban revolution while scientifically implying the reasons for the seeming abyss of understanding and communication between the United States and the people of the Third World under-developed countries, including all of Latin America.

> . . . the United States has been a very particular sort of phenomenon, very much outside certain roads of history. I mean, philosophically the United States is still to a large measure based upon 17th and 18th century philosophers, isn't it? It is still a Lockeian country - not practically, but ideologically. Really, people still believe in John Locke, who, after all is a 17th century man. The United States never had to assimilate the criticism of European capitalism put forward by Hegel and Marx, for example. It has not gone through these critical processes. Thus it lacks the sufficient intellectual perspective for comprehending what goes on in the outside world. If you have not read Marx and understood Marx seriously, not seeing him as a witch or as a bogeyman, you cannot understand what is going on in the world. If you do not accept this with absolute tranquility and openness of mind - this fact that there is something called Karl Marx and his work and his influence, and its influence throughout the revolutionary world of today - you cannot understand what is going on in the world! You simply try to exorcise a witch, but you are not understanding. There is an intellectual provincialism in the United States with respect to the outside world, and there is an absolute lack of knowledge of the historical specificity of other countries. You cannot apply the

---

[1]Baxandall, "An Interview," p. 54.

> well-worn formulas of the United States to the underdeveloped world, simply because its whole historical development has been radically different from that of the United States.[1]

This point is of paramount importance and is implied on different levels yet subtly in his novels La región más transparente, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, Las buenas conciencias and Cambio de piel. It must indeed be conceded that the average American and many well-educated ones lack not only a general acquaintance with the works of Karl Marx and his theories of alienation and exploitation but also manifest a fathomless misconception of the ideology. But, it is mandatory, in analyzing Fuentes' works, to accept this basic tenet as truthful, for it is the axis of the entire statement - that which is going on in the world today cannot be understood without first researching the motives for and the developing subsequent ideologies behind the forces of change and in most of the world that force has been for over a century the ideas of Karl Marx. They have been and still are most powerful, compelling and dramatic contributors to those forces behind change in the economic and social evolution of the world.

Fuentes further relates the spiritual contrasts of the revolutions, suggesting possible and probable reasons for the distinctions.

> La revolución norteamericana fue la única de los tiempos modernos que no se instaló en la tragedia. En

---

[1] Ibid., p. 55.

> Francia, en Rusia, en China, en México, en Cuba las revoluciones significaron ruptura radical de un orden y afirmación, no sólo de un cambio material, sino de una transformación espiritual de los hombres. Las revoluciones no se hicieron para producir más y mejor, sino para salvar a los hombres de la enajenación. Y, sobre todo, para hacer coincidir la necesidad con la libertad.
>
> La grandeza de esos movimientos se debe a esta visión y a su encarnación trágica y común: en un momento dado, todos los hombres pudieron reconocerse en las vidas de algunos hombres. En los Estados Unidos, nada de esto ocurrió. Allí, no se trataba de romper un orden, sino de asegurar la continuidad de una democracia local que la metrópoli estaba limitando. Los revolucionarios norteamericanos no gritaron, "Libertad, igualdad y fraternidad", "Todo el poder para los soviets", "Tierra y libertad". Ellos no eran los hombres que nada tenían que perder sino sus cadenas. Al contrario, sólo dijeron que deseaban ganar un poco más y que no pagarían impuestos si no contaban con representación adecuada. No se trataba de renovar la visión humana, sino de obtener ciertas condiciones concretas que beneficiaran el desarrollo de las trece colonias. La revolución norteamericana careció de las sombras de un Robespierre o un Stalin; pero también de las iluminaciones de un Saint-Just o un Lenin.[1]

The Americans were not intent upon changing the modes of production or the material economy but rather in assuring that the already existing order could fully develop. A vital point explicit in the above is that the American Revolution was spearheaded and guided by the ruling class - not by a peasant, proletarian or even marginal middle-class. Equally explicit is a new element - that of tragedy, the tragedy resulting from the historical and economic fact that the Russians, Cubans, and Mexicans of their revolutions were not a spiritual part of the occidental capitalist revolutions of the because in simplistic terms, they were under-developed coun-

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, La nueva novela hispanoamericana, (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969), pp. 86-87.

tries. Fuentes continues.

> . . . la revolución norteamericana pudo ser ordenada y optimista porque sólo fue la revolución de una parte de la nación: la clase dirigente, productora, expansionista, de raza blanca. La presencia de los negros en la revolución de independencia la hubiese convertido, posiblemente, en una empresa de otro significado. En realidad, la primera revolución norteamericana fue un aplazamiento de la revolución total, cuya primera batalla se libró hace cien años en la guerra de secesión. La segunda fase se inicia ahora, ante nuestras miradas(lo digo en sentido estricto: los asesinatos políticos y los motines callejeros son el alimento cotidiano de la <u>live television</u>).[1]

Consequently, if his premise of a second phase of actual revolution in the context of those of China, Mexico, Russia and Cuba is correct and a world-wide revolutionary movement is now beginning then he focuses upon the origin of the motives of the social unrest and protest rampant within the world today. It is equally inherent in the above that the capitalistic dream society of consumers is just as polarized with regard to identity as is the Mexican society of the Aztec and Spanish ancestry economically and socially overshadowed by a facade of neo-capitalistic bourgeois aspirations. Marx offers a concrete dialectical reason for this unrest, particularly applicable to the United States and Mexico, and as a result reasons for the growing problems within a country such as Mexico which is made in the image of the bourgeois nation and naturally plagued with the problems of the latter.

An instance in which the relations of production do

---

[1]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 87.

> not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which is to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.
> . . . . . .
> . . . having developed productive forces to a tremendous extent, capitalism has become enmeshed in contradictions which it is unable to solve. . . .
>
> These irreconcilable contradictions . . . make themselves felt in periodical crises of overproduction, when the capitalists, . . . are compelled to burn products, destroy manufactured goods, suspend production, and destroy productive forces at a time when millions of people are forced to suffer unemployment and starvation, not because there are not enough goods, but because there is an overproduction of goods.
>
> This means that capitalism is pregnant with revolution, whose mission it is to replace the existing capitalist ownership of the means of production by socialist ownership.
>
> This means that the main feature of the capitalist system is a most acute class struggle between the exploiters and the exploited.[1]

Stalin quotes Marx in his book A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy in giving a summary of the above situation.

> The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or - what is but a legal expression for the same thing - with the property relations within which

---

[1]Stalin, Materialism, pp. 30-38.

> they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.[1]

Mexico, like other neo-capitalist societies, experiences the problems inherent within the capitalist economic order, yet it suffers even more because it is categorically a barbarian or less technologically-developed country, dependent on the world-wide bourgeois system of economy.

It is propitious at this point to affirm that Fuentes never makes a value judgment as to whether he considers socialism or capitalism right or wrong, rather he follows dialectical methodology and accepts socialism as an evolutionary phase or stage more advanced than capitalism. He does, however, unmistakably state his belief that the socialist system is far closer materially and ideologically to fulfilling mankind's needs of land, liberty, equality and dignity than is or ever will be the capitalist order. As will be shortly investigated, Fuentes puts capitalism on trial in Latin America and finds it scientifically and logically guilty on a grand scale of total failure to better the world for the Latin American citizen. He does, however, not see socialism as any panacea to many problems, but rather equally condemns socialism without liberty and continual open self-criticism as being just as stifling and fatal to

---

[1]Ibid., p. 45.

further social evolution as capitalism. With regard to Mexico in particular, for he does always single out Cuba and Mexico from the other Latin American countries, he takes the position that Mexico is a special case with regard to future revolutions in Latin America. In his interview with Lee Baxandall he talks of the role of revolution in Mexico.

> Mexico has been the only country in Latin America, except Cuba(which has made another type of revolution), that has had a revolution capable of destroying the feudal structure, which is the great historical backwash in all Latin American countries. Mexico really destroyed the land-tenure system of feudalism; it destroyed the caste army; it expropriated land holdings; it expropriated oil and all these things - but for the purpose of creating a middle-class and bourgeoisie within a capitalist structure.
> Q. Nevertheless the revolution was successful to the extent that there is no real likelihood, as you view it, that another revolution could take place here?
> A. I think there is a possibility of going from the bourgeois structure we have now to forms of socialism, through evolution. I think Mexico is the only country in Latin America - I am putting Cuba apart always - that can evolve from its present situation towards higher forms of economic, social and cultural life. This is because it has broken the tremendously rigid feudal structure inherited from Spain, from the Spanish colony. All other countries in Latin America will have to break it violently, because the feudal lords do not renounce their privileges gratuitously. They've had them for 400 years. . . .
> Now, as Mexico has violently destroyed the feudal structure, it is easier for Mexico to evolve, and it will have to evolve, for the fact is that the present system is not sufficient for the economic needs of the country . . . . the present system of a mixed economy, with the emphasis put upon free enterprise, is not sufficient to feed the people of Mexico, let alone to assure the progress of a country where one million people are born a year and 35,000 jobs have to be created yearly.[1]

Therefore, Mexico, as Fuentes sees it, possesses internally only a potentiality for evolving without another violent

---

[1]Baxandall, "An Interview," pp. 52-53.

social revolution, mandatory for all other Latin American countries, with the exception of Cuba, in order to break their semi-feudal capitalist bonds and advance to the socialist order. That if the present economic system does not change becoming able to support its people, a revolution is inevitable even in Mexico, is clearly established. Equally, Fuentes emphasizes in the above one aspect of the Mexican revolutionary force which debilitated its potency as a catalytic agent and slowed down or stagnated the full social development. The social reforms effected after the fighting of the revolution itself, such as the expropriation of the oil companies, were "for the purpose of creating a middle-class and bourgeoisie within a capitalist structure."[1] In the following excerpt, he predicts for Mexico the clear and present possibility of another revolution if its economic system cannot grow proportionately as its masses do. As he suggests, perhaps Mexico can naturally evolve toward socialism and thereby avoid upheaval; however, there is a component of that structure, a chemical deterrent of sorts to that full social evolution, which maintains the country or vital organ in a semi-developed, deformed stage - that agent is the bourgeoisie and middle-class. Fuentes adds: "The Mexican Revolution has created a Frankenstein monster - its own bourgeois class. The bourgeois class is not interested in foregoing anything; it is interested only in socking away its money in Swiss banks."[2] Can that class effectively and real-

---

[1]Ibid., p. 53. [2]Ibid.

istically make a decision to change the economy based solely upon its own impetus because it realizes that increasingly the majority of the people will not have the minimal, fundamental necessities of life? Fuentes says they are not the least bit interested, but they must become interested and rapidly because as he indicated, the system is not sufficient to support its growth and needs. But, what if the economy cannot possibly develop proportionately as to the basic needs of the people; will not there have to be another revolution in Mexico of the magnitude or greater than the first, in order to effect all the reforms not carried out as a result of the first revolution? Fuentes answers this hypothetical question.

> I think theoretically that there are ways for Mexico to evolve peacefully from capitalism towards socialism. This is what I think - which does not exclude the possibility of revolution! It is possible for Mexico to do this. Now, if Mexico does not have a rate of development sufficient to feed, clothe and give work to the millions of Mexicans who are born every decade, then there will be a violent explosion![1]

Is there no alternative other than total annihilation of the bourgeoisie and its class interests, which is what a revolution would necessarily accomplish? Cannot that class somehow be persuaded and convinced by the government perhaps to increase the rate of socialist measures? Fuentes ponders this proposition.

> . . . the problem of the Mexican government, because it is conscious of this, is to promote some socialist

---

[1]Ibid.

> measures capable of developing the country at a much faster rate than it is developing, or to have to sacrifice its own power. This is what the government itself realizes and the bourgeoisie does not realize. This is the difference between the Mexican government and the bourgeoisie, to come back to the contradictions, and this explains a lot of the contradictions in Mexico, doesn't it? But of course, the government by itself will not makes a revolution from above. Such a movement will depend to a large extent upon the capability of the left to organize itself and to act politically.[1]

Summarily, Fuentes puts a reserved and doubting faith in the left of center groups within Mexico to mobilize while part of the existing system in order to alter and evolve the system more rapidly, healthfully, and effectively. One primary step of this left, he affirms, will be to rid itself of several comfortable illusions.

> The problem in Mexico is that the left has to lose many of its illusions, for example, that the government by itself will enact measures capable of carrying progress forward in our country. It depends in large measure upon the capability of the left in organizing itself, from the bottom up. This is the solution, I think, for the left in Mexico.[2]

The latent instability of the government of Mexico will be realized if it cannot manage to control development of the economy effectively and rapidly enough to provide for the vital necessities of life for its people. So far, however, Mexico or more specifically the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, has progressed rapidly enough in its economic output to avoid widespread mass social upheaval and protest because of its ability to maintain an equilibrium. However,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 54. [2]Ibid.

it is fraught with internal and external contradictions.

What is the basis of those contradictions?

> One must go back into the nature of the Mexican revolution, which was a typical democratic bourgeois revolution - not a socialist revolution - but which occurred in an underdeveloped country. I think the whole contradiction stems from this. On the one hand, being the revolution of an underdeveloped country, it had to have a foreign policy(and also an internal policy in relation to foreign interests) which was limitative of these interests. The bourgeois structure in Mexico could not have been created without the expropriation of foreign land holdings, without the expropriation of oil resources(done by Cárdenas in 1938). And . . . all these facts led to very violent opposition between the revolutionary Mexican government and the government of the United States, as well as of Britain, Holland and other captalistic countries. This, as I say, was inevitable for the furthering of the bourgeoisie itself in Mexico. It needed an agrarian reform so as to have an internal market and to liberate the peasants. It needed the expropriation of the oil holdings so as to channel oil into the industrialization of the country, not for exportation, etcetera. But at the same time it has been a bourgeois revolution, and once the bourgeoisie has been created, it has searched for its natural international alliances and has forgotten many of the original claims of the peasants and workers in Mexico. So there is this contradiction between the foreign policy followed by a government that is more or less center-left(up to now - I do not know how long it can go on being center-left), and the bourgeoisie outside the government, which is absolutely pro-capitalistic, pro-United States. So the foreign policy of the present government, which is the "left" within the official revolution, more or less, follows this line, knowing that it is popular, and that it is defending itself now and in the future. Thus it defends itself by defending Cuba. In this way too, it wins popular support. But at the same time, there is an ever-increasing force of the bourgeois right in Mexico.[1]

Are these bourgeoisie interests such that the government cannot afford to attach them and make the necessary changes so that the new evolutionary phase can be instigated more rapidly?

---

[1]Ibid., p. 51.

> It cannot! Naturally, a center government depends upon equilibrium, it wants to keep everybody happy. I don't know how long this can go on, after all, precisely because this has been a democratic bourgeois revolution, there is class strife and class conflict.[1]

Fuentes unequivocally considers the Mexican Revolution as a less than completely successful force for it evolved within a capitalist structure and created a middle-class and a bourgeoisie, demanding continual nourishment of its private interests or its own brand of sacrificial victims from within the society itself, quite like the Frankenstein monster it is labeled by Fuentes. Like a cancerous growth mutating and deforming healthy cells in the body it impedes development of the vital organ and will lead to severe and possibly irreparable damage. The key to the failure of the revolutionary ideals for bettering the social and material conditions for the masses rests in the economic and corresponding social structure which developed - a neo-capitalistic structure.

Fuentes has affirmed in his statements that another revolution is just as likely in Mexico as in the rest of the world unless the material conditions of the society are sufficiently improved as to better the daily level of subsistence for the majority of the people. There is a worldwide revolutionary movement, universal in scope and growing in impetus, as evidenced in the following excerpts from the magazine which he wrote about the Paris revolution of 1968.

---

[1]Ibid., p. 52.

> Pienso en mí mismo, en mis amigos españoles y latinoamericanos, en todos los que desde un principio comprendimos que esta no era una revolución privativa de Francia, sino un movimiento nuestro, sin nacionalidad y sin fronteras.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Por primera vez, somos contemporáneos de todos los hombres", escribió un día Octavio Paz. Secularmente enajenados y ex-céntricos por y ante la imagen universal del Hombre blanco, burgués, cristiano, capitalista, y racional, hoy nos identificamos con los hombres que, desde el antiguo centro, se proclaman tan ex-céntricos y enajenados como nosotros y en nosotros se reconocen. Dios murió, y con él su privilegiada Criatura occidental. El Hombre ha muerto, pero los hombres están bien vivos. La excentricidad radical - la revolución - es hoy la única universalidad concebible. . . .
>
> La revolución contra la burguesía y la revolución dentro de la revolución convergen en la afirmación de la autogestión del trabajo y de la producción por los hombres directamente interesados.
>
> De esta manera, la nueva revolución es por fuerza internacional. Horizontalmente en el mundo inudstrializado: la marea del cambio culminará en dos ciudadelas, Washington y Moscú. Verticalmente, en el mundo no-industrializado: esta rebelión culmina en Washington y allí entronca con la primera.
>
> Nosotros, los latinoamericanos, ligados a Francia por tantos motivos del corazón y de la cabeza, debemos felicitarnos de que hayan sido los estudiantes, intelectuales y obreros franceses los primeros actores de esta gran transformación. A través de Francia, podemos comprender y ser comprendidos.
>
> Esta revolución también es la nuestra.
>
> Es sólo el comienzo.
>
> La lucha continúa[1]

The scope of this world-wide revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants to gain control of their own means of production directly corresponds to Marx's theory of the historical development of society - a dialectical and historical materialistic concept of the universe. The above also empha-

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, París: La revolución de mayo, (París: Era, 1968), p. 32.

sizes the importance of understanding the contrasts of the revolutionary movements in Russia and in the United States as outlined. The world revolution is anti-capitalist, anti-bourgeoisie and all nations, not only those of the Third World, are involved.

Now that the historical and philosophical background as Fuentes sees it has been clearly presented, a continuity of character presentation within his works can be inferred based upon his guidelines.

The feudal structures in Mexico and Russia were demolished by their revolutions whereas the American Revolution merely freed the already established economic and social system to develop on a greater, unfettered scale. For reasons of vested interests the United States became involved in both these revolutions, but because of its geographic proximity to Mexico and the fact that during the Russian Revolution the United States was directly involved in a world war, it is conceivably understandable that military intervention was historically though not morally more logical in Mexico than in distant Russia. In the latter, as the feudal structure was totally demolished, the instruments of production became the property of the masses and they and the modes of production lay within the realm of control and ownership of the masses for which the production was intended. The economic and social foundation of centuries was leveled whereas in Mexico they were merely converted into another similar structural order,

although to be sure better than the previous order. That feudal structure in Mexico as in Russia was destroyed according to Fuentes at least in the cities, yet he states that it persists in a different deformed state or under an artificial economic mask. That is, the worker under capitalism is still much like the feudal serf. He is no longer owned by one person nor is his labor really owned as was the serf's. Yet, he lives mid-way between two systems.

> The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production - the wage labourers, whom the cpaitalist can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of means of production and, in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labour power to the capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation. Alongside of capitalist property in the means of production, we find, at first on a wide scale, private property of the peasants and handicraftsmen no longer being serfs, and their private property being based on personal labour. In place of the handicraft workshops and manufactories there appear huge mills and factories equipped with machinery. In place of the manorial estates tilled by the primitive implements of production of the peasant, there now appear large capitalist farms run on scientific lines and supplied with agricultural machinery.[1]

So, in this context, Mexico's labor force is basically still inextricably bound fundamentally to feudalism and its system of ownership, as intimated by Fuentes in the following.

> A medio camino entre el feudalismo y la sociedad de consumo, en ambos casos seguimos viviendo en el colonialismo: si no siempre somos sociedades atrasadas, en todos los casos somos sociedades deformadas.[2]

---

[1]Stalin, Materialism, pp. 36-37.

[2]Fuentes, La nueva novela hispanoamericana, (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969), p. 96.

In his essay "The Argument of Latin America" Fuentes summarizes even more clearly the economic and social history of Mexico both prior to and resultant from the Revolution. It is noteworthy that he implies that the perpetuation of a semifeudal political and economic structure - a deformed one - has hobbled Mexican internal and international development. The position for Mexico which Fuentes concludes in this essay is reflected generally in his novels La región más transparente, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, and Las buenas conciencias and in particular in certain characters of these novels. A further detailed composite of how Fuentes views the failure of the Revolution to catalyze the evolutionary process and why he believes it was predisposed to this failure, is further helpful to a logical consideration of what these character prototypes represent in these novels. Speaking of Latin America in general he points out the duality of the deformed society.

> . . . we were founded as an appendix of the falling feudal order of the Middle Ages; we inherited its obsolete structures, absorbed its vices, and converted them into institutions on the outer rim of the revolution in the modern world. . . . When we obtained political independence; the structure did not change.[1]

This is a blueprint of the economic, political and social structure of Mexico existent before political independence from Spain. Fuentes continues summarizing the ensuing econom-

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "The Argument of Latin America: Words for the North Americans," Whither Latin America?, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963), p. 10.

ic developments after independence was achieved.

> During the nineteenth century, economic liberalism--laissez faire--was superimposed on the feudal structure in Latin America. Side by side with the landlord class of the colonial period, a new class of entrepreneurs sprang up to deal in the business of exploitation. Those capitalists turned us into single-product countries, exporters of raw materials to the occidental marketplace.[1]

This primary position as a producer of raw materials, according to Fuentes, stagnated both Mexican economic development in particular and Latin American growth in general yet on a larger scale. Like other Latin American countries, Mexico rapidly became dependent upon the United States and when that country's economic system dissolved during the 1930's, Mexico as a satellite economy suffered greatly, as has been dialectically outlined in Stalin's Dialectical and Historical Materialism. Fuentes continues.

> In order to overcome the effects of economic liberalism, many Latin American countries entered another phase after 1930: protectionist capitalism, with the aim of encouraging the internal industrialization of Latin America and making it less dependent on the export of raw materials. But this naive and liberal capitalism was also superimposed on the feudal structure without destroying it. It abandoned to their fate the great masses of peasants and workers, and reserved progress for an urban minority. It ended by crystallizing a dual society in Latin America: the modern capitalistic society of cities and the feudal society of the countryside. The minority society became richer at every turn, face-to-face with a majority society becoming more miserable at every turn. In the last few years, the abyss between the two has done nothing but grow. This is why capitalism has not succeeded in solving the problems in Latin America. It has been unable to destroy the legacy of feudalism. It has been unable to promote true collective development in Latin America.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., p. 11. [2] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

The existence of a middle-class has done nothing to either reduce that abyss or function to help the lot of the majority society. Capitalism has been put on trial and found guilty of failure. The deformed society or vital organ of the child cannot healthily function; it can only infect and retard development of the child. In relation to these economic crises inherently far more fatal and devastating for the under-developed or Third World countries, the bourgeoisie is seen to be the directing force.

> Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on trial, each time more threatingly. . . . Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. . . .
>
> In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, . . . the modern working class . . . find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.[1]

In La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz Carlos Fuentes offers a thorough panoramic view of that

---

[1]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto, (New York: International Publishers, 1962), pp. 14-15.

"modern capitalistic society of cities", that working class and that "minority society."

Another vital cultural reason for the thwarted and deforming revolutionary movement in Mexico is its people's dual heritage coupled with their search for authenticity or origin. This collective psychological quest and divisiveness characteristic of an entire society is very simply reflected in Fuentes' summation statement about the Latin American economy. "This is what Latin America is: a collapsed feudal castle with a cardboard capitalistic facade."[1] He stylistically utilizes in his description of the Mexican economic system that tendency common to many of his contemporaries, such as Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz, to conceptualize the structural foundations of his country and the people within it as living an existence which is not natural to their unique individuality. Herein is realized that frustrated sense of bewilderment resultant from adhering to a life style wich is felt to be imposed externally from another culture and re-enforced internally by those natives who judge that that foreign system offers a panacean solution for progress within their country. Fuentes, therefore, views the Mexican economy as dependent upon, subordinate to, and regulated by the United States economy. It is important to consider how Fuentes feels that the average Mexican responds to this position as it affects

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "The Argument of Latin America," p. 12.

every aspect of the latter's daily life. He says.

> The Mexican suspects and fears a tendency in the American to impose his own values on foreign peoples. Many years ago America called this tendency Manifest Destiny, and it resulted in the loss of half our territory to the invading armies of Scott and Taylor in what gringos call the Mexican War and the Mexicans the Yankee Invasion, an invasion never forgotten by our people. . . .
>
> Perhaps the greatest mistake Americans tend to make is the innocent assumption that their values, because they have succeeded in the United States, are naturally universal and should be accepted willy-nilly by the less fortunate peoples in Mexico and Latin America. The American feels hurt when these values are rejected or when, once accepted, they fail.[1]

Just as the Mexican Revolution differed intrinsically from the American Revolution, so does the Mexican culture differ from that of the United States; and it is precisely the historic fact of that Revolution which more drastically impedes the two nations from an understanding of each other with mutual respect. Fuentes adds:

> Revolution is another key word that separates the Mexican and American characters. The highlights of Mexican history -- 1810, Independence; 1857, Reform; 1910, Revolution -- have been bloody, courageous, impatient struggles to destroy the feudal bondage that the gringo has never known. It has been more than that, certainly. It has meant the Mexican's only way to reach the threshold of modernity.[2]

Mexico, however, manifests paramount contradictions because it was a democratic, bourgeois revolution and not a socialist one and because it occurred in an under-developed country. Fuentes follows with a statement of how he personally visual-

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "Party of One," Holiday, October, 1962, pp. 17-19.

[2]Ibid.

izes the Mexican Revolution.

> The Mexican Revolution was an unleashing of dormant energies, a joyful recognition of being; a vast surge from anonymity by a humiliated people who for the first time could name themselves, discover themselves and come into possession of their land, their sounds, their colors. Broken, enslaved, uprooted by the Spanish Conquest; frozen in their feudal bondage by an "independence" that separated them from Spain but not from the colonial structures of society; humiliated by foreign conquest and exaction that was disguised by transplanted imitations of American democracy, French philosophy and British economics, the people of Mexico had tohave a revolution to begin the long, hard road toward self-identification.[1]

Now that the historical setting prevalent at the beginning of the continuum of the Revolution has been examined thoroughly and through the words of Fuentes himself, a look at the contemporary end of that same continuum is necessary.

> . . . during the long dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) a new feudalism was erected, now managed by a Díaz "aristocracy" and foreign landholders. While Díaz invited foreign investors to develop agriculture, mining, railways, and industry, he denied any responsibility for the welfare of workers; the result was that Mexico became an enormous forced-labor camp. . . . Only under President López Mateos, during the last six years, has a balance of sorts been achieved: Mexican agrarian reform is now entering a second and most important stage in which the peasants are beginning to be given the material means to produce more, through credit, seeds, machinery, permanent prizes and schools.[2]

So, all facets of the revolutionary goals were not forgotten and replaced completely by personal desire for power, however, many of the goals such as agrarian reform have been betrayed.

---

[1]Ibid.

[2]Carlos Fuentes, "A Life," The New York Review of Books, June 25, 1964, p. 3.

The Revolution did not fully develop, mature, and dissolve; rather, it pulsates mildly within the thoughts of the contemporary Mexican. The vital organ is not yet capable of performing its individual functions properly to sustain both itself and the inter-related necessities of the whole child. Perhaps on its own it may continue to evolve further, yet this is uncertain, particularly because it is a deformed society. Fuentes says:

> It was Chou En-Lai who said (and I quote from memory): "Once an agrarian reform is applied, even a mild one, the armed uprising of the peasantry becomes very difficult."[1]

Fuentes realizes as indicated from the above that the reforms effected since the Revolution are tepid medicants for an internal malady which continues to plague modern Mexican society - a rapidly advancing technological urban society coexisting with a rural hybrid of feudal structures. Both structures thrive and grow based on mass human exploitation. That he concedes that this infirmity is fed by external infection from the United States especially, is equally recognized. Fuentes has stated that Mexico might naturally evolve toward socialism provided the left organizations within the society can effect the necessary changes rapidly enough. If they cannot raise the level of material development in proportion to the growing needs - another revolution is inevitable. What does Fuentes consider the future to hold for Mexico both with and without further social revolutions?

---

[1] Ibid.

> La política mundial del poder y la división de esferas de influencia constituye un obstáculo enorme para nuevas revoluciones sociales; una segunda Cuba rompería el equilibrio mundial del poder y sería aplastada activamente por los Estados Unidos y abandonada pasivamente por la Unión Soviética. El camino kennedysta de la reforma burguesa ha fracasado porque, ingenuo e hipócrita a la vez, no podía suscribir la transformación de las estructuras más anacrónicas y más opresivas de América Latina sin atentar contra los tradicionales intereses del imperialismo en nuestras tierras. Quizás el triste futuro inmediato de América Latina sea el populismo fascista, la dictadura de estirpe peronista capaz de realizar algunas reformas a cambio de la supresión del impulso revolucionario y de la libertad pública.[1]

These opinions with regard to the expansive impact of the 1910 Revolution appear embodied in certain protagonists of three of Fuentes' novels. However, it must be reiterated that his personal political beliefs never openly appear in his fictional literary works; his dialectical methodology and materialistic interpretation of the world, however, is clearly evident.

> En La región más transparente la última media centuria de la vida mexicana, tan ligada a la Revolución, es narrada en las vidas de numerosos personajes quienes, en efecto, son arquetipos mexicanos. A pesar de sus propias convicciones políticas, Fuentes no es partidario de ningún personaje suyo (ni de ningún grupo de personajes), sino que se interesa en mostrar el egoismo, el materialismo, y la soledad que él cree ser tan prevalecientes entre sus compatriotas.[2]

This points out Fuentes' ability to disassociate his creative works from any personal axes to grind that he might have, for such tendencies produce a biased mosaic of existing conditions

---

[1]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 96.

[2]Robert G. Mead, Jr., "Carlos Fuentes, Airado Novelista Mexicano," Hispania, L (May, 1967), p. 231.

and thereby are invalid. He succinctly summarizes his position as a Latin American writer and intellectual who is both a creative and a political writer.

> I think that the creative writer should be creative when he is a writer, when he is a novelist or poet, and should be political when he is a political writer. The point is not to mix the two things. One approach is that of the creative writer, who cannot be sectarian, or abstract or dogmatic; and another is the approach of the political writer who is defending a cause. One must not confuse these two things; one must be able to give both of these professions their due.[1]

Federico Robles and Manuel Zamacona of La región más transparente, Jaime Ceballos and Juan Lorenzo of Las buenas conciencias, and Artemio Cruz of La muerte de Artemio Cruz are all Mexican archetypes to whom Fuentes gives life in these three novels. There are remarkable similarities in the philosophies of life of Robles, Cruz and Ceballos as there are between Manuel Zamacona and Jaime Ceballos. All these characters are enveloped in an inescapable reality minutely molded directly and indirectly by the Revolution, although Ceballos and Zamacona did not participate in the conflict. Each speaks for himself and his class.

La región más transparente, Fuentes' first novel, published in 1958, exposes the reader to the vast world of Mexico in the early 1950's. Harss says: "The desperate search for the 'true face' of Mexico is the subject of the book. The various points of view propounded by the different

---

[1]Baxandall, "An Interview," pp. 49-50.

characters are its dialectical poles."[1] Robert G. Mead expands this viewpoint in the next passage.

> La región más transparente es un libro multifacético: una novela panorámica de la gran metrópoli mexicana . . . es un análisis minuciosos, espiritual y poético, de la sociedad mexicana desde sus niveles más bajos hasta los más altos; es un testimonio apasionado de la honda desilusión de Fuentes ante lo que él considera ser la traición de los ideales de la Revolución Mexicana de 1910; es una exposición de la dualidad básica del carácter indígena, irremediablemente destruido, y del esfuerzo de encontrar la manera en que pueda desenvolverse de acuerdo con la cultura occidental, pero sin perder su propia identidad.[2]

Fuentes describes what he tried to achieve and present in this novel in the following, then further clarifies the thematic scope of the work.

> Intenté hacer una síntesis del presente mexicano: conflictos, aspiraciones, rencores. . . . Si, desde cierto punto de vista, La región más transparente es la historia del surgimiento de la burguesía mexicana, producto de la Revolución de 1910, es también una constancia del persistente influjo del México antiguo, solar y mágico, que ilumina con una interrogante perpetua al México moderno . . .
>
> El mundo de La región más transparente es el de la gran burguesía mexicana que maneja la política, los negocios, la prensa y las conciencias; la novela abarca el período histórico de la Revolución Mexicana de 1910 a nuestros días. La revolución burguesa, nacionalista y antifeudal de México creó las condiciones de una sociedad moderna y dió origen a esa burguesía. Pero la burguesía mexicana es la de un país subdesarrollado, y ha debido depender cada vez más del capitalismo más poderoso, el norteamericano.[3]

---

[1]Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, pp. 290-91.

[2]Robert G. Mead, Jr., "Carlos Fuentes, Airado Novelista Mexicana," Hispania, L (May, 1967), p. 231.

[3]Claude Couffon, "Carlos Fuentes y la novela mexicana," Cuadernos Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura (mayo-junio de 1960), p. 67.

Federico Robles belongs to that urban bourgeois class created and nurtured by the Revolution. His position is that os a self-made banker, an unimportant combatant in the Revolution who took advantage of his position to better himself and his life. In the process of this self-made life, his actions and personal gains indirectly helped his nation to progress. Robles, therefore, typifies that ruling class which gradually realized domination of the economic lifeline of Mexico. He describes his involvement in the Revolution.

> La revolución llegó como llegan el sol o la luna, como llueve o hace hambre. Hay que levantarse, o acostarse. O cubrirse del agua, o comer. Así. Yo nunca supe de dónde surgió, pero una vez que estuvo allí, había que entrarle al toro. Después algunos, como yo, encontramos las justificaciones.[1]

After years of internal strife he continues his life in a world without fighting and reveals his initiation into the society which later he was to invade and control. The resolution to restore true order came through a necessary acceptance of the bourgeois class.

> Yo no sabía qué hacerme fuera de los campos de batalla. El general me arrastraba a sus comilonas, que al principio eran sólo de los nuestros. Luego comenzaron a caer abogados jóvenes con olfato largo, mujeres de cierto estilo. Me tuve que tragar mucha bilis. Por mi ignorancia, por mi facha. Eso nomás me acicateó. Tenía que colocarme donde me tuvieran que respetar pese a mi facha y mi ignorancia. Y tenía que que trabajar duro, para servir al país. Si no, ¿para qué habíamos hecho la revolución? No para sentarnos a contemplar el triunfo de nuestros ideales, sino para trabajar, cada quien en lo suyo. Los

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, La región más transparente, 3a ed., (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960), p. 97.

> sentimientos de los que habíamos entrado con Carranza y Obregón a México eran contradictorios. Pero todos sentíamos que había llegado el momento de tomar las grandes resoluciones, de armarnos de una ambición a toda prueba. . . . si México quería progresar tenía que abrirle paso a ese germen de burguesía que se había venido incubando desde las guerras de Reforma.[1]

Robles speaks for his contemporaries as does Artemio Cruz in an effort to justify and rationalize his actions. He is talking with Ixca Cienfuegos, the ubiquitous narrator-protagonist, who deftly reveals the characters to themselves and to the reader.

> Pueden criticarnos mucho, Cienfuegos, y creer que el puñado de millonarios mexicanos--por lo menos la vieja guardia, que por entonces se formó--nos hemos hecho ricos con el sudor del pueblo. Pero cuando recuerda uno a México en aquellas épocas, se ven las cosas de manera distinta. Gavillas de bandoleros que no podían renunciar a la bola. Paralización de la vida económica del país. Generales con ejércitos privados. Desprestigio de México en el extranjero. Falta de confianza en la industria. Inseguridad en el campo. Ausencia de instituciones. Y a nosotros nos tocaba, al mismo tiempo, defender los postulados de la Revolución y hacerlos trabajar en beneficio del progreso y el orden del país. No es tarea sencilla conciliar revolucionarios: reparto de tierras, protección a los obreros, lo que usted guste. Ahí nos tocó entrarle al torito y darnos cuenta de la única verdad política, el compromiso. Aquello fue el momento de crisis de la Revolución. El momento de decidirse a construir, incluso manchándonos las conciencias. De sacrificar algunos ideales para que algo tangible se lograra. Y procedimos a hacerlo bien y bonito. Teníamos derecho a todo, porque habíamos pasado por ésas. A éste lo había agarrado la Acordada, a aquél le habían violado a la madre, al otro robado las tierras. Y a todos, el porfirismo no nos abría caminos, nos había cerrado las puertas de la ambición. Ahora era la de armarnos, Cienfuegos, la nuestra, sí, pero siempre trabajando por el país. no gratuitamente como los del viejo régimen.[2]

The above passage is neither a condemnation of Robles nor an exaggerated summary of those who took such steps after the

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 105-06. [2] Ibid., p. 109.

Revolution. Robles is in essence patting himself on the back for having assumed that responsibility and made compromises so that order could be restored. It is evident, however, that he feels some pangs of guilt or his justifications would not be so continuously repetitious as they are throughout the novel. Robles continues with a delineation of the tangible results of that Revolution for Mexico and the achievements that his tight-knit group accomplished through compromise.

> Ahí quedan todavía millones de analfabetos, de indios descalzos, de harapientos muertos de hambre, de ejidatarios con una miserable parcela de tierras de temporal, sin maquinaria, sin refacciones, de desocupados que huyen a los Estados Unidos. Pero también hay millones que pudieron ir a las escuelas que nosotros, la Revolución, les construimos, millones para queines se acabó la tienda de raya y se abrió la industria urbana, millones que en 1910 hubieran sido peones y ahora son obreros calificados, que hubieran sido criadas y ahora son mecanógrafas con buenos sueldos, millones que en treinta años han pasado del pueblo a la clase media, que tienen coches y usan pasta de dientes y pasan cinco días al año en Tecolutla o Acapulco. A esos millones nuestras industrias les han dado trabajo, nuestro comercio los ha arraigado. Hemos creado, por primera vez en la historia de México, una clase media estable, con pequeños intereses económicos y personales, que son la mejor garantía contra las revueltas y el bochinche. Gentes que no quieren perder la Revolución, y ésa fue nuestra obra. . . . nosotros habíamos pasado por ésas, teníamos derecho a todo.[1]

So, according to Robles, the most important result of the Revolution was the definite formation of a middle class. Harss concurs with this self-analysis by Robles himself, his group, and its societal influences in the following.

> He is not ashamed to represent the voice of vested interest. The best arguments in his favor are his achieve-

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 109-10.

> ments. They are clear evidence of the fact that "here there is only one truth that counts: either we build a prosperous country or we starve. The only choice offered us is between wealth and indigence. And to attain to wealth, our main concern, to which all others should be subordinated, must be to hasten the march toward capitalism."[1]

Robles continues his description of this group.

> Nosotros tenemos todos los secretos. Sabemos lo que necesita el país, conocemos sus problemas. No hay más remedio que tolerarnos, a caer de vuelta en la anarquía. Pero eso lo impediría la clase media.[2]

It can be seen from the foregoing that it is that middle class formed as a product of the Revolution which acts as a buffer and sustains the ruling class in power. These social, economic and political tenets as expressed by Robles are contextually substantiated stylistically by Fuentes in the following.

> El estilo está ligado a los personajes: a sus procedencia social, a sus ocupaciones en la vida. Las reuniones del set internacional están escritas en un estilo; las escenas en que aparece la gente del pueblo están narradas en otro estilo; los "noticieros" están escritos en forma diferente. Esos distintos estilos son totalmente intencionales. La materia prima es la que impone es estilo a cada novela. Gran ejemplo de este punto es el Ulises. . . . Tosos estos personajes dictan su propio estilo.[3]

Federico Robles ultimately declares bankruptcy and his wife Norma dies in a pagan-like sacrificial fire which destroys their house. This stylistic, creative device is

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 288.

[2]Fuentes, La región más transparente, p. 111.

[3]Emmanuel Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas de la Literatura Mexicana del Siglo XX, (México: Empresas Editoriales, S.A., 1965), p. 435.

consistently used by Fuentes in each of his novels. As suggested in the Introduction of this text, the skeleton of the indigenous world, culturally and mythologically persists beneath the modern, contemporary facade just as economically feudalism exists beneath the capitalist facade. Fuentes comments on the historical and literary role of sacrifice which prominently figures in the Mexican reality of both the past and the present.

> La verdadera venganza de Moctezuma no es la disentería: es el sentido permanente del sacrificio, del sacrificio para mantener el orden del cosmos. Esa ha sido la victoria final del mundo indígena en México.[1]

Robles loses his friends and without the influence that money wields and the power it establishes meets tragedy and personal defeat. Fuentes projects little hope for any of the characters, who are either financially ruined, as is Robles, or lose their lives, as do Norma and Zamacona. Yet, Robles does embody some element of hope; he lives to start a new life with his former mistress, blind Hortensia Chacón. He is spared and willing to begin again and this seems to imply strength and hope for the Mexican society. Equally, it emphasizes that men such as Robles and Artemio Cruz are not complete villains, but that they are human beings who want to survive and in doing so make mistakes, and live out the duality or ambiguity characteristic of their society - the tragic ambiguity that prevails within all human beings and

---

[1]Emir Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor en América Latina," Mundo Nuevo, (julio, 1966), p. 7.

all events, and which is another primary, consistent theme of Fuentes' creative works as intimated. It is not possible to have an all black or an all white interpretation of anything or of anyone. In considering the novels of the Mexican Revolution written by such authors as Azuela, Guzmán, Muñoz, and others, Fuentes singles out the very human aspect of ambiguity of the Revolution itself and the resultant reflection of this duality in the literature of the Revolution.

> . . . Los de abajo, La sombra del Caudillo y Si me han de matar mañana. . . , por encima de sus posibles defectos técnicos y a pesar de su lastre documental, introducen una nota original en la novela hispanoamericana: introducen la ambiguedad. Porque en la dinámica revolucionaria los héroes pueden ser villanos y los villanos pueden ser héroes. No sólo hay origen y permanencia fatal en el origen; hay, por fin, un destino en movimiento. No sólo hay unas relaciones dictadas fatalmente desde el siglo XVI; hay un tumulto, un sube-y-baja de fortunas, un azar de encuentros y pérdidas en el que los seres de ficción, como todos los hombres, viven sus momentos de luz y susinstantes de sombra. En la literatura de la revolución mexicana se encuentra esta semilla novelesca: la certeza heroica se convierte en ambiguedad crítica, la fatalidad natural en acción contradictoria, el idealismo romántico en dialéctica irónica.[1]

The Latin American novel and Mexican literature in particular passed gradually but in a destined movement from a positivistic ponderance of the world as represented by the social reform novels of Gallegos and Ciro Alegría toward a clearer reflection of man living within his society as an integrated part of it - not as a robot controlled by it. It was not, however, until the late forties with Agustín Yañez's novel of the Revolution, Al filo del agua, that a literary perspec-

---

[1]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 15.

tive intuitively and purposefully included this ambiguity of character prototypes and re-created this element rather than merely reproduced it.

The impact of Revolution upon those who participated in it is dramatically reflected in the life of Federico Robles. That the effects of that impact, therein implied, direct the contemporary societal make-up of Mexico through those people represented by Robles is also implied. The adoption of capitalism and the influence of European and in particular the North American ways of life have further compounded the Mexican duality, for Mexico, not yet emergent from the past, has been thrust prematurely into a modern world laden with philosophical and psychological problems such as alienation between the individual and the masses, conflict over the existence and significance of a God, and an increasing international human commitment to humanity. Fuentes is more greatly involved with these problems as they affect the Mexican in his novel Cambio de piel.

Robles reveals almost didactically the economic character of Mexico as it was formed, a direct product of revolutionary ideals muted and deformed by internal greed and corruption. Robles, more so than the charcter of Artemio Cruz, is a depersonalized symbol of his class, for in the latter novel Fuentes tells the personal story of Cruz as he himself saw it, lived it, and remembered it. It is the intimate exposé of the Revolution and the resulting economic world

through the thoughts of the protagonist, Artemio Cruz. The stream-of-consciousness style used in both novels is basically similar, but there is much greater perfection in the style of La muerte de Artemio Cruz. Cruz was the bastard son of a latifundista from a decadent family and a mestizo girl, and had no real family as did Robles, who was the legitimate son of a farmer from Michoacán. Both men did become leaders within the newly created privileged class after the revolt. Were there many peasants as lucky as these two symbols to break the bondage of their social class and rise as a result of that Revolution? Pedro Martínez, the non-fictional protagonist of Oscar Lewis' social study A Mexican Peasant and His Family, gained little from his participation in the rebellion. His material life was hardly bettered. He lives today in a similar deprived state as he did before the Revolution. Fuentes says: "Pedro Martínez is representative of peasant revolutionaries in all underdeveloped countries."[1] So, not all peasant revolutionaries were as successful as Cruz and Robles if Pedro is to be taken as a valid representative. Robles and Cruz fit the first characteristic of the ensuing two traits which Fuentes attributes to Martínez: "He is a paternalist despot and a sincere revolutionary."[2] These two men are comparable, for their

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "A Life," The New York Review of Books, June 25, 1964, p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

compromises, although individual, have intrinsically, intimately and irreversibly influenced the development of the contemporary political, economic and social structure of the Mexican society. Harss competently summarizes the panorama of this novel.

> Artemio's story, which ranges far and wide in space and time, is that of the Mexican Revolution. He grew up with it, flourished and declined with it. He fought as a rebel leader in its early heady days, saw it spread its titanic promise, only to dwindle and finally come to a complete standstill. Like Robles in La Región Más Transparente, he has known love, loyalty, and courage, but he compromised, treacherously trading them in for the cynicism and disillusionment of empty material success. His loss is Mexico's. Thus, in his tortured memory, a youthful love affair that return to haunt him coincides with the euphoria of his revolutionary days; . . . He is what he has made of himself. All he can do now is continue to live off the fat of the land, accumulating riches, tormenting himself and those around him, and counting his days, which are numbered. His death closes a chapter in Mexican history.[1]

Other than that of space and a more stylistic treatment in La muerte de Artemio Cruz, there is little that distinguishes the lives of Robles and Cruz. Although both novels deal indeed with the revolutionary aspects latent in the society, they differ. Fuentes points out these differences with regard to the characters of the two works.

> Parto de la materia a los personajes. Al escribir una novela temgo una visión del mundo, una visión de las cosas. Los personajes surgen de maneras muy distintas. En La región surgieron de un modo típico. Se trata de personajes representativos de los diferentes estratos sociales, de las distintas direcciones del espíritu mexicano. A veces no poseen vida propia ni destino personal:

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, pp. 299-300.

> son piezas que manipulo para integrar el panorama de la sociedad mexicana de nuestros días. En este sentido se puede hablar de fracaso, de fracaso parcial, atribuible a la estructura de la novela que exigía personajes típicos. . . . Más que novela de una sociedad de un tiempo -- aunque una y otro aparecen en ella --, es la historia de un destino personal, intransferible, que se cierra con la muerte del protagonista.[1]

Whereas Robles is a representative of a class - Cruz is a class, a breathing embodiment of his class yet still very much a human being. Robles' marriage is one of convenience, as is Cruz's. Both men realize and accept the responsibility of what they have made of themselves and reflect upon the importance of their lives to Mexico and how they have personally affected the formation of that society. Cruz, unlike Robles, however, does not face bankrupty and dies still wealthy and caustically respected from afar by that society which had to put up with him as it did with Robles. Fuentes expresses his purpose in the particular portrayal of Artemio Cruz in this novel.

> Artemio Cruz, the prototype of the Mexican caudillo, is a type of personality, he says, that "given our tendency in Mexico to see things in black and white, is easily classifiable as black. My intention, which became increasingly evident to me as the character developed, was to show there's no such thing as black and white. Artemio Cruz is at once the book's hero and antihero."[2]

And Artemio Cruz is that dual hero and antihero - that ambiguity. Like Robles, Cruz deals with American investors and while cheating his native country for their benefit, in turn

---

[1]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, pp. 436-37.

[2]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 300.

deceiving them for his own personal gain. His inner desire and almost obsessive compulsion to try to forget his native characteristics buried beneath a facade of traits more natural to a North American, typifies the same conflict which the Mexican experiences with the exposure to and imposition of foreign values upon his reality. Artemio's thoughts wander to a consideration of his relationship with American businessmen and the struggle he has experienced within himself while trying to pattern his life after the North American. All of his thoughts about his life compose the novel content. At age seventy-one he is awaiting death to overtake him and set his thoughts at peace. The agonizing final twelve hours take him back to twelve memorable dates in his past. The North American influence is revealed.

> Tú te sentirás satisfecho de imponerte a ellos; confiésalo: te impusiste para que te admitieran como su par: pocas veces te has sentido más feliz, porque desde que empezaste a ser oo que eres, desde que aprendiste a apreciar el tacto de las buenas telas, el gusto de los buenos licores, el olfato de las buenas lociones, todo eso que en los últimos años ha sido tu placer aislado y único, desde entonces clavaste la mirada allá arriba, en el norte, y desde entonces has vivido con la nostalgia del error geográfico que no te permitió ser en todo parte de ellos: admiras su eficacia, sus comodidades, su higiene, su poder, su voluntad y miras a tu alrededor y te parecen intolerables la incompetencia, la miseria, la suciedad, la abulia, la desnudez de este pobre país que nada tiene; y más te duele saber que por más que lo intentes, no puedes ser como ellos, puedes sólo ser una calca, una aproximación, porque después de todo, di: ¿tu visión de las cosas, en tus peores o en tus mejores momentos, ha sido tan simplista como la de ellos? Nunca. Nunca has podido pensar en blanco y negro, en buenos y malos, en Dios y Diablo: admite que siempre, aun cuando parecía lo contrario, has encontrado en la negro el germen, el reflejo de su opuesto: tu propia crueldad, cuando has

> sido cruel, ¿no estaba teñida de cierta ternura? Sabes que todo extremo contiene su propia oposición: la crueldad la ternura, la cobardía el valor, la vida la muerte: . . . por ser quien eres, de donde eres y lo que has vivido--sabes esto y por eso nunca te podrás parecer a ellos, que no lo saben. ¿Te molesta? Sí, no es cómodo, es molesto, es mucho más cómodo decir: aquí está el bien y aquí está el mal. El mal. Tú nunca podrás designarlo. Acaso porque, más desamparados, no queremos que se pierda esa zona intermedia, ambigua, entre la luz y la sombra: esa zona donde podemos encontrar el perdón. Donde tú lo podrás encontrar. ¿Quién no será capaz, en un solo momento de su vida--como tú--de encarnar al mismo tiempo el bien y el mal, de dejarse conducir al mismo tiempo por dos hilos misteriosos, de color distinto, que parten del mismo ovillo para que después de hilo blanco ascienda y el negro descienda y, a pesar de todo, los dos vuelvan a encontrarse entre tus mismos dedos? . . . Tú quisieras ser como ellos y ahora, de viejo, casi lo logras. Pero casi. Sólo casi.[1]

Cruz's own soul-searching reveals Fuentes' double intent to picture ambiguity in an individual and in the collective society. Cruz is good and bad and a peculiar creature of the interaction of the two. In character he is reminiscent of Facundo Quiroga as presented in Sarmiento's essay, Civilización y barbarie, in that, although Sarmiento sought to juxtapose good and evil or civilization and barbarism respectively in an effort to champion the former, he exposed an ambiguous Quiroga - one who was capable of tenderness, consideration, compassion and worthy of profound, sincere respect and admiration as well as one who was treacherous, who could and did murder, mutilate and destroy. Cruz, in the neo-capitalistic world of business and in his personal world ruthlessly murdered, mutilated and destroyed lives perhaps more mercilessly

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, 3a ed., (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1967), pp. 32-33.

than if he had actually killed the people. Robles and Cruz dramatically and startlingly are fictitious re-creations of their real-life counterparts. Speaking of the novel, Raúl Leiva writes:

> . . . esta novela--por su profundidad psicológica, por su trama fascinante, por los diversos tempos, que en ella se entrecruzan--es, más que un reflejo, un retrato vivo, un testimonio apasionante de varias décadas de vida mexicana contemporánea. . . . Artemio Cruz se presenta en estas páginas . . . como un personaje de carne y hueso, como un ser representativo de cierto sector de la revolución; y trás él está toda una realidad polítíco-social, todo el hondo drama de un pueblo que lucha por sobrevivir, por conquistar una tierra de misterio y desatadas fuerzas incontrolables.[1]

Robles is not so intimately stripped of his verbal and superficial mask as is Artemio. Artemio further implies how important the bourgeois way of life has been for him.

> ¿Qué saben ellos, Catalina, el cura, Teresa, Gerardo? ¿Qué importancia van a tener sus aspavientos de duelo o las expresiones de honor que aparecerán en los periódicos? ¿Quién tendrá la honradez de decir, como yo lo digo ahora, que mi único amor ha sido la posesión de las cosas, su propiedad sensual? Eso es lo que quiero.[2]

Federico Robles and Artemio Cruz manifest the dramatic role that the Revolution has played in the development of the Mexican society and the systems functioning within it, as seen in the direction that the economic system has followed and the results that it has had on the Mexican people within their society.

To gain an even more complete understanding of this

---

[1]Raúl Leiva, "Tres grandes novelas mexicanas en 1962," Cuadernos de Bellas Artes, IV (1963), pp. 26-27.

[2]Fuentes, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, p. 139.

multi-faceted impact, it is necessary to see how the intellectual group, less economically active, entertains the subject of the Revolution. If there is a thesis inherent in La región más transparente, Fuentes says: ". . . no son mis tesis: son las tesis que sobre el México de los años cincuenta circulaban en boca de los grupos intelectuales."[1] Manuel Zamacona, a poet and journalist, represents the dialectical opposite of Robles and Cruz, while symbolizing that intelligentsia of Mexico in the fifties.

> "Zamacona," says Fuentes, "is a composite portrait of many Mexican intellectuals. Many recognized themselves in him. Because, in the whole 'Mexicanist' movement there was that redemptionist attitude. . ."[2]

Zamacona is able to expound upon what he considers to be the ills of Mexico, their causes, and cures. Luis Harss classifies him as a doodler rather than a doer, and Zamacona does postulate obsessively, without reaching any conclusions which could be acted upon in reality. What does Zamacona realize about the posture of his country in relation to what it might have become, what it actually is, and what its present status means for him, the average Mexican, and the rest of the world's societies? In the following excerpts, a reflecting Zamacona reveals his viewpoint and that of his peer group about the Revolution, Robles as its contemporary manifestation, and foreign social customs.

---

[1]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 435.

[2]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 292.

"¿Qué cosa es el sentimiento de inferioridad sino el de superioridad disimulado? En la superioridad plena, sencillamente, no existe el afán de justificación. La inferioridad nuestra no es sino el sentimiento disimulado de una excelencia que los demás no alcanzan a distinguir, de un conjunto de altas normas que, por desgracia, no acaban de funcionar, de hacerse evidentes o de merecer el respeto ajeno. Mientras esa realidad superior de lo mexicano no cuaje, piensan en el fondo los mexicanos, habrá que disimular y aparentar que hacemos nuestros otros valores, los consagrados universalmente: desde la ropa hasta la política económica, pasando por la arquitectura. El último hito accesible del prestigio europeo, la Revolución Industrial, nace en México cada día. Nuestra superioridad por decreto. Y sin embargo, en algo tienen razón: hay que ver hacia adelante. Sólo que 'hacia adelante' no significa 'formas de la vida europea y norteamericana' que, aunque todavía estén vigentes, señalan sólo una etapa final. . . . la nueva burguesía mexicana no ve más allá de eso; su único deseo, por el momento, es apropiarse, cuanto antes, los moldes clásicos de la burguesía capitalista. . . . hoy podríamos tener los ojos abiertos, y prepararnos, sin más fuerza y orientación fundamental que la de nuestra propia experiencia, a crearnos desde la raíz en la verdad de una nueva estructura social y filosófica. ¿No nos acercó la Revolución a esta verdad? ¿Pero qué vamos a hacer cuando todo el poder real emanado de la Revolución se ha entregado, voluptuosamente, a las cosquillas de un cresohedonismo sin paralelo en México? Este es el problema, el poder real. . . . ¿Qué representa el poder real de un hombre como, digamos, este banquero Robles del tanto se habla, sino un puro acrecentar del poder en sí, sin atributos de valor? La disyuntiva es monstruosa, pues si algún valor es valor del hombre, es precisamente el poder, en su acepción más amplia. Cuando el poder ya no es valor, se avecina algo muy grave: su ejercicio, en todos los órdenes, deja de ser responsable. Valor-poder-responsabilidad son la gran unidad, la que no liga a unos con otros, con la naturaleza y con Dios. Poder sin valor y sin responsabilidad desemboca en dispersión, en pequeños dioses abismales o en el único dios de una abstracción terrena: la historia, las fuerzas ciegas, la nación escogida, o la mecánica incontrolable. Estamos en el cruce. . . . ¿Le será posible escoger, escoger su propio camino, o se dejará arrastrar por la ceguera criminal de los escogidos?"[1]

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, La región más transparente, 3a ed., (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960), pp. 63-64.

Fuentes' personal ideological beliefs are inherently evident in the above.

Manuel Zamacona and young Jaime Ceballos, protagonist of Las buenas conciencias, are alike in that both belong to generations physically and yet not psychologically nor philosophically detached from the Revolution. In fact both, as children of that historical moment, manifest the inability to sever the cords of that event which still manipulate all facets of their daily lives. They are alike, also, in that both feel fated at different periods in their lives to accept the responsibility for mankind's problems which have resulted in actions causing guilt. Harss ably makes this comparison.

> Family pharisaism and social injustice are felt as passionate physical torments by Jaime, for whom revolt becomes a high calling. It leads inevitably to a crisis of faith. He seeks the true Christian path, not in the false piety of church ceremony but within himself. Like Zamacona in La Región Más Transparente, he feels fated for martyrdom, destined to assume the blame for the ills of humanity. Coming out of the throes of puberty, he has found not only a vocation for social action but also his separateness, his individual worth.[1]

The philosophical similarities between Ceballos and Zamacona, more academically expressed by the latter, are manifest in this summation of Zamacona's proposed solutions for Mexico in its dilemma. Harss outlines this philosophical stand.

> . . . with a fervent belief in Mexico's saving mission, which he conceives of in messianic, almost Dostoevskian, terms, he argues for a sort of Christian humanitarianism

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 296.

> in social affairs, in which each man, as Christ, would assume the pain and blame of his fellow men and offer himself in pesonal atonement for them. He compares Mexico to the figure of Lazarus, dead only to be reborn, shouldering his fate. Thus he represents the somewhat narcissistic claim of passive individualism in a depersonalized society.[1]

Zamacona and Ceballos also strickingly parallel the personal beliefs of Fuentes himself. Fuentes substantiates this interpretation in his interview with Emir Rodríguez-Monegal, here speaking about Las buenas conciencias.

> Mira, es una novela de catarsis simplemente. En un doble sentido: literario porque quise ver si podía dominar una narración de tipo tradicional, de tipo galdosiano, y quizás no debía de haberla publicado; era para mí una prueba; y también de tipo personal porque la escribí en un momento de ruptura mía, muy traumática, con mi familia, con mi pasado, con mi educación religiosa, burguesa y demás, que traté de trasladar a la experiencia del personaje.[2]

Jaime realizes that he alone cannot fight the scheme of the established order and now as a young man admits to himself that he really doesn't want to fight it. He never felt compassion for his mother Adelina, who had been cast out of the family and forced to become a prostitute to survive. Similarly, he could not, at the most crucial time shortly before his father's death, forgive him for his human weaknesses or failure experienced at the hands of that same establishment, represented by his aunt and uncle Jorge and Asunción Balcárcel. Jorge and Asunción fled during the Revolution and

---

[1]Ibid., p. 289.

[2]Emir Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor en América Latina," Mundo Nuevo, (julio, 1966), p. 16.

returned several years later to salvage and take possession of what little Jaime's father Rodolfo had managed to maintain; simultaneously, they subjugated Rodolfo to their false, hypocritical pride.

Las buenas conciencias is a novel of the bourgeoisie in which Fuentes, according to Thomas Curley: ". . . is concerned not only with the ritual of growing up but with the bourgeois hothouse in which middle-class growth occurs."[1] Las buenas conciencias, La región más transparente and La muerte de Artemio Cruz are all novels focusing closely on the bourgeoisie and middle-class which mushroomed from the revolutionary movement. The latter is an in-depth review of all the personal ramifications of one intimately embroiled in the guiding of that class. This correspondingly accentuates the fact that Fuentes, himself a member of that class, in a revealing fictional work manifests a professional reality as a member of that class.

> La modernidad había llegado a Latinoamérica. Y el escritor, si podía felicitarse de ganar con ello un número creciente de lectores, sólo admitiría con azoro que, expulsado de la élite y sumergido en la pequeña burguesía, confrontado con la proliferación de la masa urbana, su posibilidad de actuar inmediatamente sobre la realidad era menos fácil que en los tiempos bucólicos de civilización contra barbarie.[2]

Fuentes attributes the development of an albatross elitist

---

[1]Thomas Curley, "Professed Christians in the Role of Pharisees," The Commonweal, LXXV (January 19, 1962), pp. 439-40.

[2]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 28.

group of writers and artists to the bourgeoisie of Mexico and to its obsessive compulsion and need to maintain an aura of security, continually reaffirmed in all aspects of life.

> Es decir, hay una nueva burguesía en México que requiere una buena conciencia y esta buena conciencia se la da el poder con sus discursos, sus membretes, sus estatuas, y se la dan, por desgracia, muchos artistas que recurren también a este tono menor, fino y sútil de la discreción provinciana. Con ella se pretende alcanzar una especie de aristocracia artística, que en realidad es sólo la máscara de un malestar pequeñoburgués y de una insuficiencia provinciana. Entonces en país de tuertos el ciego es rey, y en país de mudos la palabra se vuelve explosiva. Cuevas y yo posiblemente hemos utilizado, un tanto, nuestras obras como detonadores para restituirle, a la forma y a la palabra, ese sentido que para mí tienen básicamente, de ser siempre reveladoras y liberadoras.[1]

It is this same buena conciencia which is the motivating impetus guiding the bourgeois class and the Ceballos family of the novel, Las buenas conciencias.

Jaime succumbs to his sensation of futility in a fight against the existing social order and rationally accepts his pre-ordained role in society.

> "No he tenido el valor. No he podido ser lo que quería. No he podido ser un cristiano. No puede quedarme solo con mi fracaso; no lo aguantaría; tengo que apoyarme en algo. No tengo más apoyo que esto: mis tíos, la vida que me prepararon, la vida que heredé de todos mis antepasados. Me cometo al orden, para no caer en la desesperación. . ."
>
> Supo entonces que sería un brillante alumno de Derecho, que pronunciaría discursos oficiales, que sería el joven mimado del Partido de la Revolución en el estado, que se recibiría con todos los honores, que las familias decentes lo pondrían de ejemplo, que se casaría con una

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 8.

> muchacha rica, que fundaría un hogar: que viviría con la conciencia tranquila.[1]

In essence Jaime adjusts himself to becoming a young Artemio Cruz, who, seeing himself as realistically as he can without any illusions, can live with that honesty, once it has been fully accepted. Cruz knew what he was throughout his life as Jaime foresees what his life will become.

> He falls into line. He capitulates. Recognizing his failures, Fuentes tells us, is "an act of honesty, paradoxically the one act ofhonesty he has in the novel. The only one. The only time he is absolutely sincere with himself. The one time he admits the truth."[2]

Fuentes incorporates Jaime into the world of Artemio Cruz in that novel, thereby reminding the reader of that confrontation between Artemio Cruz and Jaime at a party given by the former. This serves to add perspective in that Jaime is seen to have carried through at least partially those details of his future which he foresaw in the conclusion of Las buenas conciencias. Fuentes sees Jaime as the victimized symbol of materialism and private property, and a human voracity for it. This is emphasized in a comparison of Jaime with his Indian friend Juan Lorenzo.

> --Jaime Ceballos es, fundamentalmente, un muchacho con un impulso humano sumamente generoso, de un cristianismo muy honrado, muy auténtico, que no puede desarrollar este impulso porque la célula familiar y el mundo de los objetos, de la propiedad--que es el que representan los Ceballos--, le impide cumplir esos fines. Frente a Juan Manuel Lorenzo, Ceballos es un reactivo.

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, Las buenas conciencias, 3a ed., (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961), p. 190.

[2]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 297.

> Lorenzo es un joven de extracción indígena, que ha obtenido una beca para estudiar en Guanajuato y que tratará de cumplir su destino. ¿Podrá cumplirlo? Eso es lo que se verá en otra novela. . . . ya hay elementos de gran contradicción en Lorenzo, que es, también, un muchacho muy positivo. Simboliza, . . . el tránsito de esta sociedad nuestra que está ya muy lejos de los que fue--de esas raíces que todavía le cuelgan por los brazos a Lorenzo--, y todavía muy lejos de lo que quiere ser. . . . Ceballos sucumbe ante un automóvil largo y suntuoso y se casa con una "niña bien", una niña rica.[1]

Gonzalo Bernal, Artemio Cruz's brother-in-law, died before a firing squad while Artemio escaped death during the Revolution. As Artemio vividly re-lives the memory of their imprisonment before the execution by Villa's men, Fuentes reveals the basic philosophy that Mexico's dead heroes represent, symbolized by Gonzalo. Artemio and Gonzalo are discussing the events of the Revolution, and Gonzalo presents his beliefs about them.

> Carranza ma mandó en esta misión con el puro objeto de que me agarraran y fueran ellos los responsables de mi muerte. Se le metió en la cabeza que más le valía un héroe muerto que un traidor vivo. . . . No sé si te acuerdas del principio. Fue hace tan poco, pero parece tan lejano. . . . cuando no importaban los jefes. Cuando esto se hacía no para elevar a un hombre, sino a todos.[2]

Gonzalo continues stating the reasons for the loss of the strength of the Revolution: the development of factions which weakened the movement and caused the corruption which altered the entire complexion of the revolt.

> Una revolución empieza a hacerse desde los campos de batalla, pero una vez que se corrompe, aunque siga ganando

---

[1]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 438.

[2]Carlos Fuentes, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, 3a ed., (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1967), pp. 193-94.

> batallas militares ya está perdida. Todos hemos sido responsables. Nos hemos dejado dividir y dirigir por los concupiscentes, los ambiciosos, los mediocres. Los que quieren una revolución de verdad, radical, intransigente, son por desgracia hombres ignorantes y sangrientos. Y los letrados sólo quieren una revolución a medias, compatible con lo único que les interesa: medrar, vivir bien, sustituir a la élite de don Porfirio. Ahí está el drama de México.[1]

As a citizen Gonzalo accepts the responsibility of insufficient action in concurrence with the ideals in which he believed. The uneducated masses became manipulative pawns of those with personal interests as a result of their ignorance, therefore, corruption and factions were inevitable. The multiple revolutionary ideals, thereby, were deformed and hybridized. What resulted for part of contemporary Mexico has been seen in the lives of Federico Robles, Artemio Cruz, Manuel Zamacona, and Jaime Ceballos. But what of the Pedro Martínezes and the Juan Lorenzos - the peasant revolutionaries? What of the members of that bourgeois class which functions as a Frankenstein monster? Fuentes quotes Martínez as the latter reflects about the Revolution.

> I don't believe in the Revolution any more . . . Nobody won the Revolution; even Zapata lost . . . The success of the Revolution was no great advance. It only seemed to be because at that time we got rid of the big plantation owners and the government of don Porfirio, who were the exploiters. But now there have appeared even worse exploiters. Now it is the bankers.[2]

Fuentes equally depicts the peasant class or proletarian class, as well as that bourgeois class. Gabriel, Tuno and

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 194-95.

[2]Fuentes, "A Life," p. 4.

Rosa Morales in La región más transparente and Juan Lorenzo in Las buenas conciencias characterize this class. The proletarian view of the Revolution and its results is not a statement of condemnation or praise orjustification. In fact, there is no statement as such in Fuentes' works. The evidence of the results is seen in the re-creation of the lives of the people of this class - not just in their words. And, it must be remembered that Fuentes is writing against the bourgeoisie and its cultural bed-fellows and not against the proletarian class. Consequently, he more consistently depicts the former in his novels. The involvement of all of these people in a modern world society which tends simultaneously to emphasize both social depersonalization through alieantion and personalization through a commitment to humanity sharpens the awareness of the deformed stage of development in which the Mexican society persists as a result of that thwarted effort. Yet, the unfinished goals of the Revolution remain hidden in the hearts of the people. Colonel Zagal, who had Gonzalo Bernal executed and imprisoned Cruz, states this reality in the following excerpt.

> Estamos cansados. Son muchos años de pelear, desde que nos levantamos contra don Porfirio. Luego peleamos con Madero, luego contra los colorados de Orozco, luego contra los pelones de Huerta, luego contra ustedes las carranclanes de Carranza. Son muchos años. Ya nos cansamos. Nuestras gentes son como las lagartijas, van tomando el color de la tierra, se meten a las chozas de donde salieron, vuelven a vestirse de peones y vuelven a esperar la hora de seguir peleando, aunque sea dentro de cien años.[1]

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 184-85.

It has been seen, however, that some useful reforms were accomplished through the Revolution, to which fact the characteristics of Cruz's and Robles' lives have testified. There are remnants and concrete evidences of economic and social changes readily recognizable within the Mexican existence. There have been certain tangible rewards for that Revolution, such as the emergence of Mexico, a feudal country at the outset of this century, into the mainstream of modern economic civilization. Some of the rewards for that Revolution have been less significant, however, because of betrayals of fundamental principles and ideals and because it was a rebellion which primarily benefitted the developing bourgeois class - subsequently leading to the development of a Mexico with an urban capitalist economy superimposed upon a feudal economy. Psychologically and philosophically this has had some definite, detrimental effects upon the social unit as a whole -- causing contemporary economic and social problems of paramount proportions. Fuentes manifests little faith in Mexico's ability to evolve peacefully toward socialism, and even that little faith is shaky. He repeatedly emphasizes the growing universal social unrest resultant from the failure of the capitalist economic system to provide for its people. What can be said then as to the major impact of the Mexican Revolution upon its people?--Frustration turned inward -- a deformed society.

CHAPTER III

THEMES OF SOCIAL REFORM

The internal and external social reforms subtly suggested by Carlos Fuentes in his novels and short stories and forthrightly stated in his essays, are of two distinct yet inseparable related levels. Those internal reforms which he espouses refer here to changes within the Mexican man himself as a human entity in relation to his fellow countrymen and in relation to all contemporary men. It follows then that Fuentes deals with a review of the effect of the pre-Hispanic Indian cultures and the Spanish conquest on the present Mexican, as well as that of modern international cultural trends upon him, based upon an economic evaluation of social development in keeping with dialectical methodology and the viewpoint of historical materialism or the conditions of material life of society. La región más transparente best represents the former review and Cambio de piel the latter. Fuentes reserarches the contemporary state of the Mexican man within his social unit based upon the ever-present influences of the past coupled with the factors coloring and shaping his society in the present in order to project the future develop-

ment logically and dialectically. As seen in the previous chapter, Fuentes delves into the crippling results that a preoccupation with the search for a true origin or identity has had upon a progressive and modern Mexican society, retarding its development. He also explores the results that existing international philosophical and psychological movements have exerted upon the social mass. Robert G. Mead, in a review of Fuentes' works, summarizes this Mexican dilemma as it is mirrored in La región más transparente.

> . . . es un análisis minucioso, espiritual y poético, de la sociedad mexicana desde sus niveles más bajos hasta los más altos; es un testimonio apasionado de la honda desilusión de Fuentes ante lo que él considera ser la traición de los ideales de la Revolución Mexicana de 1910; es una exposición aguda de la dualidad básica del carácter mexicano, nacida ésta de la nostalgia del pasado indígena, irremediablemente destruido, y del esfuerzo de encontrar la manera en que pueda desenvolverse de acuerdo con la cultura occidental, pero sin perder su propia identidad.[1]

Mead continues his analysis of the social impact and significance of this novel emphasizing Fuentes' underlying proposition.

> Están perdidos los mexicanos en una cultura a la cual le falta una orientación clara u hondas raíces nacionales, y en la cual se sienten atraídos por un complejo resplandeciente de valores, metas, y actitudes en su mayoría extranjeros(europeos y norteamericanos) y, por lo tanto, difíciles y muchas veces imposibles de asimilar.[2]

This lack of assimilation into contemporary world society caused by identity problems of both past and present - singu-

---

[1]Robert G. Mead, Jr., "Airado Novelista Mexicano," p. 231.

[2]Ibid.

larly characterizes the Mexican culture and consequently its forms of literary expression.

That Mexico's geographical proximity and envelopment within the occidental economic system of the United States has simultaneously forced the country into an involved yet marginal participation in world culture, is evidenced in many of Fuentes' works. For survival, Mexico has been forced to become an imitative image of the bourgeois society and system of the United States. The external reforms he encourages, it is realized, proceed naturally from the incorporation of the internal ones, since man can and does exert control upon his social environment via his economic status. However, there are those members of society who cannot make their needs for societal changes understood by those who are in a better position than they to effect peaceful, legal reforms. The former are mem such as Pedro Martínez in Oscar Lewis' study, Juan Lorenzo of Las buenas conciencias and Gabriel, Tuno and Gladys García of La región más transparente. To what actions do such men resort then, if they cannot legally make their needs heard, understood, and acted upon urgently enough? Perhaps the solution is to resort to violence as in 1910 and as various groups in the United States and France and all over the world are doing today in order to bring about long-needed social justice. As Colonel Zagal indicated, these men of Mexico harbor that revolutionary spirit within them still, and remembering that Fuentes quoted Chou En-Lai as saying that

once some land reform no matter how little was initiated, how improbable it was for the masses to revolt, it is noted that an internal frustration, as reflected in Fuentes' works, exists within the Mexican society. In Mexico it is that middle class to which Fuentes belongs himself that also maintains those such as Robles and Cruz in power and widens the economic and social abyss between classes. Simultaneously, that class serves a buffer between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The necessary progressive social changes are clearly linked to economic changes and the dramatic portent of this situation has already been inferred and investigated in Fuentes' statements.

In the following excerpt, Fuentes reveals the position of the contemporary writer who, no longer the member of a once elite class, is "relegated to the level of the rising middle class."[1] First he describes what the writer once represented fro Latin America.

> "The individual novelist was compelled to be, at once, legislator and reporter, revolutionist and thinker." He was the nation's conscience, in charge of evaluating and assessing, as well as maintaining "a continuity of relationship between social manifestation and literary imagination." He was a sort of minister without portfolio, who, Fuentes says to us now, expanding on the subject, "played the role of a redeemer, extended a helping hand to the oppressed Indian, the exploited peasant. That's the attitude at the root of all Latin-American literature. It was a literature of protest in which the writer supplied all the means of communication that were missing in Latin America."
>
> By contrast, nowadays the writer is trapped within

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 306.

> a class whose values he is constantly forced to reject. His work is an outlet for nonconformity and rebellion. A problematic situation which, nevertheless, has its advantages.[1]

He further delineates the purpose of the novel, therein indicating his commitment to social reform and his personal engagement.

> "Because it's evident," says Fuentes, "that the novel as such was born as a form of opposition, of rebellion on the part of thewriter, on the part of life itself, as expressed by the writer, against the rigidity of social patterns. In other words, without alienation there would be no novelist. Alienation is at the source of the novel. So it seems quite natural to me to be within the middle class and at the same time fighting it.[2]

In the following text, he expands upon his view of the present role of the Latin American writer.

> I do believe very deeply in historical specificity. A writer lives in a given society, and he responds to this society. Now, in the case of Latin America his responsibility is clear. In other more socially and culturally developed countries it is possible that the writer may devote himself strictly to his creative work. In our countries, however, this is very difficult. The creative writer feels an obligation, a responsibility to wield a double sword: the literary and the political. He feels he has to give voice to the voiceless. Our countries generally do not have labor unions; the voiceless do not have political parties. The situation of the newspapers in Latin America, as you know, is deplorable. They are rightist newspapers controlled by foreign influences, by mercantile influences. They do not give a voices to the people, so the creative writer in Latin America feels the urge and responsibility to speak not only for himself as a creative writer, but for the millions who do not have a voice in his country.[3]

His purpose as a writer of social reform and literary revolutionist will be more extensively treated in the following

---

[1]Ibid. [2]Ibid.

[3]Baxandall, "An Interview," p. 49.

chapter, but it is necessary to understand unequivocally the manner in which Fuentes regards himself as a social reformer so that the quest for reforms expressed in his works can be distinguished as singular to the modern Latin American writer whose works have reached literary maturity. Fuentes believes that although in a creative work of fiction, a writer's political views should not predominate, he equally believes that a writer's duty to the public - the masses - demands a certain civic responsibility to that evolving community, of which he is a part. This has particular significance with regard to the role that the writer has held in Latin America. Fuentes considers that neither a writer's political nor creative talents should ever be sacrificed one for the other.

> I think that the creative writer should be creative when he is a writer, when he is a novelist or poet, and should be political when he is a political writer. The point is not to mix the two things. One approach is that of the creative writer, who cannot be sectarian, or abstract, or dogmatic; and another is the approach of the political writer who is defending a cause. One must not confuse these two things; one must be able to give both of these professions their due.[1]

He further supports his classification as a social reformer in the following statement concerning the intent of literature.

> . . . creo . . . que toda obra literaria, fiel a sus premisas, y lograda en su realización, en su expresión, tiene un significado social. Toda obra de arte tiene un grado, primario de significación social. Pero por el otro lado, exigirle "a priori" a la obra literaria una función política, es desvirtuarla también.[2]

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[2]José-Miguel Ullán, "Carlos Fuentes: Salto Mortal Hacia Mañana," Insula, No. 245 (abril), p. 13.

The first step in delineating the kinds of social reform Fuentes espouses is to determine the themes and purposes of each of his literary endeavors so oriented. In this way a general classification of the major types of reforms with which he is concerned at different periods in his literary career can be distinguished. From that point those individual criticisms against particular institutions, traditions, and classes contained within the overall classification system, can be explored as to whether they are local and internal or cosmopolitan and international in scope.

Fuentes' first book, Los días enmascarados, is a collection of six short stories, most with the theme of fantasy. They center upon the first dramatic influence upon the Mexican reality - the pre-Hispanic culture. The following summation classifies this collection with regard to its local and international concentration, emphasizing the debilitating effect of the past upon the present culture.

> El libro está dentro de la vena universal y cosmopólita de Jorge Luis Borges, y se dirige a un público culto. En Los días enmascarados se presenta la vida humana como un drama que tiene no pocos aspectos cómicos, pero que se desenvuelve en un ambiente de fondo serio y sombrío. El hombre, según Fuentes, está luchando sin la esperanza de un éxito final contra fuerzas muchas más poderosas que él.[1]

Fuentes comments upon the combination of reality and fantasy in this collection revealing his thematic preoccupation with

---

[1]Mead, "Airado Novelista Mexicano," pp. 230-31.

symbolic reality. He states that the theme of liberty in Los días enmascarados, a thematic concern which has always interested him particularly, is: "está vista en uno de sus aspectos: como fatalidad racional."[1] The importance of re-creating reality symbolically is, for Fuentes, a continuing stylistic concern.

> --Siempre he creído que toda expresión literaria válida, independientemente de los casilleros en que la alojen, es una expresión de la realidad, ya sea naturalista, realista, fantástica, simbólica, crítica. Si se siguen las correspondencias reales que existen entre las cosas, se llega a un mundo que en apriencia también es fantástico. Pongo un ejemplo: el silogismo típico ofrece una realidad evidente, fácil de dirigir. Sin embargo, si se colocan lado a lado los elementos reales de la realidad, éstos ofrecen nítidos contornos fantásticos. No hay una construcción lógica de la verdadera realidad, tal como se presenta en la vida. Por el contrario, es ilógica y sólo un esfuerzo intelectual, lógico, le da a esa realidad una semblanza comprensible. La vida cotidiana no está ordenada lógica ni intelectualmente. Entonces, el colocar uno al lado del otro elementos de la realidad en apariencia no ligados entre sí crea la fantasía. (Descomponerlos para crear la realidad inteligible constituye otro procedimiento.) La fantasía es una realidad cotidiana más evidente que la realidad creada, que es la realidad que construimos mentalmente y que nos permite vivir, nos permite abandonar esa irreductibilidad lógica que es la vida.[2]

For Fuentes, who states that the New Testament was written by Jules Verne,[3] this historical view of man's ability to learn and accumulate an increasing mass of knowledge by scientific means aligns his ideology once again with the philosophy of Marx, as evidenced in the following.

---

[1]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 429.

[2]Ibid., pp. 428-29.

[3]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 11.

> Contrary to idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws, which does not believe in the authenticity of our knowledge, does not recognize objective truth, and holds that the world is full of "things-in-themselves" that can never be known to science, Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are not things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are still not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.[1]

In the same literary vein as the contemporary French playwrights Giraudoux, Cocteau and Sartre in their plays La Guerre de Troi n'aura pas lieu, La Machine Infernale and Huis clos respectively, Fuentes presents Mexican man as a being with his feet inextricably fixed in two different yet related worlds - the contemporary setting and the mythological fantastic world of the pre-Hispanic Indian gods, with the latter exercising a supernatural control and power over the reality and actions in the former. There is a generic interpretative difference in the Mexican presentation of his mythology of fate from that portrayed in the above French dramas. The European man graduated from a state of believing blindly in the all-encompassing manipulative powers of the Greek and Roman gods, with the inception and spread of the Christian mythology. The reversal of the element of sacrifice, that is, the practice of a human sacrifice to appease and gain the approval of the gods, was destroyed in Christianity with the god sacrificing himself for the people, has

---

[1]Stalin, Materialism, p. 17.

never fully been accepted by the Latin American cultures. The black angel of the Indian mythology haunts the present. Even the Greek and Roman mythological gods were not as demanding of their worshippers as the Indian gods. The superimposition of both the Christian and Greek and Roman mythologies has dramatically molded and colored the development and evolution of the Mexican and Latin American societies, such that these people's responses and reactions to life and its complexities are understandable and can be accepted only in that peculiar context. So, the Latin American man is now the contemporary of all men, yet he is still, as Fuentes is individually, a unique creation of an ethnic group replete with all its individual and collective ramifications.

This collection of short stories was Fuentes' initial endeavor toward the secularization of the indigenous cultural mythological legends and history. Mexican man is presented in the context of his gods and supernatural interpretations of life in these stories, yet he is a twentieth-century man. In Fuentes' most recent novel, Zona sagrada, the Mexican is permanently severed from his Indian sacrificial rites and ceremonies, as they are depicted in La región más transparente and Cambio de piel, and submerged in the world of Ulysses, Penelope, Medusa and the Sirens. There is no remaining external vestige of the pre-Hispanic gods save in the fact that in the novel, the protagonist Mito, is sacrificed as a human entity to both nourish the illusion and image of his screen-

star mother and to suckle from her. The element of human sacrifice in many forms still vitally distinguishes Mexican mythological creative works from the mainstream of Occidental mythological literatures. As Mexican literature has so progressed into the contemporary societies of the western civilizations so has Fuentes in his literary works. One very important and consistent literary characteristic of Fuentes' writing is demonstrated in all his texts, save the non-fictional, to varying degrees. That characteristic is that he is steadfastly committed to a re-creation of life and what it could be and therein emanates his thematic and stylistic preference for mythology, for it primarily affords a new dimension of artistic expression. From Los días enmascarados to Zona sagrada he investigates the possibilities of man within life. He never simply reflects life -- he re-creates it, and in that process exist the fictional elements which can be more realistic and truthful than what is assumed to be reality and the truth. This new involvement with and evolvement toward a preoccupation with mythology parallels the dying away of the old and the birth of the new in contemporary society. That is, the death of the bourgeois or capitalism and the birth of socialism. In speaking of the novel form, Fuentes emphasizes his particular preoccupation with mythological themes and the subsequent importance of this for Mexican literature.

> Hoy . . . la novela es mito, lenguaje y estructura. Y al ser cada uno de estos términos es, simultáneamente,

> los otros dos. La fugacidad de la burguesía se debió, entre otras cosas, a su incapacidad, en señalado contraste con otras culturas "clásicas" y "primitivas", para crear mitos renovables, impedida por la voraz futuridad que fue su sello de origen. . . . al inventar o recuperar una mitología, la novela se acerca cada vez más a la poesía y a la antropología; en un sentido profundo, una novela moderna . . . no es, estrictamente, sino un mito: el de las tinieblas, la perversidad, la verguenza y los riesgos del triunfo del adolescente sobre el viejo, de la pubertad sobre el patriarcado.[1]

He continues, speaking more specifically about the bourgeois influence and direction of the novel form.

> El novelista, desnudo en medio de la decadencia de su arte--pareja a la decadencia del mundo burgués que lo nutrió--sólo podría ser el testigo de esa decadencia, expresada en su forma final: la noia, el tedio, la indiferencia. Al hacerlo, el novelista sería el último héroe del mundo burgués. . . .
> Lo que ha muerto no es la novela, sino precisamente la forma burguesa de la novela y su término de referencia, el realismo, que supone un estilo descriptivo y sicológico de observar a individuos en relaciones personales y sociales. Pero si el realismo burgués ha muerto, secuestrado por los espectáculos de masas, la sicología y la sociología, ¿quiere ello decir que la realidad novelesca ha muerto con él? Inmersos en esta crisis, pero indicando ya el camino para salir de ella, varios grandes novelista han demostrado que la muerte del realismo burgués sólo anuncia el advenimiento de una realidad literaria mucho más poderosa. Esta realidad . . . se expresa, más bien, en la capacidad para encontrar y levantar sobre un lenguaje los mitos y las profecías de una época cuyo verdadero sello no es la dicotomía capitalismo=socialismo, sino una suma de hechos--fríos, maravillosos, contradictorios, ineluctables, nuevamente libertarios, nuevamente enajenantes--que realmente están transformando la vida en las sociedades industriales: automatización, electrónica, uso pacífico de la energía atómica. De la misma manera que las fórmulas económicas tradicionales del industrialismo no pueden resolver los problemas de la revolución tecnológica, el realismo burgués (o si se quiere, el realismo industrial, tout court) no puede proponer las preguntas y respuestas límite de los hombres de hoy.[2]

---

[1]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 20.

[2]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

Mexico is bound to two basic mythologies -- that of the Indian past and that of the Occidental man, including Christianity. This preoccupation is clearly evident stylistically and thematically in the novels and short stories Los días enmascarados, Cantar de ciegos, La región más transparente, Cambio de piel, and Zona sagrada.

The pessimistic, stoical view of life and man's abilities and opportunities for directing his own life as indicated in Mead's analysis of the importance of the short stories contained in Los días enmascarados, logically corresponds to the Indian mythological influence upon the Mexican culture as well as the role of destiny or fate in the Occidental cultures originating from the Greek and Roman mythologies. Fuentes re-creates the influence of the past pre-Hispanic culture and religion upon certain individuals of contemporary Mexican society - a clear and present influence still prevalent. In Zona sagrada the same lack of success in struggling against the certainty of pre-destination from outside forces reflects the contemporary alienation or disassociated state of man with himself, with his fellow man and with his world environment, and as such it reflects the status of the conditions of society on a philosophical and a psychological level, therefore, not incongruent with the viewpoint of historical materialism. Both views of mythology, the Indian and the Occidental, are parallel yet distinct, for the stories of Los días enmascarados concentrate upon the

contemporary influence of the past on the Mexican man's mind and suggest particular problems for the social unit because of that influence whereas the story of Zona sagrada is indicative of the status of contemporary Mexico involved in a bourgeois neo-capitalistic world which is an imitative image of that world and its pyschological and philosophical problems. There is little propagandizing in either book; they each embody two ends of the Mexican historical and social continuum.

"Chac Mool" and "Por boca de dioses" deal with a fantastic treatment of the pre-Hispanic religious influences. The central theme of both is that of contemporary human sacrifice to the ancient gods in keeping with the historical ceremonies. Both stylistically manifest the impact and horror of the Poe and Quiroga short stories.

"Chac Mool" is the story of a young man Filiberto who buys a statue of the ancient Mayan rain god of the same name and in turn is slowly psychologically devoured by the stone god come to life. The growing psychological horror which Filiberto experiences as the god comes to life is inherent in the following passages. Filiberto has taken the god home and put it in his basement.

> "Amanecí con la tubería descompuesta. Incauto, dejé correr el agua de la cocina, y se desbordó, corrió por el suelo y llegó hasta el sótano, sin que me percatara. El Chac Mool resiste la humedad, pero mis maletas sufrieron; . . .
>
> "Vinieron, por fin, a arreglar la tubería. Las maletas torcidas. Y el Chac Mool, con lama en la base."

"Desperté a la una: había escuchado un quejido terrible. Pensé en ladrones. Pura imaginación."

"Los lamentos nocturnos han seguido. No sé a qué atribuirlo, pero estoy nervioso. Para colmo de males, la tubería volvió a descomponerse, y las lluvias se han colado, inundando el sótano."

"Secaron el sótano, y el Chac Mool está cubierto de lama. Le da un aspecto grotesco, porque toda la masa de la escultura parece padecer de una erisipela verde, salvo los ojos, que han permanecido de piedra. Voy a aprovechar el domingo para raspar el musgo. . . .

. . . . . .

El musgo parecía ya parte de la piedra; fue labor de más de una hora, y sólo a las seis de la tarde pude terminar. No era posible distinguir en lapenumbra, y al dar fin al trabajo, con la mano seguí los contornos de la piedra. Cada vez que repasaba el bloque parecía reblandecerse. No quise creerlo: era ya casi de pasta. Este mercader de la Lagunilla me ha timado. Su escultura precolombina es puro yeso, y la humedad acabará por arruinarla. Le he puesto encima unos trapos, y mañana la pasaré a la pieza de arriba, antes de que sufra un deterioro total."

"Los trapos están en el suelo. Increíble. Volví a palpar a Chac Mool. Se ha endurecido, pero no vuelve a la piedra. No quiero escribirlo: hay en el torso algo de textura de la carne, lo aprieto como goma, siento que algo corre por esa figura recostada. . . . Volví a bajar en la noche. No cabe duda: el Chac Mool tiene vello en los brazos."

. . . . . .

La entrada del 25 de agosto, parecía escrita por otra persona. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . No sé cuánto tiempo pretendí dormir. Cuando volví a abrir los ojos, aún no amanecía. El cuarto olía a horror, a incienso y sangre. Con la mirada negra, recorrí la recámara, hasta detenerme en dos orificios de luz parpadeante, en dos flámulas crueles y amarillas.

"Casi sin aliento encendí la luz.

"Allí estaba Chac Mool, erguido, sonriente, ocre, con su barriga encarnada. Me paralizaban los dos ojillos, casi bizcos, muy pegados a la nariz triangular. Los dientes inferiores, mordiendo el labio superior, inmóviles; sólo el brillo del casquetón cuadrado sobre la cabeza anormalmente voluminosa, delataba vida. Chac Mool avanzó hacia la cama; entonces empezó a llover."[1]

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "Chac Mool," Los días enmascarados, (México: Editorial Novaro México, S.A., 1966), pp. 20-24.

Chac Mool succeeds in displacing Filiberto from his room and in totally paralyzing his life. Filiberto is forced to live in the basement where he first placed the statue. The possibility of death and his own sacrifice is dramatically revealed to Filiberto when he dares to enter his old bedroom after Chac Mool has left the house.

> "La recámara, que no había vuelto a ver desde el día en que intentó atacarme la estatua, está en ruinas, y allí se concentra ese olor a incienso y sangre queha permeado la casa. Pero, detrás de la puerta, hay huesos: huesos de perros, de ratones y gatos. Esto es lo que roba en la noche el Chac Mool para sustentarse. Esto explica los ladridos espantosos de todas las madrugadas."[1]

Filiberto drowns mysteriously in Acapulco after he had fled there, and a friend, having read the diary of his former companion returns the body home and is met by an Indian with a most unusual resemblance to the statue as described in the diary. The friend only too obviously experiences the shock of realizing the verity of Filiberto's diary. The horror of the fate of the body is evidenced in the following.

> Antes de que pudiera introducir la llave en la cerradura, la puerta se abrió. Apareció un indio amarillo, en bata de casa, con bufanda. Su aspecto no podía ser más repulsivo; despedía un olo a loción barata; su cara, polveada, quería cubrir las arrugas; tenía la boca embarrada de lápiz labial mal aplicado, y el pelo daba la impresión de estar teñido.
>
> --Perdone. . ., no sabía que Filiberto hubiera. . .
>
> --No importa; lo sé todo. Dígale a los hombres que lleven el cadáver al sótano.[2]

A pre-Hispanic magical Indian theme is also dramatically used by Fuentes in "Por boca de dioses" in which a detached mouth, possessing magical manipulative powers, causes

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 26-27. [2] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

the untimely death of the protagonist Oliverio in a ritual as complicated and bizarre as the ones used in Zona sagrada to re-create the motion pictures being made starring Mito's mother. The sacrifice of Oliverio is similar to that of Filiberto. In a museum Oliverio steals a mouth from a picture on display; a mouth which can talk and express its own thoughts. While stealing it, he beats to death an old man trying to stop him. He tries to keep the mouth quiet my wrapping it in a silk brassiere which he buys on his way home. As he goes to his room, significantly yet obviously numbered 1519, he meets Tlazol in the hallway, as described.

> Al dar la vuelta al pasillo, vi correr por él a una figura juvenil. Iba saltando con gravedad protocolaria, vestida de rumbera pero con ciertas decoraciones extrañas: las piernas tatuadas, una argolla en la nariz, el pelo, lacio y negro, pesado de aceite, o sangre. . . Cascabeles en los pies y las orejas. Un hedor insoportable surgía de toda su carne, y a la vez, invitaba a comulgar con él. Sus dientes afilados asomaban y cantaban en murmullos de eco viejísimo.
>
> --Acabo de recoger las piezas rotas de aquel anciano que asesinaste. ¿Por qué me das más labores de las necesarias?
>
> Palidecí.
>
> --No te asustes. Es mi deber recoger esos trozos sueltos de carroña y llevarlos siempre, en mi bolsa de mano. Y estoy tan cansada, Oliverio. Y hay formas mejores de asesinar entre nosotros, ¡maldito Oliverio!, ¿por qué lo mataste de esta manera, para tu goce personal, sin tolerar el contacto de todos. . .?
>
> --¿Cómo te llamas?
>
> --Tlazol, supongo que para servir a usted. . .
>
> Cortesía hipócrita, que nos mantiene en un balancín paralítico: "para servir a usted", "esta es su casa", "estoy a su disposición" . . . Tomé su mano ardiente, y Tlazol se sonrojó, pero apretó, a su vez, la mía. La introduje en mi habitación, mientras la boca permanecía sospechosamente callada, en su envoltura voluptuosa de seda y goma. ¡Para servir a usted![1]

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

It is the mouth, however, which takes over Oliverio's body, using it as a means to insult other people and make Oliverio despicable to all those he meets. Oliverio flees to his hotel but the mouth commands the elevator to descend to the basement, symbolic of the underlying yet present past both physically and emotionally, as described in the following.

> . . . la puerta se abrió y un líquido pardusco entró en la jaula: este sótano, inundado, negro, olía a sudario, y pronto las luces y el ruido furioso le invadieron. . . grité espantado: por el largo subterráneo transitaban todos, con sus sonrisas petrificadas, en un sueño de momias sin sepultura. Tepoyollotl, enorme corazón de tierra, vomitando fuego, arrastrándose por los charcos con sus brazos de ventrículo de goma; Mayauel, borracha, la cara pintada y los dientes amarillos; Texcatlipoca, un vidrio de humos congelados en la noche; Izpapalotl seguida de una corte de mariposad apuñaleadas; el doble en una galería de azogue, sombre de todas las sombras, Xolotl; sus plumas ennegrecidas de carbón y de un serpear sin tiempo entre los hacinamientos, Quetzalcóatl. Por las paredes, enredado en sus babas, subía el caracol, Tecciztecatl. Con hálito de nieve, un camaleón blanco devoraba el lodo, y la cabeza de los muertos brillaba al fondo, prisionera del flujo de los desperdicios, cirriando el canto de la guacamayas. Sobre el trono de la tierra, silente y grávida, convirtiéndose en polvo negro, la Vieja Princesa de este sótano, Ilamatecuhthli, su faz raída por un velo de dagas. Los cuerpos devorados se sabían confundidos en el sedimento pulposo del lago.
>
> Un ejército de mariposas rojas había arrastrado al elevadorista desmayado hasta el centro del lago; ahora regresaban, a recogerme a mí. "¡Vamos, Oliverio, a la comunión, a redimirte!", gritaron mis labios.[1]

Unfortunately Oliverio does not make his escape. The next day, accused by Tlazol of being less than a macho, Oliverio opens his door to him. His sacrifice follows.

> Tlazol, en traje de ceremonias, cargada de joyas gruesas y serpientes, avanzó a abrazarme: mi boca reía dislocada.

---

[1]Fuentes, "Por boca de dioses," Los días enmascarados, pp. 77-73.

> Tlazol cerró la puerta con llave, sus labios se acercaron a los míos, y a mordiscos arrancó su carne. En la mano de la Diosa brillaba un puñal opaco; lenta, lenta, lo acercó a mi corazón. La carne de los labios yacía, gimiendo espantosamente, en el suelo.
>
> Los labios gritaban, casi en suspiro: --Huye, Oliverio, huye. . .
>
> Tlazol me abrazó en un espasmo sin suspiros. El puñal quedó allí, en mi centro, como un pivote loco, girando solo mientras ella abría la puerta a la caravana de ruidos minuciosos, de alas y culebras, que se amasaban en el pasillo, y las guitarras torcidas y las voces internas cantaban.[1]

Emmanuel Carballo draws social inferences from both these stories.

> Los elementos que forman este mundo, como las culturas que los representan, se hallan superpuestos: abajo lo indígena, soterrado, actuando como supervivencia; arriba, lo occidental, el mestizaje . . . Simbólicamente la tiranía que ejercen tanto el Chac Mool como los labios indígena sobre la española, el peso de lo antiguo sobre lo moderno.[2]

In his first work Fuentes showed that struggle between the past and the present reality that exists within Mexico. He has continued this underlying theme through to Cambio de piel and Zona sagrada. There are continual mythological references in these short stories, La región más transparente, and in the two novels just cited. Zona sagrada takes place entirely in a mythological world completely of its own. There are many similarities as to theme and method as will be seen as each work is considered.

Carballo expands his classification of the utilization

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 78-79.

[2]Emmanuel Carballo, "Los días enmascarados", Nuestra década, Vol. II, (México: Universidad Nacional de México, 1964), p. 595.

of fantasy as a means of social criticism in the following statement.

> La literatura fantástica es una protesta contra la realidad, no como se cree vulgarmente, una fácil evasión de la coordenada espacio-tiempo en que se vive. Fuentes, al desentenderse aparentemente de la realidad, lo que está haciendo es penetrar más allá, revelar su inconformidad contra los órdenes políticos vigentes. Su protesta toma cuerpo mediante el uso reiterado de la ironía, de la burla. El título del libro es simbólico: va su autor quitando la máscara a cada día - a cada asunto-, presentándolo en su faz insólita: la de la verdad.[1]

In "En defensa de la Trigolibia," a witty and delightful satire of the United States' position as protector of democracy and mankind and the existing Cold War, Fuentes most poignantly points out the empty significance with which this war is viewed by an under-developed nation and deftly implies the meaning that the Cold War has for his nation. The following excerpts are self-explanatory, so obvious are the symbolic countries and la Trigolibia for which the Nusitanians and opposing Tundriusans are in disagreement.

> La esencia de la Trigolibia, decían los Nusitanios, es el libre trigolibear entre los hombres. Naturalmente, mientras más trigolibeen los hombres entre sí, más trigolíbicos serán. Gracias a esta filosofía, Nusitania se convirtió en el país más poderoso y trigolíbico del mundo, y cuando fue necesario, mandó tropas a todas partes a fin de defender con la sangre la Trigolibia y hacer al mundo trigolíbico para la Trigolibia.[2]

This is reminiscent of the fear that Fuentes said the Mexican has with respect to the imposition of North American values

---

[1]Ibid., p. 596.

[2]Fuentes, "En defensa de la Trigolibia," Los días enmascarados, p. 34.

and systems, but it is inherently implied that this equally applies to the imposition of systems of the Soviet Union upon Mexico, and all under-developed countries. According to this story, how did the world situation develop?

> En vista del audaz secuestro de su bienamada idea de Trigolibia por los Tundriusos, los Nusitanios decidieron salir nuevamente por el mundo a defender la Trigolibia. Para ello, se vieron obligados a extender los beneficios adjectivos de la Trigolibia a todos los países hambrientos de trigolíbidos, aunque muchos de estos países fueran antitrigolíbicos. Se creó así el Mundo Trigolíbido. El Comité de Actividades Antitrigolíbicas investiga a las personas sospechosas de atentar contra la Trigolibia en el territorio de Nusitania y fuera de él, de acuerdo con un interesante juego.[1]

Fuentes summarizes the case he has presented in defense of la Trigolibia in this citation, the first of which follows a list of mottoes which the Tundriusans follow.

> Estas normas, como es sabido, derivan del principio explicado por el Padre de la Trigolibia Tundriusa, Trigolibín: "Todos en Tundriusa son trigolíbicos, menos los trigolíbicos, los antitrigolíbicos, y los protrigolíbicos."
>
> Ahora, Nusitania y Tundriusa libran lo que los espíritus más enterados han llamado la Frigotrigolibia.
>
> El lema de Nusitania es: "Defender la Trigolibia hoy, o ser trigolíbicos mañana." Y el de Tundriusa: "Por una Trigolibia sin Trigolibia." Los países de Perupla, que no dicen defenderla, opinan que la Trigolibia es tan sólo la posibilidad de desear la Trigolibia. Los de Tropereta, su atención distraída en el problema de investigar la metafísica del Troperetano, se ocupan de la Trigolibia.[2]

The impact of the Indian past, the Conquest, the Revolution, and that of the modern occidental world upon the Mexican present is represented in the foregoing selected stories. In speaking about Los días enmascarados Fuentes

---

[1] Ibid., p. 35. [2] Ibid., p. 37.

clarifies the subtle suggestions contained therein concerning the importance of an awareness of the social and political situation ordained by the historical influences of the Indian cultures so that that awareness can function to prompt changes in attitude.

> The past, in Mexico, says Fuentes, "weighs heavily, because although the Conquerors, the Spaniards, carried the day, Mexico, because of its particular political and historical makeup, has given the final victory to the conquered. That's what the statue of Quauhtemoc means. . . . Here the defeated have been glorified. Why? Because Mexico is a country where only the dead are heroes. If Francisco Madero, Emiliano Zapata, or Pancho Villa were alive today, with his finger in profiteering and graft, he wouldn't be a hero any more, would he? Our heroes are heroes because they were sacrificed. In Mexico the only saving fate is sacrifice. . . . The nostalgia for the past in Mexico is a direct result of the original defeat, of the fact that Mexico was a country that lost its tongue, its customs, its power, everything. It became a nation of slaves. The Spanish we speak in Mexico is a Spanish of slaves, made entirely of circumlocutions.[1]

Mexico was subordinated to Spain and has become so economically to the United States. That the Mexican's obsessiveness with the past and his defeats is as much a part of his present existence as are the effects of the 1910 Revolution is an understatement. Fuentes hints at no solution for accomplishing psychological or social reforms in any of the stories contained in this collection. The realistic recognition and acceptance of the impact of the past upon contemporary life is sufficient enough, but underlying is the inference that his past should not consume his present. That this preoccupation, as stated in the previous chapter, hobbles Mexico

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 284.

and leaves it questing gropingly within its own traditions for the foundation for progressive steps into the equally needed universal participation is reiterated in the ensuing passage.

> . . . the key word, up to the 1910 Revolution, had been failure. In Mexico, history has been tinged with bloodshed, poverty, anarchy and national humiliation. And these, in turn, bred pessimism, rancor, and fatalism; a sense of guilt, of compassion and solidarity, and a collective shouldering and cleansing of guilt.
>
> Success and failure condition two opposing attitudes in time. When a nation rides the crest of success and power, its sights are set on the future; when its history is shadowed with defeat, it broods on the past. Mexico has been trapped in its history. . . . in Mexico the past is always present: the Indian civilizations, the Spanish Conquest, the Wars of Independence, the Yankee Invasion, the French Intervention and the social revolution of 1910 are relived and refought every day.[1]

Cantar de ciegos, Fuentes' second collection of short stories, consists of seven tales which are a literary blend of those two extremes of past and present with which the Mexican society is internally confronted. Fuentes fuses the local problems with the international, thereby defining that although there exists a unique conflict within the Mexican about the past in juxtaposition to his present reality, there simultaneously exist for him the same conflicts found in other contemporary societies, for indeed the vital organs of the body will evolve in the same processes as does the whole body itself. Each story concentrates on different moral and social issues which concern the Mexican social

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "Party of One," Holiday, October, 1962, p. 13.

masses. The decadence of the bourgeois social system and subsequent psychological impact it has assumed in Mexico is clearly manifested in the stories considered. The following quotation further defines Fuentes' objective intent in the writing of these tales.

> So, in Cantar de Ciegos, which satirizes regressiveness, posturing, faddism, and banality in Mexico, Fuentes rolls out family skeletons for one of the great peep shows of Mexican literature.[1]

This collection was published in 1964, ten years after Los días enmascarados. Both titles afford insight into the content and purpose of each. Los días enmascarados is symbolic as a reference point in that Fuentes, as Carballo implied, strips the mask from each day revealing it as it actually is for the Mexican - a life in which the past haunts the present. Luis Harss explains the symbolic implications of the title Cantar de ciegos.

> The title of his collection is an allusion to the ancient belief that the blind are seers, authorized to read the hidden truths in men's hearts and reveal their secret crimes. There were the blind bards of antiquity, and the blind oracles. There is also a tradition of blind street performers in Spain, who recite woeful tales during the fairs, usually with the aid of a child with a pointer, who marks off the gory episodes on a series of illustrative panels propped in chronological order on a scaffolding. The result is something like a cross between gospel singing and Grand Guignol. The emphasis is on the abysmal and the bizarre.[2]

It might possibly be concluded that Fuentes functions both as the blind seer and the child pointing to those illustra-

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 303.

[2]Ibid.

tive panels which in this instance are of contemporary Mexico. It is essential to note that in this collection there is no preoccupation with the theme of Mexicanism as there is in La región más transparente. Fuentes clearly delineates this internal change which is slowly being effected due to the ever-increasing participation of Mexico within contemporary political, philosophical and social movements.

> Times have changed since the days of La Región Más Transparente, says Fuentes. Options and alternatives are no longer as clear-cut as they used to be.
>
> "What has happened? That the world itself has moved at a different pace, erasing many of the ideological differences. We've had the whole pheonomenon of neocapitalism and the increasing similarity between Eastern statism and the capitalist structures of the West. And Mexico has a very intelligent, very shrewd government elite that has caught on to the way neocapitalism is going and started to apply its principles in Mexico. . . So the whole picture has changed. Culturally what has happened is that there has been a great reaction against chauvinism, against obsessive 'Mexicanism.' The elite above all, the intelligentsia, the young people, the students no longer stand in front of a mirror wondering what it means to be Mexican. All the new movement in art . . . the new writers, the new film makers--they all take their Mexicanism for granted. The problem is to be a man, isn't it? So their art reflects this new personalization and ambiguity."[1]

These stories reflect this change of attitude, but more important intrinsically, they imply the ineptitude of this marginal society to cope maturely with the problems of an ambiguous international society because that traditional attitude of the past has conditioned and molded its psychology. That past has chained the present and restricted it in its growth.

---

[1]Ibid., p. 304.

As Fuentes subtly states, if those chains could be abruptly discarded, though they are slowly rusting away, then the Mexican might truly be free from that psychological imprisonment and be able emotionally to accept his reality instead of becoming consumed in his own instability. The duality persists and the warning with which Fuentes points this out to the Mexican society as Cienfuegos does to the characters in La región más transparente, incorporates the significance of these stories.

> Mexico is young and old. There is already a strain of decadence in its sophistication. But the old way of life is still present. The new Mexico thrives on intricacies. It has begun to live dangerously.[1]

It is now logical to examine particular stories in order to set down the specific problems with which Fuentes deals. "Fortuna lo que ha querido" as Harss summarizes ". . . shows us a fashionable pop painter whose prowesses with the fast crowd and fame among the cultists do not prevent him from discovering his incapacity, or unwillingness, to love."[2] The stylistic mastery with which Fuentes develops his stories, although a parenthetical note, is essentially important to the subjects treated, for a complementing and an inseparable form and content is the prerequisite for a dynamic story regardless of the genre considered. That Fuentes' style enhances the impact of the criticisms and messages made therein understates his significance as a

---

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

prominent portavoz of his people. Alejandro Sevilla, the artist-protagonist of this story, was considered at the beginning of his career to be a new Siqueiros. His artistic endeavors embodied and reflected his country.

> Sevilla vio la Coatlicue y comprendió que la originalidad de México, el margen mínimo pero absoluto de nuestras vidas, es lo que no ha sido tocado por el Occidente.[1]

Sevilla turns from this artistic presentation of Mexico after experiencing the following emotions at one of his exhibitions.

> Tembloroso, salió de la galería sin decir palabra: esas pinturas pálidas de seres en los cuales el choque entre el orden exterior y el desorden interno se invertía para afirmar el orden de la angustia frente al desorden de la realidad, dijeron lo suyo y Alejandro, cerca del desmayo, corrió. . .[2]

Alejandro turned to pop art to express himself and that in which his country was becoming caught up. He was accused: "Lo han acusado de negarse a sí mismo, de darle la espalda al país y de plagiar descaradamente el Pop Art."[3] In his personal life Alejandro could not give himself to love any one woman; he expressed a desire to be protected from love. This aspect only too obviously refers to a modern breakdown in traditional value systems about love and marriage but more important and significant is Alejandro's failure to establish closeness with another human being. Alejandro embodies the subsequent feelings of doubt and inadequacy.

Todos dicen que, buen o mal artista, Alejandro es un

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "Fortuna lo que ha querido," Cantar de ciegos, 3a ed., (México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1967), p. 52.

[2]Ibid., pp. 45-46. [3]Ibid., p. 68.

> Don Juan afortunado e impenitente. Hace poco le recordé que ya cumplió treinta y tres años y que debe pensar en casarse algún día. Alejandro sólo me miró con tristeza.[1]

Bereft of meaningful relationships, Alejandro symbolizes that growing tendency in much of the youth of the contemporary world to avoid, like Zamacona, any real personal commitment, but rather to become lost in the ambiguity of change. Those dangerous intricacies of sophistication are making themselves felt in Mexico and Fuentes suggests caution. He creates a lonely man who seemingly has many friends and who continually has one woman or another with him, regardless of whether she be one of his friend's wives or not. In this context he is little different from a stereotype corporation man of the United States, though Sevilla is a creative man, an artist. To him, none of the women means more than momentary pleasure, a routine of violent passion and fleeting tenderness. These associations he has developed out of calculation. They are associations easily and frequently broken up by both him and the women; there is no real joining together to form an association which does not end the moment it is no longer advantageous. This type of relationship termed Gesellschaft by Fritz Pappenheim in his Alienation in American Society equally applies to Mexican society, therein seconding Marx's connected theories of explotation and alienation. That is, a Gesellschaft rela-

---

[1] Ibid.

tionship is one in a society which is market-centered, a commodity production system. A commordity or relationship is characterized by the split between its exchange value and its use value. Exchange becomes more important than use or intrinsic value. Pappenheim writes: "As we are related only to one fraction of the commodity, the exchange value, so also in personal associations we are related only to one fraction of other individuals, not to their intrinsic value as human beings."[1] This same level of social and economic association exists in the characters of La región más transparente, Cambio de piel and La muerte de Artemio Cruz. The parallel is far more than coincidental. Pappenheim continues categorically affirming that the social associations mandatorially proceed from the economic system: ". . . an economy based on the dominance of exchange value engenders -- we might almost say, demands--human relations which are characterized by the trend toward Gesellschaft and alienation."[2] In stronger language, he further clarifies his beliefs.

> Once commodity production becomes the universal economic mode, all of man's activities come to center around it. Its main feature--the paramount role of exchange value--reaches beyond the merely economic realm and penetrates the whole of human existence. . . . Opponents of socialism often claim that in a socialist society--for reasons within its very structure--the human being will not be recognized as an end in himself but will be used as a tool, and thus will become expendable. While I cannot go into this argument here, I will say that the statement

---

[1]Fritz Pappenheim, Alienation in American Society, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 24.

[2]Ibid.

> seems to be hypocritical, because . . . we are already, under capitalism, living in a society that has produced human relations which make man an <u>object</u> and thus expendable.
>
> Exchange value enters not only the relationship between man and man, destroying the possibility for genuine friendship and fellowship. I believe that exchange value, which has long ceased to be merely an economic category, invades almost all realms of our lives: our art and education, our community living, our political struggles.[1]

What Fuentes is suggesting in the characterization of Alejandro Sevilla and in the protagonist of "A la víbora de la mar", to be analyzed shortly, is adequately and clearly summarized in the following passage.

> We cannot reduce the forces of alienation unless we are ready to build up new and different socio-economic institutions. This does not mean that we need to be blind toward the great historical contribution which capitalism has made in the past, which so severe a critic as Marx was the first not only to recognize but to emphasize. But, as the song asks, "Where have all the flowers gone?" Capitalism can no longer play a positive role today. And a system geared to commodity production and based on competition cannot help man to contend with the forces of alienation.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In our society, to get ahead of the other fellow is considered an important goal, and advertising slogans are still based on the appeal of outdoing the other person--as, for instance, in the kind of commercial which proclaims, "Lady, if you wear this dress, your friends will <u>envy</u> you." The fact that arousing a feeling of envy is considered a positive appeal in advertising is but one symptom that our society promotes <u>separation</u> between man and man. If our goal is to overcome alienation by fostering <u>bonds</u> between man and man, then we must build up institutions which enable man to identify his ends with those of others, with the direction in which his society is moving. In other words, we must try to reduce the gulf between the realms of the private and the public.[2]

Harss says of "Un alma pura": "There is a mysterious moral assassination in the 'compounded fable' . . . a story of

---

[1] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 24-25.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 31-32.

brother-sister incest that exposes the morbidities of 'machismo' and leads its heroes through pregnancy, abortion and suicide."[1] Fuentes does not say that tradition of machismo must be changed. He merely suggests the same in contrasting it with a world attitude with which it is incompatible. The internal solution: understand that characteristic and its evils and try to re-channel or neutralize it. To whom is this directed? -- To both men and women.

Claudia and Juan Luis, sister and brother, part ways when Juan Luis takes a position with the United Nations in Switzerland. Juan Luis lists some of the reasons a young Mexican cannot live within that society without succumbing to it.

> Es que no se puede vivir aquí. Te lo digo en serio. Yo no quiero servir ni a Dios ni al diablo; quiero quemar los dos cabos. Y aquí no puedes, Claudia. Si sólo quieres vivir, eres un traidor en potencia; aquí te obligan a servir, a tomar posiciones, es un país sin libertad de ser uno mismo. No quiero ser gente decente. No quiero ser cortés, mentiroso, muy macho, lambiscón, fino y sútil. Como México no hay dos . . . por fortuna. No quiero seguir de burdel en burdel. Luego, para toda la vida tienes que tratar a las mujeres con un sentimentalismo brutal y dominante porque nunca llegaste a entenderlas. No quiero.[2]

The traditional machismo characteristic attributed to Latin American cultures is herein criticized for its effects on male and female. To escape the above cultural obligations Juan Luis flees to a society which is not internally hobbled by such a concept but which fosters only an ambiguous attitude

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 304.

[2]Fuentes, Cantar de ciegos, pp. 116-17.

about such values. Juan Luis affirms the dual extremism existent in Mexican society.

> Suiza termina por confrontarnos demasiado, decías en una carta; perdemos el sentido de los extremos que en nuestro país son visibles e insultantes.[1]

The internal conflict that a young man experiences as a result of living as an integral part of that society and being expected to conform to a traditional behavior pattern which negates individuality, is evidenced in the above. It is equally important to point out that these silent rigid cultural forces of the traditional past are the same Fuentes himself fought against and periodically flees from on his frequent trips abroad to Europe.

"A la víbora de la mar" is thematically very universally oriented. It is the story of a Mexican spinster who is tricked into marriage by an Anglo-Saxon homosexual and his partner, and bilked subsequently of her money and her expectant married life. She once was a member of the socially elite and since the Revolution has lived an extremely narrow, conservative and isolated life, attached yet distant from the mainstream of modern society, although she owns a dress shop which caters to the nouveau riche of Mexico City. The social reform or criticism inferred from this story is that it points out the virtual unpreparedness of Mexico in its confrontation with many psychological crises of today.

---

[1]Ibid., p. 112.

Mexico is guilty because of its past, but it is innocent in relation to many events of the present. Yet, Mexico is becoming very much a part of world-wide festering decadence because of mass communication and diversification of its internal resources. Robert Mead affirms this participation which these stories reflect.

> Las siete historias que se reúnen en el libro, modelos todos del clásico cuento contemporáneo, son esquisses de la vida entre los artistas, literatos sofisticados. . ., y la élite de hoy. Los personajes y los incidentes podrían ser sacados de muchos cuentos contemporáneos europeos y norteamericanos.[1]

The theme of La región más transparente as seen before is that of the search of the true identity of Mexico. Keeping in mind that this novel was written before Cantar de ciegos and was Fuentes' first novel, its concern with Mexicanism does date it in relation to his more recently pondered themes of social criticism. The theme of liberty indeed socially significant is equally used in this novel by Fuentes. He says, speaking of liberty: "En La región más transparente se encara como necesidad histórica y social."[2] There is that mythological element reminiscent of the Indian past embodied in the character-narrator Ixca Cienfuegos and in his mother Teódula Moctezuma. Fuentes uses the same method in Cambio de piel in which Xipe Totec is the ubiquitous narrator. Harss describes Cienfuegos.

---

[1]Mead, "Airado Novelista Mexicano," p. 233.

[2]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 429.

> Ixca Cienfuegos, a personification of the lingering presence of Mexico's aboriginal past with its pre-Columbian rites and ancient blood feuds.[1]

That there are two Mexicans, the mask and the one behind it, is reiterated in the following excerpt, which should be considered while keeping in mind that times have changed since the days when Fuentes wrote this novel.

> Because Mexico, preset in its course from the beginning, is "incapable of evolution," it will inevitably be claimed by its past, its dead heroes, its lost memories. The rest is mask and appearance, a sheer optical illusion, disguising the decay of a land that has lost its soul and spirit of solidarity.[2]

Fuentes affirms this thematic preoccupation adding a further intent of the novel.

> So I think La Región Más Transparente reflected--intentionally, of course, though without any attempt to expound personal theories--the excessive and somewhat mythical preoccupation over nationality, ancestry, and patrimony rampant at the time in Mexico. At the same time it aspired to give a critical report on the Revolution, at a moment when it could be seen in perspective, as it couldn't have been by the documentary novelists who wrote in the saddle, riding to battle with Pancho Villa.[3]

That the novel does condemn the greed and corruption that abounded before, during and since the Revolution and points out that many of its ideals were betrayed and that it does not so much condemn the individual such as Robles, as it does the whole somewhat apathetic social mass, has been attested in examples given in Chapter II. In dramatic stills

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 289.

[2]Ibid., p. 290.

[3]Ibid., p. 292.

of the lower classes of Mexico City -- of Gladys García, a prostitute with no future nor past, a figure just as valid for the seventeenth century as for the present; of Beto and Tuna, who are caught up in proving their machismo; of Juan Morales, a cab driver who is killed, leaving a large family without support and without anyone to care; of the reflections of children's caskets in the funeral parlor windows; of Gabriel a wetback who earns money in the United States, and of his family to whom he brings a meat grinder that can be used only as a vase because the family has no electricity -- Fuentes emphasizes the blackness of that abyss which exists between the class to which the above characters belong and that to which Robles and his wife Norma, Bobó, Pola and Pimpinela de Ovando belong.

Mead affirms the social portent of this work pointing out its equally important theme of alienation.

> Carlos Fuentes nos hace comprender cómo han sido traicionados los altos ideales de la Revolución por una oligarquía nacida de ella, la cual, como los antiguos "científicos" del porfiriato, no ha vacilado en unirse a empresarios extranjeros (principalmente norteamericanos) en una perfecta relación simbiótica. Estos nuevos plutócratas y aristócratas de la política que se aprovecharon de la Revolución para adelantar sus propios intereses y explotar las masas del pueblo, están dominados por un materialismo egoísta, y apaciguan sus consciencias con decir "nuestro provecho significa 'progreso' para México." El análisis que hace Fuentes de todas las clases sociales pone de relieve la enajenación que sufre ahora la vida mexicana, el desvío cultural que resulta del impacto de costumbres, técnicas, y hasta idioma extranjeros(norteamericanos en gran parte).[1]

---

[1]Mead, "Airado Novelista Mexicano," pp. 231-32.

Ernest Lewald corroborates the above analysis emphasizing more particularly how the class to which Robles and his cohorts belong fits into the historical development of Mexico after the Revolution and the corresponding development of the Mexican novel.

> En realidad, es "la nueva burguesía" de Azuela, tan prominente en las novelas de este escritor alrededor de 1940, la que reaparece veinte años más tarde en las páginas de La región más transparente esta vez transformadas en hedonistas sin escrúpulos y seres culturalmente desarraigados, hasta el extremo de ser caricaturas sacadas del álbum de la burguesía internacional.[1]

In his search for a personal Mexico "debajo de las capas de asfalto de la capital rodeada de nubes de gasolina y luces de neón"[2] Fuentes implies not only his contempt for Mexico's exterior or super-imposed capitalist facade, but equally re-creates the contemporary dilemma of the masses now at the mercy of an international, categorical and calculating bourgeoisie. The bourgeois class is the ultimate evolved caricature of a decaying economic system, no longer able to afford the basic emotional and tangible material of life to a majority of its people.

Whereas the people of the lower class seem unable to counterbalance the inertia of their existence, those of the nouveau riche exert themselves physically and mentally to forget that the lower class lives in the same world and in

---

[1]H. Ernest Lewald, "El pensamiento cultural mexicano en La región más transparente, de Carlos Fuentes," Revista Hispánica Moderna, 33 (1967), p. 219.

[2]Ibid.

the same city with them. Fuentes implies that that abyss is not so wide that it could not be bridged and closed, but it is the growing middle class which inadvertently keeps the upper class from having to comeinto real contact with the problems and reality of that lower class and it is equally from this middle class that hope for social changes for the betterment of all classes may be expected. Fuentes is an example of one such person attempting to bridge the gap so that the society may truly become integrated socially, politically, and economically. It seems, however, that he doubts that the middle class can achieve this either sufficiently or rapidly enough. The reason: according to Fuentes that feudalistic structure still underlies the present structure, and only the complete destruction of it will accord progress. In addition, the complexity of the super-imposed system must also be destroyed. In the following excerpts from perhaps his most vehement essay can be seen what little hope he actually harbors for peaceful initiation of social reforms.

> Today, Latin Americans know . . . they must trust only in themselves, in their capacity to destroy, by themselves, the old feudal structure and replace it with a radically new society, from which they can build for themselves.
>
> Revolution? Yes, because as Mexico and Cuba have demonstrated, only revolution, not aspirins or good wishes, can destroy feudalism.
>
> Revolution? Yes, because as Mexico and Cuba have demonstrated, only armed revolution can destroy forever the armies of caste, protectors of the old order. . . .
>
> Revolution? Yes, because as Mexico and Cuba have demonstrated, only revolution can produce the structural changes necessary to modernize our countries, get our stagnant resources moving, resources that were sold and

> squandered, realize agrarian reform, create an internal market, diversify production, promote popular education, and push industrialization . . .
>
> In our day, a true revolution in Latin America is equivalente to a war of independence. It means starting from the bottom and creating conditions that, at least, will permit the exercise of democracy. A democracy cannot exist, you know, with empty stomachs, empty minds, and empty shacks. Democracy is not a cause; it is a result.
>
> Sacrificing democracy through revolution? Not if there has never been democracy in Latin America. It has been democracy solely of paper and rhetoric. Sacrificing elections? Not if elections in Latin America have been only a ceremony and a fraud. Sacrificing human rights? Which ones? Those of men who do not eat, do not read, do not write, who live in humiliation and terror? Sacrificing freedom of the press? Not if there is no such thing in Latin America; there is an anti-national corrupt press at the service of the interests of feudalism and the most powerful foreign nation at hand.[1]

What would another revolution really mean for modern Mexico? Would it accomplish those ideals which Fuentes has inferred were betrayed in 1910 and would it accomplish those ideals to which he aspires in the above? Is the influence of foreign interests and their economic hold on Mexico too strong? Would a revolution really destroy the imprisoning chains of the past? Would it release the society and allow it to grow naturally from its deformed state? Can the people of the middle and lower classes ignore those changes already incorporated within their society and turn their backs upon expanding them? As Colonel Zagal indicated: ". . . vuelven a vestirse de peones y vuelven a esperar la hora de seguir peleando, aunque dentro de cien años."[2] Fuentes sets down

---

[1]Fuentes, "The Argument of Latin America", pp. 18-20.

[2]Fuentes, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, p. 185.

exactly what he thinks another revolution would accomplish for Mexico.

> The revolution would bring to power the popular majority that for centuries has had neither voice nor votes. In the eyes of this majority, the corrupt press, fraudulent elections, submission to foreigners, freedom of enterprise and the human rights of the minority that oppressed the majority are synonyms of those centuries of exploitations, of negation, of not being. This is not what the people are interested in. They are interested in concrete democracy: the starting point of their real aspirations. They are interested in destroying the old structure of exploitations; they are interested in creating their own new structures, national, popular, with collective benefits, in the knowledge that many mistakes will be committed and many failures endured, but with the hope that this time they will be working for themselves and for their future and not for a bunch of feudal landlords and foreign enterprises. Of course, this transformation demands great sacrifices and is not easy to bring about: four centuries of insanity weigh against it. But there is no other way. The only available alternative is to bear, forever, the old injustice.[1]

Fuentes does indeed seem somewhat idealistic as to the results that such an effort could bring about and yet the sincerity and fervor with which he defends and propounds his beliefs makes one believe that it not only can but will happen.

In La región más transparente Fuentes speculates no definite outcome if vital social reforms which would make the lower classes within the society more collectively equal are not instigated, but he does indicate through his characters what will happen to the society as a whole if they are not. Robles is financially destroyed; his unfaithful, vulgar and greedy wife dies in a fire, a sacrificial victim to the

---

[1]Fuentes, "The Argument of Latin America," p. 20.

gods who devour her in warmth symbolic of the passionate search for closeness and human warmth within a love relationship with Cienfuegos that she never was able to attain; Manuel Zamacona dies a senseless, meaningless death which reflects the hollowness within which his rhetoric resounded, yet which is a simultaneously valid re-creation of the Mexican reality affirmed by Fuentes in this statement.

> México es un país del instante. El mañana es totalmente improbable, peligroso: te pueden matar en una cantina, a la vuelta de una esquina, porque miraste feo, porque comiste un taco. Vives el hoy porque el mañana es improbable.[1]

And, Rodrigo Pola, a writer who conformed to what he originally considered to be a betrayal of the originality and creativity that a writer should strive to attain and maintain, is condemned to a shallow existence, worse than death, but he cannot bring himself to commit suicide. He realizes and accepts his conformity to mediocrity but cannot struggle against the security that a minimal material success and social acceptance has afforded him. Success makes him indifferent, common and alienated. He, unlike Fuentes who shares in common with this character the profession of a screenplay writer, does not fight those values of his own class, which he recognizes as hypocritical, because he does not have the confidence to jeopardize his secure position. He, like the Revolution, betrays himself. A true reform within him and the class which he represents would indeed

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 7.

mark a step toward internal social reform so that more external physical reforms such as a better system of land reform and distribution and other such changes listed by Fuentes in the above quotations, could be realized. Yet, according to Ernest Lewald there is a double significance for Fuentes in the creation of the above characters of both the lower and the bourgeois class. Lewald delineates this meaning simultaneously suggesting that the representatives of both, not just the upper class, symbolize aspects of anti-Mexican values.

> . . . ambos grupos son portadores de actitudes y valores culturales antimexicanos para Fuentes. En la esfera social burguesa los protagonistas como Rodrigo Pola y las Charlotte García, que son mexicanos, se entienden en una jerga compuesta de inglés, francés, español, y se comportan como si la capital de México fuese New York y Acapulco la Riviera francesa. En un plano mucho más primitivo, el bracero Gabriel y sus compañeros, de vuelta con los dólares ganados en la California o Tejas, imponen su grosera fanfarronería y sus palabrotas anglosajones mal aprendidas por el sórdido mundo de los cafetines y burdeles capitalinos.
>
> Para Fuentes ambos grupos representan una despreciable evolución de lo que Azuela denominó "la nueva burguesía." Los miembros de esta clase no sólo son instrumentos peligrosos del capitalismo internacional sino al mismo tiempo diseminadores de un modo de vida hueco, falso, importado.[1]

This analysis, within the context that Fuentes criticizes all degrading aspects of capitalism regardless of the economic class manifestation, does correctly emphasize this point. The social dangers emanating from the lower class, it is true, are detrimental to all society just as are those from

---

[1]Lewald, "El pensamiento cultural mexicano," p. 220.

the upper classes in the final analysis, yet, it must be remembered that the life of the lower classes is itself a caricature and shoddy imitation of the economic and social existence of the financially comfortable class; therein both classes undeniably form extreme ends of the same capitalistic economic and social continuum.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz Harss says, ". . . reflects Fuentes' strong commitment to the cause of social reform."[1] Sánchez Palacios concurs in this classification: "Es prominente el hecho de que Fuentes presenta en esta novela una imagen de los problemas políticos y sociales como un país como el nuestro. . . ."[2] He continues his analysis therein indirectly yet critically demonstrating the similarity in social presentation of the ills of the class society with particular emphasis and attention on the bourgeoisie, as did Lewald in his comments on La región más transparente.

> Cruz se convierte en un burgués y propicia el desfogue de las ideas de Fuentes de presentar descarnadamente a ese sector predominante burguesía, dotada igualmente de vitalidad y cinismo, ha represado las corrientes de la Revolución para desviarlas a estrechos canales de interés propio.[3]

Artemio's uphill battle from nothing to one of the most powerful and influential men in the Mexican business world is depicted in the pages of this novel. Fuentes' third endea-

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 299.

[2]Juan Angel Sánchez Palacios, "Algunos aspectos de la novela La muerte de Artemio Cruz," Armas y Letras, (diciembre, 1963), p. 84.

[3]Ibid., p. 86.

vor in the genre of the novel, this book testifies to the wide range of his artistic ability. He breathes life into Artemio, a life that is most humanly ambitious and equally weak -- and thereby he breathes life into Mexico itself, for ". . . the panorama . . . is mental. The camera has been turned inward, to focus on the mind of the protagonist, who relives his life and, by extension, that of modern Mexico, on his death bed."[1] The realistic correspondence of the social and political predicaments in the novel to daily living are pointed out by Sánchez Palacios in this statement.

> Es en suma el aspecto político una de las grandes vertientes de la novela. Hay en ella la imagen que se amolda perfectamente al México de nuestros días de hace poco tiempo, pues basta sólo un pequeño poder relacionante para identificar muchos sucesos de la novela con otros acontecimientos en la vida real.[2]

Cruz owns the newspaper Vida Mexicana and through it controls the news that reaches the public and in particular keeps certain news items of interest to a high authority from appearing in the publication, or if they do, always in an altered form. As Artemio's thoughts, like footsteps, retrace the past, he remembers the following conversation which shows that there is only controlled freedom of the press and it is those who control it who intend to maintain their power and authoritative positions.

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 299.

[2]Sánchez Palacios, "Algunos aspectos de la novela La muerte de Artemio Cruz," p. 87.

". . . Díaz: tenga mucho cuidado que no se vaya a filtrar una sola línea sobre la represión de la policía contra estos alborotadores.
"--Pero parece que hay un muerto, señor. Además, fue en el centro mismo de la ciudad. Va a ser difícil . . .
"--Nada, nada. Son órdenes de arriba.
"--Pero sé que una hoja de los trabajadores va a publicar la noticia.
"--¿Y en qué está pensando? ¿No le pago yo para pensar? ¿No le pagan en su 'fuente' para pensar? Avise a la Procuraduría para que cierren esa imprenta . . ."[1]

Fuentes would like true freedom of the press. In the novel he does not have to state blatantly as much, for he makes a delicate yet strong lattice-work of these basic needs for change. A further example of the use of a newspaper, which should inform the people rather than to blackmail them is seen in the following.

". . . Este Juan Felipe Couto, como siempre, quiere pasarse de listo . . . Igual que con Federico Robles, ¿te acuerdas? Pero conmigo no se va a poder. . . .
"--¿Cuándo, mi capitán?
"--Obtuvo con mi ayuda la concesión para construir esa carretera en Sonora. Incluso lo ayudé para que le aprobaran un presupuesto como tres veces superior al coste real de la obra, en la inteligencia de que la carretera pasaría por los distritos de riego que le compré a los ejidatarios. Acabo de informarme de que el lángara también compró sus tierritas por aquel rumbo y piensa desviar el trazo de la carretera para que pase por sus propiedades . . .
"--¡Pero qué cerdo! Tan decente que parece.
"--Entonces, muñequita, ya sabes; metes unos cuantos chismes en tu columna hablando del inminente divorcio de nuestro prohombre. Muy suavecito, no más para que se nos asuste.
"--Además tenemos unas fotos de Couto en un cabaret con una guerota que de plano no es Madame Couto.
"--Resérvatela por si no responde . . ."[2]

---

[1]Fuentes, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, p. 87.

[2]Ibid.

Fuentes dramatically pictures Cruz's attitude toward the Church and its representative Father Páez as Artemio thinks about the priest trying to encourage him to confess and to give rites of Extreme Unction to him.

> --el incienso será un olor con tiempo, un olor que se cuenta:
> --el padre Páez vivirá en tu casa, será escondido en el sótano por Catalina: tú no tendrás la culpa, no tendrás la culpa:
> . . . ¿cómo se llama el monstruo que voluntariamente se disfraza de mujer, que voluntariamente se castra, que voluntariamente se emborracha con la sangre ficticia de un Dios?: ¿quién dirá eso?: pero que ama, se lo juro, porque el amor de Dios es muy grande y habita todos los cuerpos, los justifica: tenemos nuestros cuerpos por gracia y bendición de Dios, para darles los minutos de amor de los que la vida quisiera despojarnos. . . . domine non sum dignus, domine non sum dignus: sí, un hombre que puede hablar dolorosamente con Dios, un hombre que puede perdonar el pecado porque lo ha cometido, un sacerdote que tiene derecho a serlo porque su miseria human le permite actuar la redención en su propio cuerpo antes de otorgarlo a los demás: domine non sum dignus: . . .[1]

The above also reflects the traditional attachment to the Church which the man in Mexican society has, while the woman becomes often an integral part of that which the man rejects. Artemio reflects further about his attitude and that of his contemporaries toward the existence of God.

> --Me cago en Dios . . .
> --. . . porque crees en él . . .
> Muy listo. Eso fue muy listo. Me calma. Ya no pienso en esas cosas. Sí, ¿para qué voy a insultarlo, si no existe? Me hace bien esto. Voy a admitir todo esto porque rebelarme es conceder que existen esas cosas. Eso voy a hacer.[2]

It is apparent to any observer that the Catholic Church no

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 123-24. [2]Ibid., p. 117.

longer plays as commanding a role in Mexican life as it did before the Revolution. Fuentes strips it of its protective, impressive cathedral-like mask to show a symbolic churchman who is the personification of decadence and intrinsic moral disintegration, therein showing the weak role to which the Catholic Church in Mexico has been subrodinated. Fuentes does not seem interested in the role that contemporary religious dogma has in Mexican life, but does show the detrimental effects that the Catholic Church had on that life for four centuries--effects which caused the depersonalization of women into passive, non-participators in society, stripping them of the right to a personal identity and predisposing them as exemplified by Catalina Cruz and Asunción Balcárcel of Las buenas conciencias to resort in an unnatural, perverted adherence to religion to withholding of sex to make their existence as individuals felt in a marriage relationship. Catalina married Artemio because he was the only person who could save her father's land and wealth after the Revolution. He had been placed in that advantageous position because he had been with her brother Gonzalo Bernal before the latter's execution. She had no say in the matter of her marriage, which serves partially to bear out the above. The obvious exchange value of Catalina was quickly realized by her father.

> "Acepté como él quiso. El me pidió que no aceptara dudas o razonamientos. Mi padre. Estaba comprada y debía permanecer aquí. . . ."

. . . . . .
"Sin voz ni actitud, comprada, testigo mudo de él."
"Ah, sí, objeto de un placer ocasional."
"¿Madre? Qué parto sin alegría, sin dolor."[1]

It is no wonder that since love and closeness had an almost impossible environment in which grow and thrive that the fundamental conditions of the union remained to keep the two permanently apart. Catalina had sworn to herself to avenge her brother's death which had forced her into the situation of having to marry a stranger, Artemio Cruz, and her only means was to withhold her love and warmth. She did, however, come to love Artemio but only at night, for her shame and disgust at enjoying herself and releasing her inhibited emotions and passions in dark made her cold pride return during the day. Because she felt that she had been bought, she hated herself for natural feelings both physical and emotional and came to put a price on both. She and Artemio almost managed to come close together shortly after her father's death but she was unable to forget her private oath.

"No te lo diré. Me vences de noche. Te venzo de día. No te lo diré. Que nunca creí lo que nos contaste. Que mi padre sabía esconder su humiliación detrás de su señorío, ese hombre cortés, pero que yo puedo vengarlo en secreto y a lo largo de toda la vida."
Comparaba los días felices de la niñez con este galope incomprensible de rostros duros, ambiciones, fortunas derrumbadas o creadas de la nada, hipotecas vencidas, intereses caducos, orgullos sometidos.
("--Nos ha reducido a la miseria. No podemos tener trato contigo; tú eres parte de lo que él nos hace.")[2]

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 97-98. [2]Ibid., pp. 103-04.

She, like the stereotype of the Mexican woman, puts the responsibility of her position on God: ". . . Dios, ¿por qué me has puesto en este compromiso?. . ."[1] She comes to the conclusion: "Soy una mujer débil. Sólo quería una vida tranquila en la que otros escogieran por mí. No . . . no sé decidirme . . . No puedo . . . No puedo . . ."[2] Consequently, Artemio turned to mistresses and Catalina to a separate bedroom. She often tiptoed to listen to the breathing of the man she had rejected and from whom she lived isolated. Artemio built a beautiful mansion and installed one young mistress in it with the full knowledge of all. He never denied the kinds of complex instrument he had become, nor did he regret his actions; he lived with the responsbility of his life, yet an overwhelming vacuum of loneliness, disbelief and aloneness overcomes him as he dies and the reader feels and experiences that vacuum only too realistically. With regard to Catalina he knew that, had she been willing to accept him for what he was, they could have had a love which would have been both satisfying and inspirational. Fuentes shows the barrier to communication that separates man and woman in Mexico. They cannot openly discuss problems of daily living together, such as sex, admittedly a vital component of any conjugal union. Neither can Asunción and Jorge Balcárcel of Las buenas conciencias discuss such facts of living. In all of his works

---

[1] Ibid., p. 108. [2] Ibid., p. 109.

there is not one example of a happy medium marriage relationship; can it then be inferred that the two extremes are in the majority? No, it must be a function of perspective to realize that his works are dedicated to the theme of social reform and the exposure of a trait of the society to examination predisposes that the extremes should be related. With regard to those two extremes, however, it is essential to note that either there is a loveless marriage of convenience with one partner or both having affairs, or there is the prostitute and the Don Juan. What a sad picture Fuentes creates for us, yet it must be remembered that to emphasize the need for individual change and the change of external societal attitudes toward the respective roles of the man and the woman, the author exaggerates somewhat.

This projected lack of communication and isolation between people is the age-old problem of alienation. When people cannot be honest with one another and face life as realistically as possible, it seems that the human race has not changed much since its inception, yet alienation has not so thoroughly dominated human social existence as much in teh past as it does in this contemporary stage of social development. La muerte de Artemio Cruz affords a panoramic exposure of the very private world of a financial magnate and molder of Mexico's present and subsequent future. According to Fuentes, it is the Mexican's duty to decide whether he really likes the present and if not, to change it. To con-

sider the character of Cruz more closely affords a very informative concept of the bourgeois class created by the 1910 Revolution. This is the class most unlikely to relinquish its titles to properties and lands for the benefit of all. This is the class which the Mexican government must convince to accept socialist measures designed to further develop the country or the class which it must fight, although the latter seems highly unlikely. Artemio Cruz symbolizes the successful man Robles almost was and the man Jaime Ceballos wants to become. The theme of liberty, represented differently by Fuentes in each of the works Los días enmascarados, La región más transparente, La muerte de Artemio Cruz and Las buenas conciencias is in this one: ". . . al mismo tiempo, azar, libre albedrío y necesidad."[1]

Artemio maneuvered a marriage and romantically believed its basis would not interfere with the development of love and a meaningful relationship. On his deathbed, he remembers his one lost love, Regina, a young girl to whom he made no such commitment, nor she to him, but with whom he felt himself a man and a fulfilled human being. Artemio Cruz distrusts all people, even his own daughter and his wife. In reviewing the past he realizes how very deeply he loved his son Miguel, but Miguel was killed in the Spanish Civil War living out the unfulfilled revolutionary hopes and aspirations of his father -- a period which corresponds

---

[1]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 429.

to Cárdenas' term as President of Mexico. Artemio feels the guilt of his son's death and regrets having encouraged him to live his own life in accordance with his beliefs. Yet, he accepts this guilt, also, and manages to live on, still successful, never faltering. He is uncontrollably obsessed by the need for incessant maneuvers to get ahead and stay ahead financially, sacrificing everything and anyone dear to obtaining fulfillment of that obsession. The world he sees is one in which a profit must be made regardless of the cost. People are worth only a certain amount and relationships are advantageous only within a profit-making framework. Cruz is dehumanized and although strong, and accepting of his guilt and shortcomings, he dies a sad, dramatically lonely death. Fuentes says of Artemio:

> En su agnoía, Artemio trata de reconquistar, por medio de la memoria, sus doce días definitivos, días que son, en realidad, doce opciones. Nace en una hacienda cafetalera del Golfo; llega a la ciudad de México (aquí le ocurre un incidente con un tal maestro Sebastián, incidente que le llena de dolor y verguenza); participa en la Revolución; enamora en Puebla a Catalina, que llegaría a ser su esposa; se convierte en pequeño cacique; regresa a la ciudad de México, esta vez como diputado; asciende social y económicamente. Su biografía espiritual es más importante que su biografía física. Las negativas, las traiciones, las elecciones, las presiones a las que su espíritu se somete lo empujan al mundo de los objetos, en el cual él es un objeto más. En el tiempo presente de la novela, Artemio es un hombre sin libertad: la ha agotado a fuerza de elegir. Bueno o malo, al lector toca decidirlo.[1]

Continuing, Fuentes further outlines his ruthlessness both on an individual and a collective level.

---

[1]Ibid., p. 441.

> Los demás personajes se sacrifican para que Artemio Cruz cumpla su destino. Cada una de sus elecciones supone el sacrificio de una persona, el sacrificio de un amor, de una posibilidad de ser.[1]

The rite of sacrifice still pervades the Mexican reality; it has merely changed form and manner because of the influence of the cultures and scientific progress of the technologically-advanced world. Now sacrifice is practiced on a far grander, far more ruthless and much more tolerable and imperceptible level, for the masses are killed more slowly and surely and in many different ways but without even one respectable reason, even a religious one, to give this world massacre a justifiable traditional status. The people are sacrificed slowly with little mercy, and with no respect nor dignity whatsoever. And all this for what? So that man may remain free to breath the air, eat, and live a relatively calm, comfortable life.

Pappenheim ably offers a summation totally applicable to Cruz's alienation.

> There are three types of alienation. First, there is man's alienation from himself. Modern man often finds it hard to be himself; he has become a stranger to himself. At the same time, he has become estranged, or alienated, from his fellow man. And finally, he experiences alienation from the world in which he lives.
> . . . . . .
> The alienated man is frequently a successful man. As long as the success continues, it often engenders a certain numbness toward the price the individual is paying, toward the fact that he has become estranged from himself. Only in periods of crisis does he become aware of alienation. Societies, too, often do not feel disturbed by

---

[1] Ibid.

> forces of alienation. Only in critical phases of their history do they become alert to the problem.[1]

As he is dying, and in a crisis unlike any other he has before confronted and conquered, Cruz becomes aware of that alienation. Stylistically segregated by Fuentes, Cruz is an alienated trinity of beings who in reality are only one supposedly integrated person, only one living entity with its trinity of time periods to live -- the yo of the present, the tú of the future, and the él of the past. Cruz has lived his life with as much concern for his fellow man as for death which keeps vigil over him in his final twelve hours. Cruz angrily wants the doctors to make his body well, to feel better -- even though they cannot hear him. He even feels detached from that body and becomes infuriated because it has suffered a malfunction which his will cannot control. The hatred between him and his wife and daughter is emphasized when his daughter continually insists that he is simply faking illness and probably will not die after all, simply to spite them. He, now, is not a warm, living, breathing useful human being, he is an object -- a sacrificial animal awaiting death from his family, the vultures, who will only devour what little is left of him but will nurture and become carriers of the moral sickness which afflicts him. His ultimate worth to them is dramatized as he watches them scavenge for his will about which he merrily and joyfully

---

[1]Pappenheim, Alienation, pp. 16-18.

misleads them in his coherent moments, just to see them greedily pick for it before his death. It is indeed a bleak picture of family bonds; but it is a reflection of the same bonds which the capitalist society uprightly and staunchly defends and affirms that exist, even though they do not.

Las buenas conciencias was the first of a now discarded series of four novels depicting as Fuentes says:

> . . . el mundo de los jóvenes mexicanos, de los que no lucharon en la Revolución y hoy buscar nuevas formas de vida, libres, creativas, ajenas a las presiones inmorales que sobre la vida personal de los mexicanos ejercen el feudalism clerical heredado de España y la americanización vulgar de la clase en el poder, formas opuestas al actual esquema oficial del optimismo, las buenas conciencias y el silencio.[1]

Fuentes states the initial purpose of the series of novels.

> . . . éstas son las novelas de cuatro individuos ante problemas morales del México contemporáneo: El catolicismo, la lucha obrera, la vida íntima de una mujer. Al cabo, todo desemboca en un solo problema, tan intenso en México como en cualquier otra parte del mundo moderno: ¿cuáles son los límites de la responsabilidad personal? ¿Dónde se encuentra la línea que separa a la inocencia de la culpa, si en verdad hay inocentes y culpables?[2]

Luis Harss corroborates with the following theoretical classification of this theme which is characteristic of Fuentes, as a social reformer. "As usual in Fuentes, the central problem dealt with is that of the 'individual responsibility

---

[1]Claude Couffon, "Carlos Fuentes y la novela mexicana," Cuadernos Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura, (mayo-junio de 1960), p. 68.

[2]Ibid.

in an evolving community.' The search for a personal base, outside caste and family."[1]

In his interview with Emir Rodríguez-Monegal, Fuentes states that Las buenas conciencias embodies some autobiographical aspects. Referring to the protagonist, Jaime Ceballos, he says.

> . . . "la escribí en un momento de ruptura mía, muy traumática, con mi familia, con mi pasado, con mi educación religiosa, burguesa y demás, que traté de trasladar a la experiencia del personaje."[2]

Due to the fact that the novel does contain certain autobiographical aspects, it is understandable that it is not a stream-of-consciousness novel and that there is little time-play element. It is almost didactic and in that respect stylistically in concurrence with a more traditional Latin American social protest or social criticism novel.

Las buenas conciencias testifies to Fuentes' versatility as a novelist; and, although Fuentes' direction as the author is obvious, the writing and the story hold the reader's interest. The theme of liberty appears in this novel "como fracaso de la rebelión individual."[3] Jaime makes of himself a Christ figure when he goes into the country to flail himself, in an attempt to psychologically and physically accept and suffer the punishment for all the evil in the world. His mother Adelina, who was disowned

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 298.

[2]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 16.

[3]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 429.

by her family, and Ezequiel, a fugitive leader of a mine strike whom Jaime helped to hide but who was captured when Jaime's uncle informed the police, are the two persons whom Jaime believes he should be able to reach out to and accept most readily. As he punishes himself, he imagines Adelina before him drinking beer and Ezequiel brought before him bound as he was when he was captured. Why did he want to sacrifice himself for humanity?

> . . . hace caer sobre las espaldas el látigo de espinas; tuerce la boca, reprime las palabras que distraen y alivian el dolor. Vuelve a caer el fuste erizado; vuelve a clavarse en la espalda. Lo arranca, espera--ahora con necesidad--el siguiente golpe. Una espina aguda se clava bajo la tetilla: al arrancar el látigo trenzado, siente que el ancho le levanta la carne . . . Toca la sangre espesa y cae de rodillas entre los matorrales. . . .¿Por qué es alegre el dolor? No buscaba--siente, hincado sobre la tierra más dura--este calor suave en las entrañas, este látido alegre. Fue por ellos--dice en silencio--; por cada uno de ellos; porque las cosas buenas no pueden quedar sin premio; porque lo malo no puede quedar sin castigo; porque alguien tiene que echarse encima lo que los demás no quieren . . .[1]

After his father's death when Jaime and his Aunt Asunción are attending the novena, he imagines that he has a conversation which is really one between him and his conscience, with the statue of Jesus.

> Estaba solo con el Cristo negro de su adolescencia, con la escultura sangrante y retorcida que esta noche volvía a hablarle, como durante aquella Semana Santa de su despertar.
> --¿Tengo un destino mío, Señor?
> --Pero no estás solo, mi hijo.
> --Señor, no quiero engañarme más. Creí que yo solo,

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, Las buenas conciencias, 3a ed., (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961), pp. 134-36.

> obedeciendo tu lección, sería un buen cristiano . . .
> --Pero no estás solo, mi hijo. Mi lección sólo se cumple al lado de los demás.
> --Señor, te digo en secreto que no tendré el valor de descender hasta ella; te confieso que su mundo me llena de horror, que no sabría de que hablarle, que no aguantaría esas palabras de ella, ni la suciedad, ni la mala educación, o las habladurías de toda esta gente que está aquí . . .
> --Señor, te digo en secreto que Juan Manuel me hace sentirme tranquilo con mi conciencia, igual que mi desplante de ir a trabajar a Irapuato.
> --Sientes que le haces un favor a tu amigo. No lo quieres de verdad.
> --No . . . sí . . .
> --Lo sientes fuera de tí y crees que puedes inclinarte a darle la mano sin perder tu dignidad; pero confundirte con la vida de tu madre no sería lo mismo. Entonces sí que estarías al mismo nivel de los humildes. Pero tú solo amas a los humildes desde arriba.[1]

Jaime expresses the condemnation and revulsion that youth and innocence experience when it realizes that there are hypocrites in the world and that as his father Rodolfo said before his death, "Qué distinto . . . lo que somos de lo que pudimos ser."[2] It is this loaded sentence which Fuentes at a time very appropriate to the structure of the novel used to point out the essence of each of the characters in the novel and in particular Jaime. Although Jaime had struggled within himself against the falsity of the world which Uncle Balcárcel and Aunt Asunción represented, he succumbed.

> El disgusto y la complacencia batallaban dentro de él. Sentía una intranquilidad apremiante, que se negaba a ser suprimida. Los Balcárcel se alejaban: no quería ser como ellos; y, sin embargo, qué segura tranquilidad le invadía al pensarse como ellos.

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 180-81. [2]Ibid., p. 161.

> Pudo haberse preguntado en qué instante la cabeza rubia del niño--esa invitación a la caricia protectora--se había levantado con un mínimo reto que, en verdad, dejaba de retar para convertirse, apenas, en el rasgo estereotipado de la juventud conforme, obediente de una ley no escrita según la cual los jóvenes deben mirar con indiferencia, casi con desprecio, al mundo.
>
> Pero todas estas nuevas actitudes le pasaban desapercibidas. Sólo, en un apoyo secreto de la conciencia, chocaban esas fuerzas del disgusto y la tranquilidad.[1]

In the following passage, Fuentes describes Jaime, the symbol of the provincial bourgeois class in contrast to Juan Lorenzo, the representative of the lower peasant class. At first the economic boundary between them does not affect their close friendship at all, yet, ultimately the social meaning of that difference in economic status rears its ugly head, and Jaime chooses to have a clear conscience within the protective security of his class -- signaling the definite end to the friendship. In the novel, Fuentes implies that Juan Lorenzo goes on to lead a very radical, active life in an attempt to better the material conditions of life of his people and of that class.

> . . . hay elementos de gran contradicción en Lorenzo, que es, también, un muchacho muy positivo. Simboliza, un tanto, el tránsito de esta sociedad nuestra que está ya muy lejos de lo que fue--de esas raíces que todavía le cuelgan por los brazos a Lorenzo--, y todavía muy lejos de lo que quiere ser. . . .[2]

The decision reached, Jaime is destined to become another Artemio Cruz or a Federico Robles. The ideals of youth and the echoes of the Revolution are silenced in the vacuum

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 182-83.

[2]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 438.

of a good conscience.

> . . . viviría con la consciencia tranquila.
>
> La buena conciencia. Aquella noche, en el callejón oscuro de Guanajuato, las palabras le atravesaron con dolor la lengua. Iba a ser un hombre justo. Pero Cristo no había venido por los justos, sino por los pecadores.
>
> Por primera vez en su vida, rechazó la idea. Tenía que hacerse hombre, tenía que olvidar sus niñerías de ayer. Así estaba ordenado el mundo en el que vivía. Cristo quería a los justos, habitaba las buenas conscien-cias, pertenecía a los hombres de bien, a la gente decente, a las buenas reputaciones. ¡Qué cargara el diablo con los humildes, con los pecadores, con los abandonados, con los rebeldes, con los miserables, con todos los que quedaban al margen del orden aceptado![1]

Jaime represents the ironic hope in the prospect for concrete societal changes. He and his father symbolize Mexico's internal conflict -- Mexico with its two cultural heritages, Mexico with a fear of itself that paralyzes it. As Rodolfo is dying Jaime sits with him and it is seen in this passage that there is an internal and an external abyss of fear which separates the young Mexican of today from the old Mexico.

> Trataba de recordar el pasaje del Evangelio sobre las casas divididas; lo mezclaba con algún cita de Nietzsche. Pero algo que las ideas, la diferencia de años o la distancia personal los separaba. . . . El moribundo se afirmaba en su estado; el vivo en el suyo. Ninguno quería saber nada del contrario. Cada cual hubiese querido ver, en el otro, un reflejo, no una negación. Sólo se hubiesen aceptado en una situación idéntica . . . Por eso Jaime no quiso escuchar las palabras que al fin brotaron de la garganta del padre como burbujas de un hervor apagado. El hijo, con la cabeza pegada al pecho del enfermo, contenía la respiración. "Morimos mucho, mucho tiempo."[2]

---

[1]Fuentes, Las buenas conciencias, p. 190.

[2]Ibid., pp. 165-66.

To emphasize further how distinctly youth sees reality and the blatant hypocrisy of institutions such as the Catholic Church, we may cite the following quotations taken from a conversation between Father Obregón and Jaime, which offer an insight into religious dogma as Jaime sees it. Jaime has just been brought in from the country where he punished himself. Also in evidence in this selection is the attitude of the Church as represented by Obregón. That attitude is as detached from present reality as is the concept of a medieval doctor attempting to analyze psychologically a contemporary hippy. Obregón tries to convince Jaime that no mere man can receive forgiveness for his sins from God without anyone else to intercede. Also, he tries to convince him that no man can change the world by accepting responsbility for its evil actions. Jaime thinks that he can receive forgiveness and Obregón explodes. "--Nadie puede decir eso, Siempre se necesitarán dos hombres para acercarse a Dios. Uno sólo no puede. ¿Me entiendes, tú que ya eres un hombre? Uno sólo no puede."[1] Jaime reveals his innocence and his keen observance of the role of the Church in the lives of those like his aunt and uncle.

> Pero padre, yo creo que todo lo que usted dice, todo ese mundo de amor, sólo es posible si yo cumplo la lección de Cristo.
> --Eso creemos todos, hijo. Pero para cumplirla necesitas a la Iglesia, que es el cuerpo de Cristo en la tierra. ¿Cómo vas a andar tú por tu camino y la Iglesia por el suyo?

---

[1] Ibid., p. 147.

> --La iglesia ya no es Cristo, Padre--volvieron a endurecerse la mirada y la voz del muchacho--. La Iglesia es el lugar a donde viene doña Asunción y mi tío Blacárcel y todos los demás a sentirse buenas gentes una vez por semana. A que los vean. No les importa Cristo, ni quieren de veras vivir con él. Además, ni pueden.[1]

As in the relationship between Catalina and Artemio, Asunción cannot, like Catalina, bring herself to try to talk about her life with Jorge. She resorts to God and prayers to fill that life her husband makes void for her. He protected himself from complaint of not giving her a son, by taking in Jaime as that son.

> Al año de casados, los esposos habían visto, en Londres, a un médico. Asunción no olvidaría las palabras del doctor: "Usted no tiene nada. Podrá tener los hijos que quiera." Pero Jorge nunca le dio a conocer el resultado de su propia consulta.
>
> . . .La educación de la muchacha no le permitía abordar el problema con su esposo. . . . Y la inocencia de la mujer, que en una relación normal hubiese sido sexualidad corriente, sin relieves, se transformó en una violencia interna, concentrada y primitiva. Las relaciones con el marido eran externas y mecánicas; Asunción se acostumbró a no esperar fruto de ellas. Vivía su propio mundo secreto de visiones y apetitos insatisfechos. Nunca habló de esto con nadie. Sólo en sueños, o en momentos de soledad, alimentaba las visiones táctiles de fecundidad hinchada, de caricias maternales, de semillas de carne. Despertaba fatigada; corría con tambores en la cabeza y el vientre al que hacer doméstico; lograba conjurar el hechizo durante algunos días; siempre volvía a caer en él.[2]

Jorge's attitude toward the way that a wife should be treated by her husband and be expected to react is expressed in the following excerpt, which also manifests the difficulty and

---

[1] Ibid., p. 150.

[2] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

frustration that the Mexican woman must experience as she is expected to be either a moral prostitute or the righteous Holy Mother. This conception equally has plagued the United States society of women and has caused untold psychological torment for women of both nations. Even the hint of developing change in the existent double standard smacks of unstable extremism to the other end of the continuum; therefore, such a change does not free the individual woman from experiencing a groping for a value system in concurrence with the fact that she is neither morally bereft of values nor is she a sacred pillar of sanctity and chastity.

> (--Decididamente, las cosas no tienen por qué salir mal. Todo se premia en la vida. ¿Por qué me pagan con la intranquilidad y la rebeldía? Si pudiera hablarte, Asunción, si pudieras entenderme. Puedes pensar que a veces soy frío contigo. Pero ésa es mi manera de respetarte. No traeré la prostitución a mi casa. No soy perfecto; tengo la debilidad natural de los hombres. Pero a tí te respeto; cuando caigo en tentación me voy lejos, dejo mis tentaciones sucias en León, en Guadalajara, o en México. En mi casa soy limpio, y te amo castamente. ¿Lo entenderías si te lo dijera? He querido ser un hombre bueno.)[1]

The criticisms that Fuentes levels against the society in Las buenas conciencias are unmistakably evident. The cleavage between young and old Mexico; the lack of realistic communication between a man and woman without the use of masks to conceal the fact that each is a human being possessing natural human needs and desires which should not be suppressed nor perverted privately in order to appear superfi-

---

[1]Ibid., p. 143.

cially and artificially more righteous than humanly possible; the stifling of the society's potentiality for growth through change is symbolized in Jaime's conflict and resolution; and the complete detachment from living reality that the Church demonstrates, are interwoven social themes. As in La región más transparente it is conceded that these aspects are probably slightly disproportionate, but Fuentes certainly does not cite conditions which could not be very real and credible. The social and cultural stagnation that ideas steeped in the inflexibility of tradition ordains, prevails throughout the book. What can be concluded by inference as the concentrated message of the work is the recognition of the stagnation resultant from paralyzing compromises so that a Jaime Ceballos could personify real hope for Mexico instead of repetition.

The theme of Cambio de piel is basically the same as that of Las buenas conciencias, but it is far more cosmopolitan, more incisive, and more experimental than any of his previous works. Fuentes best summarizes the theme in the following.

> Once again, he says, it is "the story of a conflict between an individual and the world," more specifically, "between those old cherished private notions with which we try to justify our lives and the passion of a world that contradicts them."[1]

The political and social vision which Fuentes manifests in

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 308.

this novel is Marxist. It is not, however, a propagandistic political work, for, indeed, he capably separates literary creation from political dogma. Fuentes indicates the importance of this Marxist vision of the world for an understanding of the theme of the novel.

> Digamos, entonces, que en "Cambio de piel" hay una visión marxista, esta vez implícita, muy implícitz, porque ha sido demasiado explícita en mis otras obras, de lo que el hombre le debe al mundo, a la historia que hace y padece el hombre, y una visión nietzscheana de lo que el hombre se debe a sí mismo, al yo que el mundo, a su vez, hace y padece. Me interesaba, siempre de una manera sugerida, enfrentar y acaso fundir esa oposición gemela, solidaria. Diría que en la novela se circunscribe una arena en la que luchan las relaciones susceptibles de racionalizarse, la verdad socio-histórico-psicológica, y la relación que la verdad narrativa extralógica quisiera imponer.[1]

This philosophical juxtaposition of Nietzsche and Marx within the characters and structure of Cambio de piel is further clarified as Fuentes continues his explication of the significance of the major theme as stated above.

> . . . el espíritu nietzscheano en un aspecto que me importa mucho, . . . se ha llevado demasiado agua a molinos que no eran el suyo, se olvida que todas las declaraciones de Nietzsche son negadas por otras declaraciones de Nietzsche y que esto, lejos de significar eclecticismo, constituye la coherencia misma de su obra. En la lucha perpetua entre "episteme" y "doxa", Nietzsche ofreció el método de autocontradicción para impedir el sistema del dogma: variar sin fin las perspectivas, criticar sin fin las certidumbres adquiridas, iluminar desde todos los puntos de vista: una filosofía escultórica de múltiples llaves, de multiplicadas hipótesis, que requiere de la contradicción para no petrificarse en el sistema. Creo que, en este sentido, Nietzsche es importante para Marx,

---

[1]José-Miguel Ullán, "Carlos Fuentes: Salto mortal hacia mañana," Insula, Vol. 22 (abril, 1967), p. 12.

> como en otros aspectos Marx lo es para Nietzsche. Porque existe un marxismo "detenido", como lo llama Sartre. . . . Hay . . . muchos artistas del mundo socialista, que realizan un gran esfuerzo de removilización del pensamiento abierto de Marx y Engels. La fidelidad a una sola visión del mundo, inmutable, pasa a menudo, entre nosotros, por un rasgo de honestidad intelectual. Para mí, es la puerta de la esclerosis--cuando no del fascismo--: Nietzsche decía: "Son necesarios otro vigor y otra movilidad para mantenerse dentro de un sistema inacabado, de perspectivas libres e indefinidas, en vez de instalarse en un mundo dogmático." Te hablo de todo esto, porque quizás el germen de "Cambio de piel" está allí, ...[1]

One of the primary sustaining tenets of Marxist social theory and methodology is the constant self-questioning, self-criticizing and self-scrutinizing of the system as it is evolving. This is the aspect which assured a continual progressive evolution; it is the frontal confrontation of ways of life and subsequently, of the ideas and attitudes resultant from those ways of living which assure the development of the better and better world -- the more advanced form of an evolving economic and social system, as Fuentes indicates again in this excerpt.

> La Unión Soviética y los países de su zona de influencia no son, tampoco, el mejor de los mundos y no es preciso ser anticomunista para decirlo. Al contrario, una de las exigencias del socialismo es la de ejercer la crítica constante. ¿Cómo puede haber verdadera dialéctica si lo real es identificado únicamente con la tesis? ¿Cómo puede superarse la enajenación si no se admiten y combaten las enajenaciones propias del sistema socialista? El socialismo nació de una disidencia: el asentimiento le es mortal.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[2] Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 91.

Neither a dogmatic acceptance of one social system over another nor the acceptance of one social system as an inevitable end to the development and evolution of social units is tenable. Therefore, neither capitalism nor socialism as economic bases with their corresponding social structures can be accepted as ends to the developmental and growth process of society. Neither capitalism nor socialism is a final stage in the evolution of the society of man. Both are, however, progressive phases indicative of the movement of the various vital organs of the child -- the various social units of world society -- forward and onward to a better economic and social state. Fuentes affirms this position in speaking of the power of the writer's words and the role they play in this growth process.

> . . . la sociedad de consumo puede adularla en vez de perseguirla, pero sabe que la palabra del artista es enemiga, aún cuando su sentido sólo sea (y basta que tenga un sentido para ser enemiga: la base de la sociedad de consumo es la pérdida del sentido a fuerza de darle un falso sentido a todo; es la falta de la interrogación sobre el sentido)ése, claro y estrito, que Engels le adjudicó: afirmar y reafirmar que no vivimos en el mejor de los mundos: que ninguna sociedad representa la culminación de la historia.[1]

Capitalism as an economic and social order preceded socialism in development and, therefore, scientifically and historically is a dying phase just as the early stages of its phylogenic descendants are currently dying away and new concepts of economy and social living are developing. In other words,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 90.

the becoming or the present is the vital component of progress, evolution and growth. This method of interpretation and vision of the world is again succinctly summarized in Stalin's Dialectical and Historical Materialism.

> . . . if the world is in a state of constant movement and development, if the dying away of the old and the upgrowth of the new is a law of development, then it is clear that there can be no "immutable" social systems, no "eternal principles" of private property and exploitation, no "eternal ideas" of the subjugation of the peasant to the landlord, of the worker to the capitalist.
>
> Hence the capitalist system can be replaced by the socialist system, just as at one time the feudal system was replaced by the capitalist system.
>
> Hence we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force.[1]

Stalin continues this analysis ending it with a quotation by Lenin, which is most relevant for today's world situation.

> Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of development, the internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "In its proper meaning," Lenin says, "dialectics is the study of the contradiction within the very essence of things."(Philosophical Notebooks.)
>
> And further:
>
> "Development is the 'struggle' of opposites."[2]

---

[1]Stalin, Materialism, p. 13.

[2]Ibid., p. 11.

It is this very open position and stand which Marx establishes that Fuentes feels is of paramount importance not only to himself in his own writings but to the world. Speaking of the end of Cambio de piel when the narrator Freddie Lambert or Xipe Totec is imprisoned in the insane asylum, Fuentes refers to this state of openness.

> La audacia de esa apertura intelectual y sensorial; la apertura significa la posibilidad misma de contagio. Lambert, como Nietzsche, como el narrador de "Cambio de piel", será encerrado en la prisión-hospital-manicomio-iglesia porque es un ser abierto: peligroso.[1]

The Narrator of this novel is a mythological figure like Ixca Cienfuegos in La región más transparente, yet in this work he is much more than a narrator-character. Fuentes says, speaking of him: ". . . el Narrador podría ser todos."[2] However, he does not intervene in the action of the novel other than as an observer, unlike Cienfuegos, until the latter part of the book. At the beginning of Part II, one of his identities is revealed: "El Narrador, Xipe Totec, Nuestro Señor el Desollado, cambia de piel."[3] He is also known as Freddie Lambert, as the reader discovers at the end of the work; and he is the cab driver who drives Elizabeth and Javier home from a bar one night. The basic background of the story is psychologically similar to that of his first

---

[1]Ullán, "Salto mortal hacia mañana," p. 13.

[2]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 10.

[3]Carlos Fuentes, Cambio de piel, (México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1967), p. 368.

novel. Harss capably relates the setting.

> . . . he weaves a delicate counterpoint between modern life in the historic village of central Mexico called Cholula and life in that same village in the days of Cortes.[1]

The backdrop, however, is overwhelmed by the combination of social criticism, a stylistic stream-of-consciousness technique, and time-play devices. That Cambio de piel is an expanded version of La región más transparente and of a less past-oriented Mexico can be fully understood only after a reading of both. The following plot summary affords a succinct description of the principal characters and suggests the link which binds them.

> The zigzagging plot surges surges around four principals, Javier, a U.N. diplomat and unfulfilled poet, is vacationing back home in Mexico with Elizabeth, his New York-born wife of twenty years, true to him after her fashion and still wanting from him that complete love which Mexican machos find hard to bestow. Franz, an ex-Nazi, is expiating his inability to save a Jewish girl from the concentration camp to which he had been assigned. Isabel, least important member of the group, serves as a rival and alter ego to Elizabeth (the former name being, of course, the Spanish form of the latter). The two couples drive in Franz's Volkswagen along the winding road from Cuernavaca to Cholula, ancient pantheon-city of the Aztecs, where the sinister, omniscient Narrator awaits them. He is joined by the Monks, six wacky characters right out of East Village.[2]

All four characters are involved in a love rectangle. Franz and Isabel are lovers; Franz and Elizabeth are lovers; Javier and Elizabeth are married; and Javier and Isabel are lovers.

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 308.

[2]Robert J. Clements, "A Riddle of Life and the Good Love," review of Change of Skin, by Carlos Fuentes in Saturday Review, January 27, 1968, p. 27.

All are attempting to find within each other a feeling of completion which they cannot individually gain. As Fuentes said, the Narrator could be all of the characters. Emir Rodríguez-Monegal intimates the duality of the characters in his interpretation of the novel.

> No me parecía casual que las dos mujeres, por ejemplo, tuvieran el mismo nombre: Elizabeth e Isabel. De alguna manera sentía que eran permutables, que se trataba de la misma mujer en distinta altura de la situación vital o en distinta circunstancia. Los dos hombres, Javier y Franz, también podrían ser el mismo.
> . . . . . .
> . . . hay un plano en que el Narrador de la novela puede ser también un chofer y puede ser Javier en una especie de desdoblamiento. Y hasta te diría que también puede ser Franz, lo que pone más en tela de juicio la identidad de cada personaje.[1]

In one statement Fuentes summarizes the novel structurally and hints at another aspect of the basic theme: "La novela está llena de dobles. Hay incluso un capítulo dedicado al doble, a William Wilson, a Mr. Hyde. Todo apunta a una cosa: la novela misma es un doble."[2] That aspect is the same thematic concern expressed by the philosophical juxtaposition of Nietzsche and Marx and in the statement from Las buenas conciencias by Jaime Ceballos' father Rodolfo: "Qué diferente podemos ser, de lo que somos."[3] Fuentes reiterates this thematic position and philosophy. "Elizabeth es lo que Isabel puede ser y lo que no debe ser al mismo tiempo. Isabel

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," pp. 10-11.

[2]Ibid., p. 10.

[3]Fuentes, Las buenas conciencias, p. 161.

es una repetición de Elizabeth a otro tiempo, a otro ritmo."[1] Carballo testifies to this duality within the theme in writing about Fuentes himself and his work.

> . . . Fuentes como el México de nuestros días juega a ser alternativamente dependiente y revolucionario, fiel a sus raíces y descastado, orgullosamente viejo y coherentemente innovador. Fuentes ofrece la imagen de lo que somoe y de lo que queremos ser, de lo que hemos padecido y de lo que nos falta por sufrir. Fuentes en un ciudadano del mundo que al mismo tiempo no ha dejado de ser un habitante de la "región más transparente del aire".[2]

The spotlight focuses mainly upon the vacillating relationship that Javier and Elizabeth have and the ultimate effect which the relationship between Elizabeth, a Jewess, and Franz, once an architect in a concentration camp has upon the marriage. The latter link is important for its subtle implications for the world society.

> Javier and Elizabeth must constantly vindicate or reaffirm their love against the obstacles of a hostile because overpermissive society. . . . The tardy redemption of this love by its two excessively demanding partners is apparently not possible until the ritual sacrifice of Franz, the rival.[3]

The novel consists of flashback verbiage, for the actual chronological time is but one day. Fuentes has written different conclusions as to how the confrontation of the four in Cholula terminates, causing definite confusion on the part of the traditional-oriented reader, yet correspon-

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 10.

[2]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 447.

[3]Clements, "A Riddle of Life and the Good Love," Saturday Review, January 27, 1968, p. 28.

ding to Fuentes' desire for a truly absolute fictional work. It is again confirmed as the novel closes that the Narrator is at least psychologically enclosed within the same prison that once housed so many Jews. The pyramid at Cholula itself symbolizes Mexico's two heritages: the Aztec sacrificial pyramid and the Catholic chapel built at its summit. The correspondence of history, that is, the Aztecs and their defeat and conquest by Cortez and the annihilation of millions of Jews by the Nazis, along with other historical accounts, with that of fictional occurrences in the novel implies the two dimensions of the work. Just as the characters are doubles, so is fiction a double of history or vice versa. Fuentes believes this aspect to be the only true unity in his text.

> Creo que es esa la unidad de la novela, una novela que a veces parece no tener unidad. Para mí la unidad profunda es esa que acabamos de decir: la Historia es ficción, la realidad es apócrifa, el Nuevo Testamento fue escrito por Julio Verne.[1]

Fuentes further clarifies his beliefs while seeming to contradict the scientific theory of the laws of historical and social development as set forth in Chapters I and II, but actually only focusing attention upon and highlighting the fact that the historical process of development and growth is consistent and does not vary dramatically whereas the product of that process does change, sometimes abruptly, as it evolves.

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 11.

> Hay una historia paralizada. Hay una historia convertida en Estatua de la Historia, remitida a sí misma, regresada a sí misma. No hay progreso histórico, eso es lo que está diciendo un poco la novela: no hay escatología, hay puro presente perpetuo. Hay la repetición de una serie de actos ceremoniales.[1]

What Fuentes affirms philosophically in the above is that the becoming or the present developing is the only truly consistent, dependable and identifiable aspect of evolution. That is, just as ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, or the development of the individual of the species undergoes the same series of evolving stages as the whole species, so does the collective society of mankind undergo in its individual social units an established order of development and, in fact, it is that law of gradual development and change which assures continual evolution and progress. The developing product of that evolutionary series of changes is the representative of progressive evolution. Within Cambio de piel Fuentes paralyzes that history fictionally silhouetting the vestiges of the past developmental stages and therein revealing the slowness of the quantitative changes and the correspondence of the growth stages of historical development which in its re-creation or renovation of the established process repeats the same series of phases - this is absolute and never changes, for it is a scientifically established law. Fuentes talks about tradition and what this unity of change signifies.

---

[1] Ibid.

> La tradición no se hereda: se crea, se inventa a partir de los museos incendiados. Tradición es renovación. Se trata de que los muertos sirvan a los vivos, y no al revés. No hay que confundir la verdadera gestación con la simple acta notarial de bautismo, cuando se habla de tradición.[1]

This corresponds equally to Marx's ideological theory of the transition of the means of production and accompanying development of society and its systems as an infinitely slow and gradual transition, yet still and inherently a becoming process with its own particular consistent laws of development.

Fuentes elaborates further on this aspect referring to the characters and the mythological tone of Cambio de piel.

> . . . la verdad es salvada por la mentira. La Verdad con mayúscula, en este caseo, vendría siendo esa materia socio-histórico-psicológica, y la narración la mentira que la salva, la hace ambivalente y, por lo tanto, humana. De allí la lucha permanente, dentro de la novela, entre el narrado, portador de la palabra posible, y los personajes, portadores de la palabra "dévenu", imposible, ¿no es cierto? Pero hay algo más en Cambio de piel, algo que sólo ahora entiendo, al leer Marshal Mcluhan, y es una cierta participación en el nuevo mundo circular, o de integraciones simultáneas y explosivas, que ha venido a sutituir al mundo lineal, individual, del punto de vista y las motivaciones. Quisiera que Cambio de pielse leyese como dice McLuhan que se integra una imagen de televisión: a razón de tres millones de estímulos por segundo. . . . Preferiría hablar de un trayecto, sí, de una circunvalación en la que el paso histórico de la cacería medieval de las brujas a la cacería moderna de los judíos, o el paso físico del ágora de Delos a un cuarto de baño de hotel, quisiera decir que el uno vale el otro, en el sentido de contaminarse, de reactivarse--y con la esperanza de que esa re-activación sea una sub-versión.[2]

---

[1]Ullán, "Salto mortal hacia mañana," p. 12.

[2]Ibid., p. 13.

Near the end of the novel, Xipe Totec or Freddie Lambert loses control as the Narrator of the story and cannot manipulate the action of his six hippy partners. He steps outside the novel and then re-enters it at his discretion. This aspect, blended with the fast pace and fantastic dialogue of the novel, produces a most uncomfortable sensation for the reader. The latter senses himself lost in a magical maze. The primary impact of the world contained within the covers of this book is intimated in the following quotation.

> . . . el autor . . . entrelaza las vidas de los protagonistas, extiende los límites espaciales y temporales de la historia, y construye algo como un mosaico hecho del pasado, el presente, y el futuro. . . . la novela será el intento de Carlos Fuentes de contemplar este accidentado siglo veinte, tan decisivo para el destino humano, a la luz de la total historia mexicana, desde los siglos pre-hispánicos hasta los años actuales.[1]

It is sometimes helpful, and usually so with Fuentes' works, to consider the significance of the title of a social reform novel. Cambio de piel refers to:

> . . . the renewed vigor of body and soul that comes with love, moral or even adulterous, as with those serpents who "wriggle over the trampled fields of Eden." The most obvious mutation involves Javier and Elizabeth, with their ultimate attainment of the good love.[2]

Fuentes subtly implies that Xipe Totec sheds his skin becoming a part of the action, and is thereby thrust from his

---

[1]Mead, "Airado Novelista Mexicano," p. 234.

[2]Clements, "A Riddle of Life and the Good Love," Saturday Review, p. 28.

life in history -- the past -- into life in the twentieth century. The original title of the text, El sueño, implies the concept of both character and historical duality coupled with the thematic concentration upon the recognition of what we are in contrast to what we want to or could be.

With respect to specific social criticisms, it can be said that the number is vast; therefore, only those relating to reforms treated in the previously considered novels and those which are vitally topical will be considered. Since one of the themes of the work is that of personal fulfillment and establishment of a close relationship through love, it is fitting to view this theme through the relationship of the characters. The love which Elizabeth tries so desperately to find is hidden in the illusion of Javier's mask and of her own. The conclusions to be drawn from the following dialogue between Elizabeth and Javier are multiple. First, it is seen that both nurture yet, like vampires, drain each other of love in search of a feeling as an individual. There are also criticisms of other societies contained within the ensuing speeches. Elizabeth speaks first, then Javier.

> --¡Porque te amaba!
> --¿A mí? ¿Estás segura? ¿No querías que alguien quien fuese, te arrancara de tu país y tu familia, te llevara a otras tierras que tú habías inventado, con tu cabeza romántica, tierras del sol y la felicidad? Por eso te entenderás con Franz. Todos ustedes vienen huyendo de la bruma. De los textos sagrados. Del puritanismo. Del orden. De la muerte. Hacia el sol, hacia nosotros, hacia el sur. . . . Eras una reina con mirada de toro.

> Hacías el amor como una leona dando a luz. Y me has convertido en una ruina estéril. . . . Me casé con una tigresa, no con una mujer; con una tigresa de imaginación, de las palabras, de las exigencias imposibles. . .[1]

Xipe Totec summarizes the essence of the preceding, speaking to Elizabeth within her own thoughts, after she had told Javier that he was blaming her for what Mexico had done to him and he had said that they alone were equally responsible. Javier first describes that situation.

> --. . . atarnos unos a otros, matarnos unos a otros, robarnos nuestra identidad solitaria, Liegeia, nuestra máscara secreta . . .
>
> Y el discurso se te quedó entre los dientes, las palabras que estaban segura él había escrito anotado apenas, en algún pedazo de papel, para, finalmente, justificarse y justificarlos. México es una máscara. No tiene otro sentido este país. Sirve para ocultarnos del mundo, de lo que dejamos atrás. Ah, dragona, éste sólo es un lugar de exilio para los extraños, no una casa propia. Te acurrucaste contra el espejo frío, lo llenaste de vaho, cerraste los ojos porque querías hablar. Tú también eras prisionera del país. Tan prisionera y tan enamorada ya de tu máscara, que si se rompiese, la luz te cegaría. Sí, entonces sí, ibas a darle la razón a Javier, ya está, ¿ves?, venimos aquí a refugiarnos, a enmascararnos.[2]

Herein lies that same thematic treatment of the superficialities of societies and of the complex individuals that people them. The contemporary conflict of the individual securing and maintaining a personal identity within a relationship, as seen in the characters of Catalina Cruz and Asunción Balcárcel as well as in Elizabeth, is a function of the increasing realization of alienation on a dominant level. This

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, Cambio de piel, (México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1967), pp. 324-25.

[2]Ibid., p. 326.

emphasizes that the neo-capitalistic marginality which Mexican society has experienced no longer exists solely in the cities. In defending himself, Javier states his case for accusing Elizabeth of stealing his life from him.

> --Tú, sí tú, que me robaste con tu amor mis años de creación, que con tu amor me hiciste creer que había algo más importante que escribir, y era amarte a tí y negarme en tu nombre porque tú estabas allí con las piernas abiertas y sólo ibas a vivir una vez y sólo ibas a ser joven una vez y yo ya tendría tiempo de sobra cuanod nuestra juventud pasara y nos retiráramos como dos pensionados yanquis, ¡tú! ¡tú![1]

They had no children after Elizabeth had an abortion and the responsibility for that vacuum in her life is difficult for both to bear. Xipe Totec offers a welcome interlude in this most revealing dialogue which is every bit as dynamic and moving as Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

> No se daban por enterados del juego secreto, debajo de las palabras, de la complicidad para probarse esta impotencia mientras hablaban sin saber que decían.[2]

The element of machismo appears again as seen in the next passage.

> --Yo te amaba. Pero tú nunca has amado a las mujeres. Has amado a La Mujer. Con mayúsculas. Fantasma. Sólo así te sentías libre. Sin cadenas. Una mujer de carne y hueso es una condena, ¿verdad? Llámese Ligeia. O Isabel. Javier, óyeme.[3]

Elizabeth reveals in this speech that same desperate need for justification of actions which Javier represents as a symbol of the Mexican.

> Eres como todos los mexicanos. Necesitas toda esta retórica para justificarte. El clima, los nopales,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 327. [2]Ibid., p. 331. [3]Ibid., p. 335.

> Moctezuma, la chingada, todo les sirve para justificarse. Javier, ¿por qué perdimos el sueño?[1]

The contemporary theme of universal guilt for all the evils committed against mankind, reminiscent of Jaime Ceballos is explored in the next passage. The conversation is very symbolic and most essential to an understanding of the purpose Fuentes is attempting to accomplish. Originally remember, the title of this work was to be El sueño. The theme of an ideal love between Javier and Elizabeth is lost and they search endlessly for the reason, blaming one another and themselves. Their dream of ideal love symbolizes the dream of achievement of world-wide social justice with the elimination of hate, prejudice and war. Javier speaks first.

> --Decimos que porque Rusia y Alemania firmaron un pacto de amistad. Ribbentrop y Molotov. ¿Te das cuenta qué absurdo? ¿Quiénes serán Ribbentrop y Molotov?
> --Creimos tanto en eso, de jóvenes. Quizás eso nos hubiera salvado. Tener una fe. Esa era una fe, Javier. Tú y yo en la LEAR, cantando la Internacional. Tú y yo juntos, leyendo a Dos Passos y a Miguel Hernández, oyendo las canciones de la guerra de España, tú y yo con el puño levantado . . .
> . . .-Quién sabe. Aprendimos que todos somos culpables. Quizás ésa fue la lección de ese tiempo. . . . Y sólo ahora, tan tarde, entendemos que los más culpables son los que saben que no son inocentes y por eso dejan de luchar contra la culpa.
> Mira: es esto, la lucha es entre culpables, ¿ves?, y por eso es trágica; los justos y los injustos son culpables, no son inocentes, y por eso todo es tan terrible, porque la justicia tampoco es inocente . . .[2]

The unlimited scope of the truths contained in the pages of Cambio de piel is staggering. Fuentes' insight is so over-

---

[1] Ibid., p. 334. [2] Ibid.

whelming that at times a sense of bewilderment overcomes the reader as a psychological defense against too much exposure to fictional reality and history on a universal scale.

The mock trial that the six hippies and the Narrator hold is a mirror of exactly how Elizabeth, Javier, Franz and Isabel appear in their daily actions, and constitutes a good deal of the text. The trial is the symbolic sacrifice demonstrative of the present vestiges of the past mythological past and that developmental stage. Before the verdict already reached by the hippies can be carried out in the pyramid of Cholula at night, an earthquake occurs, affording two possible conclusions to the action of the novel. In the first ending, Javier and Isabel flee the pyramid as it crashes in upon Elizabeth and Franz and in the other Javier and Elizabeth take a living bundle from the trunk of the hippies' car outside the pyramid, after having already placed another body in the trunk; they take the living mass to the gate of the insane asylum, and perhaps it is this bundle, newborn, which becomes Freddie Lambert, who signs the text at the end.

The Narrator speaks collectively for Mexico and for the characters.

> . . . soy Javier, Elizabeth y Franz: en nombre de ellos retengo la cólera de mi destino; . . . suave hogar, Eden subvertido por tus hijos descastados que prefieren salir al mundo con una quijada de burro para no pudrirse encerrados y regresan con la pródiga herida abierta de la

> Malinche, madre traidora que se dejó fornicar para que tú y yo naciéramos. ¿O de veras cree alguien que hubiera sido mejor derrotar a los españoles y continuar sometidos al fascismo azteca? Cuauhtemoc era el Baldur von Schirach de Tenochtitlán. Más sabes que él, las mujeres indias se dejaron hacer. Cólera eterna fatalidad: hemos regresado.[1]

It is evident that in Cambio de piel and its characters there is a caution to all societies. Fuentes intimately contrasts the world of Mexico with the rest of the world in the following excerpt from the mock trial manifesting this aspect of the encompassing scope of the work and Fuentes' projection of the world and its people, disintegrated by alienation.

> --Necesita ir más lejos--dijo Jakob--. El deber lo llama. Se necesitan más aldeas estratégicas en Vietnam. El es eficaz. El es preciso. El cumple con su deber. Su profesionalismo no tiene precio. Se requerirán de urgencia sus servicios en todas las prisiones y crematorios que aún faltan por construir. En Cambodia. En Laos. En Perú. En el Congo. En México. En España. En Carolina del Sur. Falta mucho por construir. Falta terminar la obra del aislamiento organizado. A su imagen y semejanza. Esa obra necesita hombres dedicados y responsables. Antes de que termine el siglo, el mundo debe ser un solo y enorme campo de concentración. Cada hombre debe ser una esfera aislada de luz negra.[2]

One of the Monks is speaking about the function that Franz fulfilled as a part of the massize execution of the Jewish people in the concentration camps of Germany during the last war, emphasizing that the killing and genocide keeps going on.

Fuentes delves into the contemporary role of the

---

[1] Ibid., p. 415. [2] Ibid., p. 428.

Christian religion and Jesus as its symbol in the next passage, in which the Narrator is speaking. From these quotations it must be conceded that this is a mirror-reflection of this philosophical problem.

> Lo chingón de un buen evangelio es que también tiene dos caras y solo sobrevive si puedes jugar volados con él. . . . Lo que no le reconocen al Guero claveteado es que fue el primer sicópata, el primer tipo verdaderamente desordenado de la historia, que hoy andaría moto en moto y bailaría watusi nomás para darle en la chapa a los beatos, y que eso de resucitar muertos y caminar por el agua y llevarse a todo trapo con las troneras del barrio era una manera de escandalizar, porque no hay otra manera de consagrar. Imagínate que J.C. hubiera maniobrado como el PRI o LBJ: ahí estaría todavía en Israel, metidito en su provincia y el Nuevo Testamento lo hubiera escrito Theodore White: "The Making of a Saviour, 32 A.D." No; el heredocolombino no era cuadrado; era bien cintura porque nos estaba inventando un nuevo sistema nervioso y por eso era peligroso y pervertido desde el ángulo de los apretados. . . .¿Sabes por qué resistió las tentaciones en el desierto? Porque él era su mero diablo cojuelo, su propio Satanás. Imagínate si me lo sientan en un couch y me lo resuelven con complejos de edipo y delirios de persecución y triple personalidad.[1]

Many of these references are reminiscent on a small scale of Las buenas conciencias and La región más transparente. That guilt that Jaime tried to shoulder and which the world, Mexico, and Elizabeth, Javier and Franz feel cannot be blamed on God. Why? The Narrator continues.

> Y de Marción, al verlo, dijo Policarpo: "Te conozco, primogénito de Satanás", porque el muy picudo fue el primero en saber y decir que Dios era el Extranjero, el totalmente Otro: si el mundo es sólo una tensión irrealizable entre el amor y la justicia y termina en la prueba final de lanada--el cadáver y la fosa--el Creador del mundo nada tiene que ver con Dios, que

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 263-64.

> sería amor y justicia absolutos. Al Creador puede imputársele el horror del mundo, pero no a Dios, el Extranjero, el Otro, el Buen Dios irresponsable. Con él sólo se comunicarán los herejes, los apóstatas, los outsiders y extranjeros como él, dragona.[1]

Fuentes takes another look at those men who have influenced and controlled society in the past and who have helped to mold it into its present evolved state. That the Mexican society needs a change of skin appears without reservation on nearly every page of this novel.

> . . . los sacerdotes siempre han tenido por misión vigilar a los locos, darles versiones de la vida y el mundo comprensibles para el enajenado, impulsar su odio o procurarle la paz, de acuerdo con la excitación o el reposo que el locl necesita para seguir dándole vuelta la hilacha. Es escritor, el artista, el sacerdote, el político, todos los que ofrecen otra imagen del mundo, la imagen artificial y falsaria, la interpretación, el salmo incantatorio, saben que manipulan a los locos. . . . todo es el problema de mantener la ilusión racional para mantener la ilusión de la vida.[2]

This method or philosophy of establishing multiple illusions from which to establish rationality and the illusion of life directly relates to Fuentes' style of presenting what we are in comparison to that which we aspire to be. This means, however, that quite realistically nothing in life is certain except change. Fuentes speaks of his father's reaction to Cambio de piel and its double meanings and endings, therein affirming the previous observation.

> Pero ésta es una novela que está siempre sobre el filo de la navaja. Mi padre la leyó y me la tiró a la cara. Se indignó conmigo completamente: "Entonces resulta que nada era cierto." Claro, el lector quiere saber

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 265-66. [2]Ibid., pp. 308-09.

> que lo que le están contando se lo cuentan seriamente y con un intento de reproducir la realidad. Aquí no hay ese intento. Aquí resulta que "nada era cierto". Igual que siempre: Don Quijote no es cierto, es sólo un deseo: el de Cervantes y el de Alonso Quijano. La imaginación es idéntica a sus deseos, y estas imágenes son sólo la aspiración de mis personajes; es decir, su única libertad posible.[1]

Because this is a treatise of social reform to which it has been proven Carlos Fuentes is committed as an artist, it is necessary to mention that although there do exist certain elements of social criticism in the novel Zona sagrada, it is an experiment in artistry as well as, and more important, a testimony to Fuentes' efforts as a writer with a revolutionary vision of the world. In it Fuentes creates a mythological world based upon a few realities and the effect therein leaves the reader lost between the earthly and the ephemeral. Zona sagrada will be considered in the following chapter, since as a literary work it primarily relates to Fuentes' evolution as a writer.

In summation Fuentes criticizes: the Mexican Establishment; the people who run it; the bourgeoisie and the middle class; capitalism; the Catholic Church; hypocrisy; the effects of alienation; the United States; foreign policy; the United States' way of life; the inability of those peasant classes to act for the instigation of social reforms; socialism without self-criticism and analysis; machismo; the traditional concept of the role of Mexican women in

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 13.

marriage; the psychological use of sex to destroy, manipulate, and keep people distant so that no real commitment to self will have to occur; racial prejudice; war; apathy -- social injustices. He predicts revolution -- the destruction of the Establishment, the people who run it, and capitalism. The Church he contends is already decadent within and the facade it maintains will soon also be destroyed. The development of a single standard or common denominator for all Mexican men and women with regard to a moral value system could develop as a result of the Revolution with the elimination of the tradition of machismo and the substitution of naturalness for complete passivity in the woman, yet the United States bourgeois society with its sexual double standard for men and women and the corresponding importance of the give and take or exchange value process of effecting marriages, offers nothing meaningful as a substitute. Yet, the teachings of the Church and the Spanish and Indian cultural traditions have been genetic factors in the entity that is contemporary Mexican society. The acceptance of the realistic mestizaje and Mexicanism would follow, as to a certain extent it already has. If these factors were changed by another revolution or catalyzed anew that social unit or vital organ would leap forward in its evolution to battle more capably and massively with the problems and deformed stagnations of development common to all men of all social units.

CHAPTER IV

FUENTES: THE ARTIST-REFORMER-CRITIC-REVOLUTIONIST

What function does Carlos Fuentes fulfill as a literary artist-reformer-critic-revolutionist in contemporary Mexico? The most logical method for determining this is first to classify the literary framework within which he as a writer works, and second, to infer those attributes which make of Fuentes a singular writer within that framework. Focusing upon Mexico itself, Fuentes clearly defines the Mexican backdrop in many different responses but more particularly in the following statement of the tendencies of the new Mexican novel, also considered in his essay La nueva novela hispanoamericana.

> En todas las novelas de los jóvenes mexicanos se encuentra un elemento común: el rechazamiento de los clichés folklóricos, superficialmente nacionalistas y uniformes del pasado, y la afirmación de un nuevo espíritu de inconformismo, libertad crítica y amor. La novela actual es una respuesta a la sociedad actual. Más variada, más abundante en expresiones singulares de humanidad, más nutrida de lenguaje poético; menos generalizante, aunque más crítica y más independiente. Esta novela promete ser tan rica, temáticamente, como el país mismo.[1]

---

[1]Claude Couffon, "Carlos Fuentes y la novela mexicana," Cuadernos Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura, (mayo-junio de 1960), p. 69.

It must be conceded that the novel is one of the best literary vehicles for a writer to reach the majority of the reading public. When a novel is written in the vernacular of all levels of a social mass, and consequently reflects many realistic aspects of those levels wrapped within and tributary to an interesting story, it then follows that it can be understood and enjoyed by all those classes. As seen in the following statement by Fuentes, the purpose of the contemporary Mexican novel and Mexican literature in general conforms with the local and universal criticisms explored in the previous chapter.

> . . . Al fin y al cabo, la literatura es la respuesta, piadosa o enfurecida, a la soledad, la miseria, el odio y el terror que separan a unos hombres de otros.[1]

Fuentes does exactly this in his literature. He explores and outlines undesirable aspects of the Mexican society and the Mexican; those of the Mexican society in relation to other world societies; and those of the Mexican in relation to contemporary man. The exposé embodied in his works is never that of one isolated characteristic, for herein differs the modern Latin American writer of social protest from the traditional. That is, Fuentes always presents that undesirable aspect within an encompassing perspective that includes the events, the environment, the psychology, and the philosophy toward life which have created and given birth to that malformed societal characteristic against which he is pro-

---

[1] Ibid.

testing. That many of Mexico's current problems are the same as those of the societies of Europe and the United States affirms that Mexico is losing its marginal position of minimal participation in a progressive world society. This change in itself generates psychological and social problems unique to the Mexican, succinctly summarized by Octavio Paz: ". . . nor has the Mexican mind resolved the conflict between the insufficiency of our own tradition and our need for universality."[1] This quotation echoes the theme, common in Fuentes' works, of individual responsibility within an evolving society. A theme equally expressed by Paz as he wrote: "Por primera vez, somos contemporáneos de todos los hombres, . . ."[2]

Carlos Fuentes is revolutionary in his artistry, critical of his society and the world, critical of his nation's literature, and important but more pertinent to our consideration of him - he is a man who singles out multiple interconnected defects of his social unit and of society in general indicating a path forward to improvement. We have already reviewed the role of the Latin American author both in the past and in modern times in Chapter II. As does Fuentes, the Latin American writer still serves as a vehicle to present to the public an alternative representa-

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 279.

[2]Carlos Fuentes, París: La Revolución de mayo, (México: Era, 1968), p. 32.

tion of that with which they are daily confronted. The Latin American fictional writer is served by two handmaidens-creativity and political beliefs. One more complete and lengthy yet tremendously vital definition of the Latin American writer and a self-definition follows. In it Fuentes calls for Latin American literary people to scrutinize their literature and its existence and essence in an effort to delineate its defects so they can be redeveloped. It must be remembered that Fuentes, although a marginal member of the bourgeois class, regards it as a Frankenstein monster and vigorously confronts and rejects it in his fictional and political writings. As an intellectual he refuses to become a puppet of that class which relegates all levels of human expression to a commodity existence or value level of exchange.

> Un escritor es siempre un hors-la-loi, en todas las sociedades y bajo cualquier signo ideológico. Es, como tan bien dice Mario Vargas Llosa, el eterno descontento, el eterno opositor, el buitre que se alimenta de todos los detritus de la sociedad. Es el gran pesimista; los escritores optimistas son mentirosos; bastante optimismo nos sirven todos los gobiernos y todas las agencias de publicidad. En América Latina hay una enorme tendencia a lo providencial, al gran acto escatológico que remite nuestra redención a un futuro apocalíptico. Nuestras grandes enajenaciones son el paternalismo y el personalismo: la abdicación y la expectativa. Vivimos ansiosos de que nos protejan. El escritor de derecha, obviamente, por los poderes constituídos. Lo malo es que el escritor de izquierda, con demasiada frecuencia, también se protege bajo una sombrilla ideológica que lo exime de pensar con idependencia, se disfraza con el decálogo de la apocalipsis venidera y deja de escribir, de someterlo todo a juicio a través de la palabra y la imaginación, que es nuestro mester. En cambio, el empleo verdadero del lenguaje nos somete a un revolucionarismo de todos los días, permanente, que consiste, como decía Vittorini, en "ponerlo todo en tela de juicio, caso por

> caso y momento por momento; esa es la única manera de participar en la Historia". Esto es lo que nos falta: la crítica diaria, la elaboración crítica, permanente, de todos los problemas humanos, con la intención de colmar ese vacío del poder en América Latina, el vacío entre el poder total de la minoría y la impotencia total de la mayoría. De lo contrario, nuestras relaciones serán siempre verticales, carismáticas, de señor y siervo, de cliente y sátrapa.[1]

The writer has a definite individual responsibility to the evolving society. This duty of the writer to expose reality in newly re-created forms of expressions is recognized as Fuentes points out that the language of Latin America is alien both to its writers and its inhabitants. As a result, they are continually attempting to resolve that problem by creating their own means of expression, their own language.

> Nosotros tenemos una reflexión crítica frente al lenguaje porque no lo consideramos nuestro. El español se considera dueño de su lenguaje, nosotros no. Lo seguimos sintiendo en grados diversos, . . . como un lenguaje prestado, como un lenguaje injertado. Por ejemplo: ¿Qué es la cortesía mejicana? ¿Qué son todas estas fórumulas de la cortesía mejicana, estos circunloquios, estos increíbles eufemismos del habla mejicana? Es la manera de hablar de un pueblo sometido, de un pueblo conquistado que tuvo que aprender el idioma de sus señores, de sus conquistadores, ¿verdad? Esa dulzura del habla mejicana es esto: una manera de ser sumiso, pícaramente sumiso ante el señor.[2]

This multifaceted conflict of an alien language, understandable in the context of the search for an identity which has plagued the Mexican man since the Conquest, explains not only the reason for no successful theater in

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," pp. 20-21.

[2]Ullán, "Salto mortal hacia mañana," p. 13.

Mexico, but equally reveals an aspect of the character of the Mexican and of the Latin American population. It is indeed true that one can begin to understand other peoples and cultures very well through their literature.

> . . . no hay teatro en Méjico, y hay novela, porque en la novela se permite el procedimiento del monólogo interior: el mejicano se expresa realmente a través de monólogos interiores, nunca se expresa frontalmente, nunca dice la verdad a los demás, nunca habla con un lenguaje real, el lenguaje real lo sorprendes de repente, o lo sueñas, o te lo dices a tí mismo, nunca lo usas en relación social: todas son fórmulas, desde los discursos del 1 de septiembre del señor presidente de la República hasta la forma como el último de los campesinos se dirige a los demás, todas son fórmulas académicas del idioma. Tenemos que descubrir todavía el idioma real mejicano, y cuando ese idioma se expresa violentamente y es conocido, claro, como es un idioma secreto, en seguida cambia, lo cual es su riqueza y lo cual representa, además, un reto al escritor.[1]

The tremendous significance of literature to social growth is indicated, believes Fuentes, when the words used by a writer inevitably cause him to be imprisoned, ostracized or killed. Fuentes quotes C. Wright Mills in his essay La nueva novela hispanoamericana, in which he clearly expresses the new role of the Latin American writer to revolutionize his language in correspondence with a revolutionary vision of the world, even though this might invite that same imprisonment and death. "Cuando la respuesta a la palabra--decía entonces Mills -- es la prisión y quizás la muerte, esto quiere decir que lo dicho y lo escrito cuenta."[2]

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 93.

Carlos Fuentes further describes the language as it was before capitalism and as it is now, since the wonderland of the bourgeoisie has been firmly established in Mexico and is flourishing. He begins referring to the past.

> . . . era el lenguaje de conquistadores, misioneros y libertadores. En su degradación presente, es la jerga de oradores cursis, políticos semiletrados, agentes de relaciones públicas, gorilas zafios y burócratas patológicos llegados, por el milagro de nuestra debilidad e inadvertencia, al poder. La presencia de modos incipientes del consumo en algunas grandes ciudades latinoamericanas ha duplicado este fenómeno: dueños del falso lenguaje del subdesarrollo, somos también mimos del falso lenguaje del desarrollo.
>
> La corrupción del lenguaje lationamericano es tal, que todo acto de lenguaje verdadero es en sí mismo revolucionario. En América Latina, . . . todo escritor auténtico pone en crisis las certidumbres complacientes porque remueve la raíz de algo que es anterior a ellas: un lenguaje intocado, increado. El lenguaje, de buena o mala gana, nos posee a todos. El escritor, simplemente, está más poseído por el lenguaje y esta posesión extrema obliga al lenguaje a desdoblarse, sin perder su unidad, en un espejo comunitario y otro individual. El escritor y la palabra son la intersección permanente, el cruce de todos los caminos del lenguaje. A través del escritor y la palabra, el habla se hace discurso y el discurso lengua; pero, también, el sistema del lenguaje se convierte en evento y el evento en proceso. De esta manera, la literatura asegura la circulación vital que la estructura requiere para no petrificarse y que el cambio necesita para tener conciencia de sí mismo. Ambos movimientos se conjugan de nuevo en uno solo: afirmar en el lenguaje la vigencia de todos los niveles de lo real.[1]

This is significant to Fuentes' role as an individual not only desirous of social and economic reform but as one positively fighting and struggling for those reforms. The task of discovering and creating this new means of expression

---

[1]Ibid., p. 94. [2]Ibid., pp. 94-95.

simultaneously and inherently symbolizes the necessity for reform and revolution in order to assure that that better world will continue to develop, for through the struggles, confrontations, and conflicts of force emerges a better evolving society. The function of the writer to create and discover the new expression is described by Fuentes.

> Esta función, la más evidente pero también la más compleja de la literatura, es posible con particular intensidad en Hispanoamérica porque nuestro verdadero lenguaje . . . está en proceso de descubrirse y de crearse y, en el acto mismo de su descubrimiento y creación, pone en jaque, revolucionariamente, toda una estructura económica, política u social fundada en un lenguaje verticalmente falso. Escribir sobre América Latina, desde América Latina, para América Latina, ser testigo de América Latina en la acción o en el lenguaje significa ya, significará cada vez más, un hecho revolucionario. Nuestras sociedades no quieren testigos. No quieren críticos. Y cada escritor, como cada revolucionario, es de algún modo eso: un hombre que ve, escucha, imagina y dice: un hombre que niega que vivimos en el mejor de los mundos.[1]

In yet another statement of his beliefs of the importance of the development of language, Fuentes reiterates the mandatory yet vital political, economic and social significance of this new brand of writer for Latin America.

> . . . yo no voy a tomar un fusil y encaramarme a la Sierra Madre. Pero sí te digo que Vietnam y Santo Domingo no son ajenos a mí, como escritor, simplemente porque acatar el consenso, el statu quo, supone silencio, negación de la palabra y abandono del lenguaje, que queda expuesto a que lo secuestre cualquier oscuro McCarthy surgido de una barraca tropical. El lenguaje es un desacato sin tregua y en todos los órdenes, del más íntimo al más público. El lenguaje es libertad o no es; y para mí la libertad es mantener el margen de herejía, mantener el mínimo disentimiento para que nunca se cierren del todo las puertas de las aspiraciones concretas de hombres concretos. Yo soy un hombre concreto, yo escribo, yo me

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 94-95.

> niego a aceptar que la "fuerza interamericana" tiene derecho a estar en Santo Domingo en nombre de la democracia, porque si lo acepto hoy mañana acepto que tiene derecho a estar en México y pasado mañana que tiene derecho a decidir, en nombre de la democracia, lo que puede decirse y lo que debe callarse en mi país y, finalmente, el derecho a dictarme lo que escribo. Si algo nos enseña la historia del siglo es que no podemos ser indiferentes nunca; que la palabra también es resistencia contra los Hitlers, los McCarthys y las Uniones de Escritores que, potencialmente, nos rodean. Creo que en el Estado tecnocrático, neo-industrial, la lucha por la libertad ha sido expulsada de la arena pública. . . . Asistimos a una lucha frontal de dos lenguajes: el mentiroso del poder y el auténtico del artista. Entonces, claro, es fácil la actitud de Sartre cuando dice en el precipicio contrario y decir que no hay lugar para Vietnam and Santo Domingo en la literatura. La literatura rechaza la reducción, la parcelación; es una apertura a la totalidad, al riesgo.[1]

Fuentes is definitely committed to artistic revolution and therefore, as previously noted, to perhaps even another revolution for Mexico to do away with the bourgeois Frankenstein monster once and for all. He is also definitely committed to that revolution at times more strongly than others. He believes that it is an historical, natural, desirable and mandatory process for Mexico to progress from capitalism both economically and socially to a socialist system. That he has said he believes it possible for Mexico to accomplish this peacefully without a violent explosion or social revolution, does not mean that he considers it probable. Rather, he views revolution, on all levels, as a prerequisite for effecting rapid fundamental changes. It is an absolute necessity for the other countries of Latin America to have

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 21.

violent social revolutions in order to catalyze their evolution toward socialism away from semi-feudalistic capitalism, but Mexico could perhaps manage to evolve without another revolution. However, in the same breath that he says he believes it possible - he points out its economic unlikelihood, for Mexico is faced with an insurmountable task of developing economically at a rate equivalente to its population growth. The contradictions within the Latin American and in particular Mexican social units dramatically pair off for battles for survival of orders. Either the material conditions of life must be humanized or the humans must be conditioned to accept basic levels of existence within a new slavery and death. These contradictions are engendered by a bourgeois capitalistic way of living available in the great cities superimposed on a countryside of "la selva y la montaña, con sus indios de carga, sus mineros devorados por la silicosis, sus mujeres mascando coca; sus niños muertos, sus jóvenes iletrados, sus prostíbulos verdes."[1] The people of the second of these two worlds within one demand better, and they will get better in a socialist system, provided that system, as Fuentes believes, does not attempt to stop the evolutionary process of development as it has tried to do in Russia. Recognizing the limits of the writer, for although words are part of inciting confrontation, the writer himself or Fuentes

---

[1]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 29.

is usually not an activist with a rifle in hand. Fuentes projects the writer toward re-creating the natural, historical developmental growth process in his writing; that is toward the future cognizant of the past and aware of its present becoming stage.

> Presionado por estas contradicciones, sofocado el sueño de la "civilización moderna" por el encuentro del capitalismo norteamericano y las oligarquías criollas, el intelectual de América Latina sólo ve la perspectiva de la revolución. En las últimas décadas, y sobre todo a partir del triunfo y el ejemplo de la revolución cubana, la inteligencia de nuestros países se sitúa, mayoritariamente, en la izquierda. Pero ni el anhelo ni la pluma del escritor producen por sí mismos la revolución y el intelectual queda situado entre una historia que rechaza y una historia que desea. Y su presencia en un mundo histórico y personal contradictorio y ambiguo, si lo despoja de las ilusiones de una épica natural, si lo convierte en un hombre de preguntas angustiosas que no obtienen respuesta en el presente, lo obliga a radicalizar su obra no sólo en el presente, sino hacia el futuro y hacia el pasado.[1]

The fight of the intelligentsia against the bourgeoisie in the latter's attempt to castrate, consume it and destroy its power is primary to an understanding of Fuentes' writings. He describes his personal dilemma as a literary artist within that bourgeois world.

> --Desde niño mi vocación fue la de escribir. Sentía la necesidad de oponer un mito personal, válido para mí mismo, al mundo en que nací: el mundo de la burguesía cristiana. Frente a los mitos impuestos desde afuera y desde arriba, quise crear mi propia mitología. Y esta mitología sólo podía realizarla por medio de palabras: escribiéndola.
>
> --Este es el tema del escritor en la sociedad burguesa. Al tener una firma vocación literaria, se encuentra uno muy pronto frente a un muro, el muro de la sociedad burguesa que mina y aísla al artista. La bur-

---

[1] Ibid.

> guesía para su propio confort, para su permanencia, presupone que el arte y la literatura son inocuos, que no tienen nada que ver con la vida práctica. Es ésa la manera de que se vale para aislar y minar al artista. Por tal motivo no puede haber escritores de derecha, escritores que sean cómplices del statu quo que niega toda validez a su obra. Se produce entonces la pugna entre el escritor y la burguesía. Moravia dice que quizá el único drama de la sociedad burguesa es el drama de los intelectuales, y es probable que tenga razón.[1]

Fuentes further describes the demands of the bourgeoisie upon the writer and the sterility it tries to produce and maintain. He, on the other hand, has chosen to battle against that sterile intellectual existence.

> . . . hay una nueva burguesía en México que requiere una buena conciencia y esta buena conciencia se la da el poder con sus discursos, sus membretes, sus estatuas, y se la dan, por desgracia, muchos artistas que recurren también a este tono menor, fino y sútil de la discreción provinciana. Con ella se pretende alcanzar una especie de aristocracia artística, que en realidad es sólo la máscara de un malestar pequeñoburgués y de una insuficiencia provinciana. Entonces en país de tuertos el ciego es rey, y en país de mudos la palabra se vuelve explosiva. Cuevas y yo posiblemente hemos utilizado, un tanto, nuestras obras como detonadores para restituirle, a la forma y a la palabra, ese sentido que para mí tienen básicamente, de ser siempre reveladoras y liberadoras.[2]

This applies not only to the Mexican bourgeoisie but consequently, to the world's class societies in which there is a bourgeoisie as indicated by Fuentes. This universality is reiterated in the following.

> La referencia universal es inevitable, porque por origen o por aspiración toda cultura tiende a lo universal; la cultura es lo universal concreto. Lo que pasa es

---

[1]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, pp. 442-43.

[2]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 8.

> que esa referencia puede ser refleja y vergonzante, como en nuestras obras naturalistas, o abierta e informada, como en Darío, Alfonso Reyes o los nuevos escritores. . .[1]

In a scathing yet realistic comparison of the Latin American with other contemporary men, Fuentes strikes out against the imposition of the North American class and economic structures upon all the world societies.

> El fin del regionalismo lationamericano coincide con el fin del universalismo europeo: todos somos centrales en la medida en que todos somoe excéntricos. Un físico nuclear británico se parece a un campesino indígena tzotzil en que ambos han sido marginalizados por el avance astronómico, inalcanzable, de la tecnología norteamericana; ambos ignoran--el campesino mexicano todo, el físico británico mucho--los secretos que hacen posible un alunizaje. Pero ambos representan y centralizan las aspiraciones que no pueden ser colmadas por la simple tecnología. Ese carácter inalcanzable de la vanguardia tecnológica nos obliga a revisar nuestras nociones sobre el "progreso" y concluir que lo que hoy pasa por tal. . . no es, no será ya, no será nunca. . . nuestro. En la imposible carrera hacia un imposible miraje, incluso nuestra lengua se vuelve prescindible; no será el castellano el habla de ese "progreso"; ante él, nuestro idioma sólo es una montaña más de chatarra a la vera de la supercarretera, un cementerio de automóbiles inservibles.[2]

It is important at this point to depict more clearly the predominant philosophy and tactics of the bourgeoisie, since it does exert tremendous power and control over much of the world, but in particular in Mexico and Latin America. In relation to the intellectuals and writers in particular, the bourgeoisie has "stripped of its halo every occupation

---

[1]Ullán, "Salto mortal hacia mañana," p. 12.

[2]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 97.

hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-laborers."[1] Fuentes typifies the bourgeois consumer philosophy applicable also to the United States pointing out the devastating blindness and alienation of the contemporary man before the real material conditions of society for the majority. Marx continues in a most powerful outline of exactly what result this has had upon the social unit of the world. Fuentes' summary is first, followed by Marx's.

> La sociedad de consumo europea, al atenuar o disimular las oposiciones de clase, convirtió a la política en un enorme ejercicio verbal. La lucha "política" (es decir, dentro del orden establecido: elecciones, parlamento, decisiones del ejecutivo, posición y "oposición") se resumía en el matiz de una frase, en la posesión de un lema, en la difusión interminable de las palabras convertidas en invitaciones al consumo, en tranquilizadores de las conciencias, en avales de un bienestar ilimitado: nada os oprime; todo os beneficia; vivimos en el mejor de los mundos.[2]

> . . . the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.
>
> The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism,

---

[1]Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 11.

[2]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 89.

> in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom--Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.[1]

We have already seen that this tremendous force has compelled all nations "on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; . . . to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image."[2] The quicksand-like existence described herein of Mexico and which depicts the neo-capitalistic community bewilders the reader, provided that it is accepted as fact.

> The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. . . . All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his relations with his kind.
>
> The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.[3]

What the bourgeoisie has also made of the contemporary Latin American writer is stated by Fuentes as he implies that like Artemio Cruz and the combatants of the Revolution, the writers like his brothers have <u>las manos sucias</u>.

---

[1]Marx and Engels, <u>The Communist Manifesto</u>, p. 11.

[2]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 13.

[3]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 11.

> Lo que pasa es que al tener lugar la superposición del mundo capitalista norteamericano a las estructuras feudales y semifeudales de América Latina, el escritor perdió ese lugar en la élite y quedó sumergido en la pequeña burguesía. . . . dejó de ser un poco el fariseo que hablaba desde los púlpitos de la pureza con una clarísima conciencia del camino recto, para convertirse en lo que es un verdadero escritor, es decir, un publicano, un hombre que participa del pecado, de la culpa, que se mancha, que está inmerso en una situación común con los tros hombres.[1]

That monster must logically be destroyed in that process of evolution and its most probable demise will be a violent one at the hands of the majority of the people, nine-tenths of whom own no property whatsoever, while the one-tenth they will topple owns about ninety-five per cent of the land. Fuentes states as a writer of the left what his status is, in answer to Emmanuel Carballo's question about his role.

> --¿Qué significa para tí ser un escritor de izquierda?
> --Como creador literario no tengo ya, por desgracia o por fortuna, las grandes ilusiones que me acompañaban hace cinco o seis años. Estas ilusiones son necesarias para el despegue literario, y se refieren al poder que tiene la literatua para trasformar al mundo. Sé que tal poder no existe. Conozco los límites de la literatura y el papel efectivo que cumple: el de abrir a la conciencia, a largo plazo, una serie de puertas y ventanas. Hoy día no aspiro a concederle a mi trabajo gran trascendencia política: la política no se hace a través de la literatura, ni la literatura a través de la política. En última instancia, y desde una perspectiva histórica, Sartre tiene razón: la literatura de una época es la época digerida por su literatura.[2]

Again, the two handmaidens of the Latin American writer - political beliefs and creativity - and of Fuentes, are always

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escrito," p. 16.

[2]Carballo, Diecinueve Protagonistas, p. 444.

the two fountains of potential inspiration. As we have seen, Fuentes believes the two must be separated, but also that in his works vital and pertinent social and political content is included because it is a part of the reality of human life. On the other hand, the Latin American writer is compelled both to write for and talk to his readers, and this Fuentes does, in spite of his statements to the contrary.

> --En los países europeos en donde la opinión pública está diversificada, donde existen partidos, sindicatos, parlamentso independientes, el escritor puede darse el lujo de ser únicamente un creador; en nuestro país se siente la obligación de ser algo más que un creador, de ser voz para numerosas personas que no la tienen. En un país como el nuestro donde existe un monopolio político, donde funciona un magnavoz continuo de propaganda, donde la opinión pública no se ha desarrollado, donde la irracionalidad asume las funciones de la razón, conviene que los escritores hablen a su pueblo. Desde hace varios años cumplo fielmente esta obligación.[1]

Fuentes lives by this individual obligation which is equally a collective responsibility as implied in the following comment about the 1968 Paris revolution and what the spirit of the joining of the workers and students together has meant for all people of the world.

> . . . la revolución de la juventud universitaria europea y, concretamente, la revolución de mayo de 1968 en Francia han consignado que el mundo del consumo no es el mejor de los mundos posibles, que la abundancia no basta, que hay necesidades que la ausencia de necesidad no satisface. . . . en las barricadas del Barrio Latino no sólo había adoquines y automóviles incendiados, sino todas las palabras y secuestradas: amor, pasión, responsabilidad, creación, fraternidad, autonomía y democracia y justicia con un contenido directo, no meretrizado. Los estudiantes y obreros de Francia le dieron un conte-

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 444-45.

> nido grave e inmediato a las palabras visionarias y rebeldes de los artistas: el hombre, cada hombre, es capaz de definir su propio destino como un artista define, creándola, su propia obra. Y como una obra de arte, la responsabilidad individual es la instancia suprema de la responsabilidad colectiva y, simultáneamente, lo es ésta de aquélla.[1]

It is propitious to again here emphasize that Fuentes does not see the socialist economic and social order as a panacean answer to liberty, happiness and a good material level of existence for the majority. Rather, that system is just like capitalism in that it is not an end in itself and must equally undergo change in progressive physically and intellectually toward a better socialist system. He discusses this dilemma of the writer within the present socialist system in Russia and its satellites pointing out the pitfalls of a non-doubting, non-criticizing socialist burocracy.

> El socialismo nació de una disidencia: el asentimiento le es mortal. El socialismo opuso la visión de lo real (lo total) a la mentira optimista de la burguesía; no puede, sin negarse en el absurdo, caer en la misma trampa y exigir que los escritores del mundo socialista se comporten como escritores del mundo victoriano.[2]

Fuentes comments on his thematic, stylistic and structural usage in Cambio de piel of the excesses of modern social life in Mexico. Simultaneously, he points out the perplexing state of the capitalistic world with its universal advertisements and false customs.

> Los procedimientos . . . han nacido de esa intención de legitimar toda la vulgaridad, el exceso y la impureza

---

[1]Fuentes, La nueva novela, pp. 90-91.

[2]Ibid.

> de nuestro mundo, de quitarles el mal olor peyorativo que permite a nuestras "aristocracias" alzar la nariz al cielo. . . . estamos metidos hasta el cogote en la carrera de las ratas, estamos tan sometidos como cualquier gringo o francés al mundo de las competencias y los símbolos de status al mundo de las luces neón y los Sears-Roebuck y las lavadoras automáticas y las películas de James Bond y los tarros de sopa Campbell. Murió la Graciosa Epifanía del Arte. Vivimos en sociedades modernas, . . . y tenemos que encontrar los procedimientos, las respuestas, al nivel de esa realidad: tenemos que encontrar las nuevas tensiones, los nuevos símbolos, la nueva imaginación, a partir del Chicle Wrigley's y la telenovela y el frug y el bolero y Los muchachos de antes no usaban gomina. Antes que en la cultura, el mexicano o el bonaerense o el limeño actuales somos contemporáneos de todos los hombres en las mercancías y las modas, ¿no es cierto? Participamos apócrifamente de la modernidad como Elizabeth, o nos agotamos en el sueño de la armonís helénica, como Javier. Esa es la intención de la novela y por eso llega un momento en que se autodefine como pop lit. Hay una tensión, un paso: el de la vieja sensibilidad latinoamericana, "fina y sutil", de Javier, a esa exteriorización, pop, apócrifa en Elizabeth y finalmente cierta en Isabel, la chica que ya nació psicoanalizada. En fin, . . . he tratado de convertir esta materia en estilo. Soy consciente de que una y otro son desagradables para mucha gente, se alejan demasiado de los ideales de pureza estética. Pero a mí me gustan las manchas y el riesgo. No me agrada repetir lo que ya sé hacer, sino indagar lo que no puedo hacer. Hablamos de dobles: el novelista quisiera ser el gemelo de Luzbel, el curioso, el tentador, el condenado.[1]

In the above text he reaffirms the dangerous participation of Mexican society within the meaningless object-oriented and exchange value centered consumer capitalistic world forced on Mexico by that economic system and its representative, the bourgeoisie. His position as the novelist of just such a world means, according to his own definition, then, that he aspires to be a continual embodiment of con-

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 14.

tradiction as reflected in his works, for from the conflict of that confrontation of contradiction emerges a new developmental stage of evolution of society.

The most important aspect of Fuentes' novels, in particular Cambio de piel and Zona sagrada, is that they are unrestricted, open novels. That is, Fuentes does have a Marxist vision or viewpoint of the world, its history, and its economic and social systems, yet he is not a dogmatic propagandist of that philosophy. On the contrary, he has chosen to live and work within the environment of the contradictions of the bourgeois society -- which he terms as hell -- rather than to accept any one view of the world. The importance of the openness and becoming of his position is most significant.

In referring to the novel form as a vehicle of literary expression, Fuentes has stated that it is not the novel form itself which has died out or is in crisis, but rather the bourgeois form of that novel. He comments on the remaining vestiges of the bourgeois novel.

> . . . sólo dos escuelas literarias se han empeñado en prolongar la vida del realismo burgués y sus procedimientos: el llamado realismo socialista de la época staliniana y sus derivaciones, que pretendía crear una literatura revolucionaria con métodos académicos y sólo producía solemnes caricaturas, y la anti-novela francesa, que lleva los procedimientos realistas a su expresión final: la de un mundo descriptivo de objetos vistos por personajes en la etapa sicologista más fragmentada: el nouveau roman francés bien podría llamarse la novela del realismo neocapitalista.[1]

---

[1]Fuentes, La nueva novela, p. 19.

Fuentes classifies the development of Latin American literature into three stages, the last of which is the myth, and therein lies the explanation for his strong interest and concentration upon the myth as a theme of his novels and on a mythological interpretation as the revolutionary vehicle for expression of a new stage of literary evolution in Latin America. He refers particularly to Zona sagrada while relating the historical and philosophical facts of the discoveries and great historical events of this hemisphere.

> Me importa mucho la zona mítica y cuando hablo de zona sagrada, claro, estoy estableciendo un territorio, un recinto. Es la idea antiquísima del templo, del templo como defensa contra la epidemia, contra el sitio, y sitio a su vez; es el dónde: es el lugar que es todos los lugares y en el que tiene su sede el mito. Se me ocurre que nuestra cultura y nuestra literatura, las de América Latina, han pasado por tres etapas más o menos fluidas y que esa experiencia latinoamericana tiene proyección universal, con correspondencias reales en la cultura europea, en la cultura norteamericana e, . . . en las culturas del Tercer Mundo a medida que se desarrollen. Yo creo que estas tres cadenas, estos tres círculos a veces tangenciales, son la utopía, la epopeya y el mito. América entera, el continente, fue descubierto y pensado como una utopía. . . . Hemos vivido bajo el signo de la epopeya casi toda nuestra vida: nuestras novelas han sido épicas. . . pero en el momento en que se agota esta capacidad épica parece que no nos queda sino una posibilidad mítica, una posibilidad de recoger ese pasado, de slair de ese pasado que es pura historia, historia mostrenca, para entrar en la dialéctica. Salir de la historiografía, de la redacción de la historia, para entrar en la dialéctica, que es hacer la historia y hacerla con los mitos que nos dan los hilos de Ariadna de todo ese pasado utópico y épico para convertirlo en otra cosa. A través del mito, re-actuamos el pasado, lo reducimos a proporción humana.[1]

---

[1]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," pp. 14-15.

He summarizes Zona sagrada, referring to the mythological basis of the novel set in the sixties. This work is the model of his preoccupation with mythology and the myth, or the third stage of literary development in Latin American literature.

> Zona sagrada me interesa mucho como experimento. La novela parte de las relaciones de una gran estrella de cine, de una hechicera que al mismo tiempo es madre, con su hijo. Lo importante de los mitos vivos, no de lo mitificado, es que en realidad nunca se cierran. Parece que se han cerrado y no es cierto. Encontré un equivalente en Apolodoro, . . . en los Mitos griegos, de Robert Graves: la verdadera conclusión del mito de Ulises, el que no cuenta Homero. Se diría que el mito está cerrado ¿verdad?[1]

The task of the new brand of writer includes the new imagination or imaginative treatment of man's basic aspirations in life. The importance of contemporary novels being written by this new brand of author in Latin America is outlined by Fuentes, speaking again of the alleged crisis of the novel as a literary form.

> Lo que importa en las novelas que se están escribiendo hoy, es esa esencia imaginativa, esa imaginación propia de la literatura, este decir: esto que estoy escribiendo no se podría decir, no se podría expresar de otra manera sino a través de una novela, . . . Simplemente, el problema es de tratar los temas de la Mancha con esa integridad imaginativa.[2]

Fuentes uses all of his imagination in Zona sagrada to recreate the mythological past of Ulysses as it is confronted in the modern reality of human relationships and emotional needs. The means of accomplishing the revolution of the novel

---

[1] Ibid., p. 15. [2] Ibid., p. 19.

form is the use of the myth and the attempt to stylistically, structurally and thematically discover a new language of expression. In this respect, Fuentes is a revolutionist. With regard to social changes and themes of these changes, he is a reformer-critic, not a revolutionist, for the latter is classified as one who actively and physically attempts to overthrow the established, existing system and order by force. Fuentes believes unequivocally that this will happen, to be sure, but he has realistically accepted his personal limitations within a position of living within a society against which he protests. He has chosen his means to encourage and attempt to change the literary forms along with the economic and social forms of the system -- revolution in literature.

As society has become more depersonalized so has the novel become in juxtaposition more personalized or subjective, at least in Latin America in accordance with the development described above. There are no contemporary movements such as Romanticism or Naturalism in the Mexican literary world, rather the literary movement is seen in correspondence with the historical development. A further insight into what the modern Latin American novel is and whether it has a literary future is expressed in these words of Fuentes.

> ". . . the novel as such was born as a formal opposition of rebellion on the part of the writer, on the part of life itself, as expressed by the writer, against the rigidity of social patterns. . . . Alienation is at the source of the novel. So it seems quite natural to me

> to be within the middle class and at the same time fighting it. . . . that it's the only way to write good novels . . . And I don't in the least," he adds genially "share the illusion that we're on the way to a better society where alienation will disappear. We can see that clearly in Soviet society: the new structures of the Socialist state create their own alienations--alienations from the new system. And once again the novelist is channeling the forces of life against paralysis and stratification. That's the ambiguity of the novel: in the face of a custom-tailored art made of fixed patterns, the novel arose as a revolt against established order. But when the order the novel was advocating became a fact, the novel found itself in the paradoxical position of having to criticize what it had defended. I think this is equally valid in relation to Socialist order.[1]

Harss quotes Fuentes as saying that he refuses "the newly minted cliché of the novel and that ". . . a new anarchic left is forming within the neo-capitalist countries, and that this current offers us new literary modes and characters."[2] This we have already recognized in previously cited statements by Fuentes and as the novels Cambio de piel and Zona sagrada corroborate. Fuentes continues with a further definition of the novel of personalization and its causes.

> The young Mexican novelist . . . is bound, he says, for "personalization: the novel of inner life. Above all, I believe that, in contrast to the old tendency writers had to form schools and movements, to overstate their position today, precisely because of the ambiguities of Mexican life, the trend is in the direction of a series of very individual manifestations on the part of each writer. There are no common labels any more."[3]

Fuentes himself reflects the passage of his literature into a mature stage, the stage of the myth, precisely as that lit-

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, pp. 306-07.

[2]Ibid., p. 309.

[3]Ibid., p. 308.

erature reflects the maturation of the collective culture itself.

Carlos Fuentes is committed to the cause and theme of social reform as has been shown in Chapters II and III using selected essays and short stories and the novels La región más transparente, Las buenas conciencias, La muerte de Artemio Cruz, and Cambio de piel. He is committed to revolution in literature as evidenced in Zona sagrada. He rejects those same characteristics in the literature of his country which engender stratification and stagnation within its society.

In the following statement of the literary and political principles of the Revista Mexicana de Literatura which he helped to found in 1956, Fuentes affirms that commitment.

> Literarily speaking he says, . . . it has always stood for "a rejection of localism, of the picturesque, of chauvinism, and the parochialism of Mexican literature." Politically it stands for "a rejection of every ideological a priori, and interest in tiers monde, freedom of judgment with regard to the United States as well as the Soviet Union.[1]

The best summation of Fuentes' function as a writer of social protest, of his role as a judge of his society, and the justification of that function is in this description of what the duty of a writer should be.

> . . . ponerlo todo en tela de juicio, caso por caso, momento por momento; ésa es la única manera de participar en la Historia.[2]

---

[1]Ibid., p. 309.

[2]Rodríguez-Monegal, "Situación del escritor," p. 21.

In his interview with Luis Harss, Fuentes also indicates the goal attained when such a commitment is met and the vital role that the word or the new language plays.

> "Whatever the society he lives in, the writer must always come up with a new heresy to renew that aspiration to liberty which is, perhaps, the closest we can come to liberty itself."[1]

He continues: "in a perpetually unfinished world, there is always something that can be said and added only through the art of fiction."[2]

Another function which he performs as a reformer-critic is that of focusing world attention on Mexico and its problems. The reason for this role is indicated in the next quotation.

> . . . It is frequently said that the flaw of American foreign policy is its incapacity to understand the changes that are coming about in the underdeveloped world: That flaw can only be corrected through knowledge of the people making these changes and of the context of their actions.[3]

Fuentes is actively attempting to bring about an environment which will be more conducive to mutual understanding between societies, and this he does through his writings. He is trying to bring about just such a situation between the United States and Mexico in particular for the previously considered economic, political and social reasons. He believes that a better understanding on the part of the United States of the

---

[1]Harss and Dohmann, Into the Mainstream, p. 309.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Carlos Fuentes, "A Life," The New York Review of Books, June 25, 1964, p. 3.

Latin Americans must mandatorially be achieved as soon as possible. This position was strongly demonstrated in his essay, "The Argument of Latin America: Words for the North Americans". He reiterates this comment in his interview with Lee Baxandall in suggesting a way for the United States and its people to better their knowledge and understanding of the rest of the world and in particular of Latin America.

> I can't give recipes, of course. It's very difficult, and I think the fault is not only the fault of the United States, but our fault also. There is also a lack of communication from Latin America to the United States, and sometimes a lack of understanding of the United States by Latin Americans. I think it is fundamentally an intellectual problem and should be coped with by the intellectuals both of Latin America and the United States of America. . . . there should be some way of erecting a common platform where we could meet and debate our problems--not just to expect the United States to understand Latin America, but really to meet and freely debate our problems and find ways of publicizing and expressing them. And we must try to exorcise the witches and forget there are such things as angels and devils in history. There are people fighting for different things who should get in contact and speak and participate in a dialogue with one another about these things. I think that in a very broad sense, this would be the solution: a meeting of the intelligentsia of the United States and Latin America.[1]

A third function is to make Mexico aware of itself as an emergent under-developed country and to encourage internal changes such as the acceptance of its dual cultural heritage. As seen in the next quotation, he always, either subtly or forthrightly, cautions against the superimposition of foreign values and customs onto the Mexican culture, for this

---

[1]Lee Baxandall, "An Interview with Carlos Fuentes," Studies on the Left, III, August 10, 1962, p. 56.

is merely further masking the Mexican and his reality.

> We don't have to ape the best or the worst in the United States; we don't have to fear that a better life will destroy the identity of Mexico. We would lose all the wisdom that we won through our past experience in defeat and poverty, tragedy and death. And the United States would lose the nearest reminder it has of the realities of life outside the affluent society: a practical, everyday reminder that life does not everywhere conform to the American plan; that the differences in social, economic and cultural values in today's world are not a simple opposition between right and wrong; and that the only constant in human nature, paradoxically, is change and difference.[1]

He functions in his role as observer-participator-judge as the conscience of his society. Robert Mead says of Fuentes:

> . . . un contemplador-participante tan pronto a censurar un acto anti-humano del comunismo como a reprobar una agresión contra la libertad del hombre por parte del capitalismo.[2]

Fuentes strikes out continually and consistently against North American imperialism and its subjugation of his people and their way of life. As a writer he fulfills the obligation to represent his people again. In addressing himself to the American public, he writes:

> "All writers in Mexico have an obligation. We must be coléricos, angry young men, lawyers for the illiterate and the poor. Not for us the luxury of being "pure artists."
> . . . one-party government, which has ruled for 32 years, still levies no real income tax on the rich and allows us freedom to talk, but not to act. We need a new party on the left.
> You preach free enterprise, but we Latins have had

---

[1]Fuentes, "Party of One," p. 19.

[2]Mead, "Airado Novelista Mexicano," p. 229.

> free enterprise for 150 years, and what did it do for us in concrete social betterment? You crusade against Communism, but what does this mean to the poor, whose oppressors have been the big landowners, the crooked politicians, the U. S. corporations?"
>
> "Mexico needs a new revolution. Cubans have brought revolutions "up-to-date."[1]

Although, as just seen, Fuentes favors another revolution for his country and definitely encourages revolution for all of Latin America, and he is in sympathy with the principles of the Cuban Revolution, he cannot truly be labeled a Marxist or Communist. He merely recognizes the dangers to true freedom presented by imperialism as represented by both the United States and Russia, for his country. The important thing is to keep free of both.

> Estamos apenas en el umbral de esta nueva era, y parecen ser más los hechos que la obstaculizan que los que la propician. No obstante, el desarme abre esa puerta, y es preciso mantenerla abierta. La mano que desea cerrarla es la del imperialismo y sus dos procedimientos: el de la explotación directa, cada vez más raro, y el de la explotación indirecta. El método indirecto es hoy el más efectivo, y consiste en establecer en los países semicoloniales gobiernos de apariencia democrática que propongan las soluciones de la "libre empresa" y admitan sin reservas las inversiones norteamericanas en su territorio; que se vean colmados de créditos, que protejan la explotación irracional de las riquezas nacionales por los grupos exportadores y aseguren un flujo continuo de materias primas baratas, producidas por mano de obra barata, a la Metrópoli norteamericana. La misma gata--dice el refrán mexicano--, nomás que revolcada. Lleras Camargo es más útil que Rojas Pinilla.[2]

The inevitable response of these Latin American countries to this reality is reiterated as he continues.

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "Mexico: Children of the Revolution, The Angry Young Men," Look, July 18, 1961, p. 34.

[2]Carlos Fuentes, "Radiografía de los Estados Unidos," Casa de las Américas, No. 4 (enero-febrero, 1961), p. 51.

> La respuesta de estos países, . . . a la falaz "solución" norteamericana, sólo puede consistir en llevar a cabo, en contra de todos los obstáculos, su tarea revolucionaria. Sí, revolucionaria, porque sólo una transformación política que coloque el desarrollo económico en manos de gobiernos verdaderamente democráticos y nacionales, puede destruir los moldes tradicionales de la deformación colonial; inutilizar al ejército como factor político; reformar la tenencia latifundista de la tierra; diversificar soberanamente el comercio exterior; nacionalizar los recursos básicos; fundar la industrialización en la utilización racional y abundante de los recursos propios; dar un destino productivo y popular al excedente económico despilfarrado por las clases dirigentes, los exportadores extranjeros de materias primas y los inversionistas privados, y establecer metas económicas populares planificadas.[1]

He is not a Marxist but his philosophy is Marxist and his methodology of interpretation of and representation of the world and society in general is dialectical. He is a sincere idealist with a pessimistic, realistic outlook. That makes of him quite an embodiment of contradiction. But he is himself a reflection of his society and country. After walking on the campus of the University of Mexico he wrote:

> . . . Nowhere, in the people, in the architecture, in the landscape, was a sign of restful conformity to be seen. And yet, what harmony could contradiction beget.[2]

As well as the conscience of his people, Fuentes is their representative speaker. This function he fulfills most easily as an essayist. In the essay "The Argument of Latin America" he speaks to the American people on behalf of his nation and its people with regard to the revolution he feels is inevitable.

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Carlos Fuentes, "Party of One," p. 19.

> We do not want the destruction of the American people, which we love for the expressions of its great people, its great political names. . . . We do not want atomic hatred, or a permanent cold war, but a world of peace in which we may grow without anachronistic deformations, without irrational exploitations. We want a world in which everyone coexists, not in mutual tolerance but in mutual respect and friendship.
>
> We are different from you. Our problems are not your problems. We have to make decisions and walk on roads different from those you believe to be universally valid. Do not be provincial. Try to understand the diversity of the world. Try to understand we want progress that is real, not the unjust lie of today. We want to be. We want to live with you as loyal friends, not as sick, poorly fed, ignorant slaves. We want a rational organization of development in which science can, at least, distribute its fruits universally. We want to arrive at a peaceful synthesis of oppositions that are not, nor can ever be, eternal. . . . We want to be free of slavery, and we want to save you from a destiny worse than that of the slave: that of the lord, of the master.[1]

He asks that the people of the United States understand that a revolution in Mexico and in all of Latin America would present no real threat to the United States and its present position.

> Try to understand that a revolution in Latin America can affect only a handful of Yankee enterprises, but never the concrete welfare you enjoy. Try to understand that our real development, which can be achieved only through revolution, far from hurting you will help you. Do not let yourselves be fooled by this handful of enterprises and investors. Try to understand that the sooner we start our basic development, which can come only through revolution, the more buyers you will have, and we will all be closer to a planned world economy, rational and interdependent.[2]

Carlos Fuentes is a psychological-sociological author

---

[1]Carlos Fuentes, "The Argument of Latin America: Words for the North Americans," Whither Latin America? (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963), pp. 23-24.

[2]Ibid., pp. 22-23.

who is a representative of his country and a literary generation. With the publication of his novels in English, French, Italian, Russian and Czechoslavakian, he is rapidly becoming a meaningful part of it. He has already made himself famous and listened to, subsequently aiding Latin American literature to achieve the recognition it deserves. As an artist-reformer-critic-revolutionist, Carlos Fuentes is helping his nation and its literature to minimize its cultural lag of several decades.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The works of Carlos Fuentes show that the Mexican Revolution of 1910 functioned as the impetus that thrust Mexico into the twentieth century. The feudally based economic, political and social structure catalyzed by the Revolution did not completely develop into a national contemporary neo-capitalistic structure. As seen in quotations from Fuentes' essays, he stated that that neo-capitalism was superimposed on the existent semi-feudal structure resulting in a deformed economic, political and social foundation. These works have also illustrated that, according to Fuentes, this evolved posture is not desirable for Mexico. The cause for the lack of true societal development to socialism has been shown to be a complex composite of: intrinsic psychological ethnic problems; economic, political and social interferences from foreign countries, in particular the United States; and the increasing exposure of the Mexican society to other societies and their mutual problems.

In his works Fuentes has demonstrated that for centuries the Mexican has been questing for a model of his true

identity and simultaneously, that collectively, he began only within the last decade to accept his Mexicanism as fact and to realize that his individuality predisposes him to be a contemporary of all men. Through specific references taken from the novels, essays and short stories of Carlos Fuentes, we have explored the outstanding consistent facets of social criticism contained therein. The impact of the Revolution upon the contemporary societal structure, the specific social reforms espoused by Fuentes, and his function as an artist-reformer-critic-revolutionist have been thoroughly considered.

Fuentes' works have also illustrated that he dialectically considers it to be the superimposition of capitalism upon a four-century-old feudal structure which maintains all of Latin America within a confining, untenable strait-jacket of economic subjugation and social slavery. Equally, according to Fuentes, the inevitability and necessity for another revolution in Mexico to accomplish the incomplete reforms and ideals of the first and to thrust that deformed state of society forward in evolution into total participation as an independent economic, social and political entity have been demonstrated.

We may logically conclude from the foregoing that Mexico, still in a marginal position of participation in world society, is rapidly approaching internal confrontation with the demand of its people for tangible reforms and external confrontation with those countries which attempt to

exercise a sphere of influence within the basic political, economic and social structure of the country. The inevitability of a revolution within the country as predicted by Fuentes is a matter which needs to be understood and pondered by those societies outside Mexico. That Mexico is, as reflected in Fuentes' works, becoming anxious to enjoy more equally distributed prosperity can also be concluded. A third fundamental conclusion we can draw is that the Mexican social masses culturally are no longer lagging behind the technologically-advanced cultures of the United States and Europe.

In summation, therefore, the Mexican is on one hand maintained in the deformed posture of an isolated existence by his economic, political and social subordination to the United States, and on the other hand, he is a psychological and philosophical collective individual who is a contemporary of all men. The determining factor to neutralize this conflict as demonstrated in the theme of social reform of the works of Carlos Fuentes is revolution.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works by Carlos Fuentes

"A Life." Review of Pedro Martínez: A Peasant and His Family, by Oscar Lewis. New York Review of Books, June 25, 1964, pp. 3-4.

Cambio de piel. México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1967.

Cantar de ciegos. 3a ed. México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1967.

La nueva novela hispanoamericana. México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1969.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz. 3a ed. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1967.

La región más transparente. 3a ed. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960.

Las buenas conciencias. 3a ed. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961.

Los días enmascarados. México: Editorial Novaro México, S.A., 1966.

París: La Revolución de mayo. México: Era, S.A., 1968.

"Party of One." Holiday, October, 1962, pp. 13, 16, 17-19.

"Radiografía de los Estados Unidos." Casa de las Américas, I, No. 4 (enero-febrero, 1961), pp. 41-51.

"The Argument of Latin America: Words for the North Americans." Whither Latin America? New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 9-24.

Zona sagrada. 3a ed. México: Siglos XXI Editores, S.A., 1967.

Critical Works Consulted

Adams, Mildred. "The Line of Life Lies Between Paralysis and Frenzy." Review of The Death of Artemio Cruz, by Carlos Fuentes. New York Times Book Review, May 24, 1964, p. 4.

Alvarez, A. "Mortal Longings." Review of The Death of Artemio Cruz, by Carlos Fuentes. New York Review of Books, June 11, 1964, pp. 14-15.

Andrés Murillo, Luis. "Carlos Fuentes, La región más transparente." Revista Iberoamericana, XXV (julio-diciembre de 1960), pp. 194-96.

Baxandall, Lee. "An Interview with Carlos Fuentes." Studies on the Left, III, August 10, 1962, pp. 48-56.

Botsford, Keith. "My Friend Fuentes." Commentary, (February, 1965), pp. 64-67.

Campos, Jorge. "La sociedad mejicana en un nuevo novelista: Carlos Fuentes." Insula, XV (1960), p. 13.

Carballo, Emmanuel. Diecinueve Protagonistas de la Literatura Mexicana del Siglo XX. México: Empresas Editoriales, S.A., 1965.

_____. "Los días enmascarados." Nuestra década, II. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1964, pp. 593-96.

Castellanos, Rosario. "La novela mejicana contemporánea y su valor testimonial." Hispania, XLVII (May, 1964), pp. 223-30.

Chávarri, Raúl. "La novela moderna mejicana." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, LVIII (mayo de 1964), pp. 367-79.

Chumacero, Alí. "Las letras mexicanas en 1954." Nuestra década, II. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1964, p. 603.

Clements, Robert J. "A Riddle of Life and the Good Love." Review of Change of Skin, by Carlos Fuentes. Saturday Review, January 27, 1968, pp. 27-8.

Couffon, Claude. "Carlos Fuentes y la novela mexicana." Cuadernos Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura. (mayo-junio de 1960), pp. 67-69.

Curley, Thomas. "Professed Christians in the Role of Pharisees." Review of The Good Conscience, by Carlos Fuentes. The Commonweal, LXXV (January 19, 1962), pp. 439-40.

Díaz-Lastra, Alberto. "Carlos Fuentes: La región más transparente." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 175-76 (julio-agosto de 1964), pp. 242-47.

_____. "Carlos Fuentes y la revolución traicionada." Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, LXII (1965), pp. 369-75.

Durán, Manuel. "Cuatro novelas mexicanas." Revista Hispánica Moderna, XXVI (julio-octubre de 1960), pp. 143-45.

Ferguson, Judy Kay. "Social Reform in the Works of Carlos Fuentes." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Modern Languages, University of Oklahoma, 1968.

Harss, Luis. "Carlos Fuentes, Mexico's Metropolitan Eye." New Mexico Quarterly, XXXVI (1966), pp. 26-55.

_____ and Dohmann, Barbara. "Carlos Fuentes or the New Heresy." Into the Mainstream: Conversations with Latin-American WRiters. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967, pp. 276-309.

Jackson, Richard L. "Hacia una biliografía de y sobre Carlos Fuentes." Revista Iberoamericana, (julio-diciembre de 1965), pp. 297-301.

Lane, Helen. "Last Rites for a Fat Cat." Review of The Death of Artemio Cruz, by Carlos Fuentes. Nation, June, 1964, pp. 558-60.

Leal, Luis. "Contemporary Mexican Literature: A Mirror of Social Change." University of Arizona Quarterly, XVIII (1962), pp. 197-207.

Leiva, Raúl. "Tres grandes novelas mexicanas en 1962." Cuadernos de Bellas Artes, IV, No 1 (1963), pp. 25-34.

Lewald, H. Ernest. "El pensamiento cultural mexicano en La región más transparente, de Carlos Fuentes." Revista Hispánica Moderna,33 (1967), pp. 216-23.

Maldonado Denis, M. "Sobre Carlos Fuentes." Casa de las Américas, III, No. 19 (julio-agosto de 1963), pp. 63-66.

Maloff, Saúl. "Growing Pains of a Bourgeois." Review of Las buenas conciencias, by Carlos Fuentes. Saturday Review, December 16, 1961, pp. 20-21.

Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. The Communist Manifesto. New York: International Publishers, 1962.

Meal, Jr., Robert G. "Aspects of Mexican Literature Today." Books Abroad, XXXIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1960), pp. 5-8.

_____. "Carlos Fuentes, Airado Novelista Mexicano." Hispania, L (May, 1967), pp. 229-35.

"Mexico: Children of the Revolution. The Angry Young Men." Look, July 18, 1961, p. 34.

Millán, María del Carmen. "Sobre Carlos Fuentes, La Muerte de Artemio Cruz." REvista Iberoamericana, XXVIII (1962), pp. 397-99.

Moody, Michael, W. "Existencialism, Mexico and Artemio Cruz." Romance Notes, (1968), pp. 27-31.

"Multiples and Myths." Review of Cambio de piel and Zona sagrada, by Carlos Fuentes. The Times Literary Supplement, March 7, 1968, p. 233.

Ocampo de Gómez, Aurora M. and Velázquez, Eduardo Prado, eds. Diccionario de Escritores Mexicanos. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1967.

Pappenheim, Fritz. Alienation in American Society. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967.

Rodríguez-Monegal, Emir. "Situación del escritor en América Latina." Mundo Nuevo, (julio de 1966), pp. 5-21.

Rodman, Selden. "Revolution Isn't Enough." Review of The Good Conscience, by Carlos Fuentes. New York Times Book Review, November 12, 1961, p. 4.

Schott, Webster. "An Epic of Doubt from Modern Mexico." Review of Cambio de piel, by Carlos Fuentes. Life, March 8, 1968, p. 10.

Sommers, Joseph. "Novels of a Dead Revolution." Nation, CXCVII (june, 1963), pp. 114-15.

_____. "The Present Moment in the Mexican Novel." Books Abroad, No. 2 (Summer, 1966), pp. 261-66.

Stalin, Joseph. Dialectical and Historical Materialism. New York: International Publishers, 1940.

Torres-Ríoseco, Arturo. "Notas sobre el Desarrollo de la Literatura Hispanoamericana desde 1916." Hispania, L (December, 1967), pp. 955-62.

_____. "Spanish American Novelists of Today." Aspects of Spanish American Literature. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963, pp. 72-90.

Ullán, José-Miguel. "Carlos Fuentes: Salto Mortal Hacia Mañana." Insula, 22, No. 245 (abril de 1967), pp. 1, 12-13.

"Volkswagon of Fools." Review of Change of Skin, by Carlos Fuentes. Time, January 26, 1968, p. 80.