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MAJOR THEMES IN THE WORKS OF RAMÓN RUBÍN

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MAJOR THEMES IN THE WORKS OF RAMÓN RUBÍN

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with the publication in 1942 of a volume of ten short stories, Ramón Rubín has written eighteen volumes of prose fiction. Eight of these volumes are short stories: Cuentos del medio rural mexicano (1942); Cuentos mestizos (1948); Tercer libro de cuentos mestizos (1948); Diez burbujas en el mar (1949); Cuentos de indios, libro primero (n.d.); Cuarto libro de cuentos mestizos (1950); Cuentos de indios, segundo libro (1958); El hombre que ponía huevos, quinto libro de cuentos mestizos (1960). His ten novels include: Ese rifle sanitario, seminovela (1948); El callado dolor de los tzotziles (1949); La loca (1950); La canoa perdida (1951); El canto de la grilla (1952); La bruma lo vuelve azul (1954); La sombra del techin-cuagüe (n. d.); Cuando el táguaro agoniza (1960); El seno de esperanza (1964); and Donde mi sombra se espanta (1964). An early "novela pueril," Tiempos fáciles (1950), bearing the name of D. Tercero Rivas and written in 1932 at Mazatlán, Sinaloa, probably belongs to this list of novels written by Rubín. A volume of non-fiction, Lago Cajititlán (1960), a monograph in the series "Jalisco en el arte," completes the known published works of Ramón Rubín.

Two of these novels have received special recognition: La bruma lo vuelve azul received the Premio Jalisco in 1954 from the newspaper El Occidental; Cuando mi sombra se espanta, offered under a pseudonym, was awarded the Premio Nacional as the novel of 1955. The short story "El duelo," from El hombre que ponía huevos, also received the Premio Nacional, awarded in 1954 by the newspaper El Nacional. The Concurso Nacional de Cinematografía granted an award of excellence to the plot of "La venganza de Cándido."[1] Of even greater significance is the fact that in a nation which has a relatively small reading public and where a literary prize represents a writer's primary hope of being discovered and of being read widely, Rubín has perhaps as many devoted readers as the more celebrated contemporary authors.[2] Only three of his works have gone into second editions: Cuentos del medio rural mexicano (1942); Burbujas en el mar (1955); and El callado dolor de los tzotziles (1957). This is perhaps due to the fact that the author has borne the publication costs for most of his early works, and second editions may have proven too costly. Of those books which have been published by a commercial house, several have appeared in the provinces away

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[1] Ramón Rubín. Cuentos del medio rural mexicano (Guadalajara: By the author, 1942).

[2] In an interview which this writer had with Pedro Frank de Andrea of Ediciones de Andrea, Mexico City, December 21, 1964, Dr. Andrea stated that orders from the United States for the writings of Rubín equal or exceed in number orders for the works of authors who are at the present time more highly regarded by Mexican critics.

from the capital, and thus has kept them in relative obscurity. Still, it is difficult to locate copies of many of these works, several of which have appeared in printings of two thousand or more.

Not only in his own country, but throughout the entire Spanish-speaking world, Rubín has won acclaim for his interpretations of modern Mexican reality. His works have received considerable attention in Spain. The short story "El duelo" was selected in 1964 for inclusion in an anthology of world literature.[3] Two of his short stories have appeared in English: "Su perro heroico" and "El tesoro de don Sóstenes."[4] There are also several other works which have been translated into Russian, Czech, German and French.

There is a growing interest in the writings of Rubín, but no major study on any aspect of either his novels or his short stories has appeared to date. The present study is being made with the intention of providing basic bio-bibliographic data on Rubín, a survey of his major themes, and a comprehensive, critical analysis of his work which, it is hoped, will place him in proper perspective as one of the major contributors to modern Mexican prose.

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[3] Los cien mejores cuentos del mundo, (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1964).

[4] Ramón Rubín, His Heroic Dog, Don Sóstenes' Treasure, trans. Rosemary Holt (Guadalajara: Contemporary Editions, 1959).

CHAPTER I

RAMÓN RUBÍN -- THE MAN

Ramón Rubín was born in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, in 1912. His father, Francisco Rubín Tamés, was of Spanish descent. He had come to the New World from the northern province of Asturias in 1894 at the age of thirteen. Francisco was sent to Santa Clara, California, to continue his formal education. At the turn of the century, Mexico was a land of economic opportunity and, with capital supplied by an uncle, Francisco engaged in several imaginative business enterprises, but none of these brought to him either the wealth or the fame of which he had dreamed in his native country. Ramón Rubín said of his father's various occupations that he did many things, but nothing well. His mother, Elena Rivas, was Mexican.[1]

In 1914, in the confusion that followed the assassination of Francisco Madero, the elder Rubín and his family returned to Asturias. The Rubín family spent the next fourteen years in Spain, while Mexico was passing through several turbulent administrations and the bloodiest years of the Revolution, and

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[1]Unless otherwise noted, biographical information on the author was obtained in a personal interview with Ramón Rubín in Guadalajara, Mexico, on December 22 and 23, 1964.

the world was rocked by the first modern global conflict. Along the coasts which inspired the masterful realistic novels of José María de Pereda, Ramón Rubín gained an insight into the life and the ways of the fisherfolk and a love for the sea which left a deep impression on both his personal life and his works. In the small town of Llanes, a few miles up the coast from famed Santander, he completed his formal education and was graduated with a bachillerato from La Encarnación, a colegio operated by the Augustine order.

In 1928, near the close of the Calles administration, with the return of relative political and economic stability to Mexico, the Rubín family returned to Mazatlán. Burbujas en el mar, one of the most autobiographical of the author's works, describes how in 1931 he set out to sea to satisfy what he called "aquella lejana solicitud."[3] During three years at sea, he touched many ports, including most major coastal cities in South America and the United States and numerous foreign ports such as Saigon and Dakar. He returned to Mazatlán and his family in 1933.

In 1936, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War found Rubín, his father, most Mexicans, and indeed almost the entire Spanish-speaking world in sympathy with the Republican army and against Franco and the fascist forces which supported him. He boarded the Spanish freighter "Majallanes" at Vera Cruz with a load of arms destined to the aid of the Republican army. Ramón

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[3]Ramón Rubín, Burbujas en el mar (Guadalajara: Ediciones Altiplano, 1949), p. 9.

Rubín stated that this was for him only a "cosa de ventura" without any real political significance, and that it lasted for only three months.[4] An acquaintance of Rubín's, who asked that his name not be mentioned, stated that Rubín actually took arms and fought for a short time alongside the Communists, but finally left disillusioned. Emmanuel Carballo wrote that Rubín "luchó por la tierra de su padre [España] en el mar y en la tierra."[5] Lerín and Millán also state that Rubín took an active role in the conflict: "Fue durante su primera juventud militante ilegal del Partido Comunista."[6]

From that time, as Carballo has said, Ramón Rubín "ha ejercido...los oficios más antagónicos, las ocupaciones más extravagantes."[7] He has travelled extensively throughout Mexico from Chiapas to the southern border of the United States, from Vera Cruz to Mazatlán. He says that his only visits to the United States have been at ports of call during his duty at sea and brief visits to border towns such as Nogales. He was a travelling salesman in northwestern Mexico for eighteen months. He has been continuously active in small business and at present is the proprietor of a small shoe manufacturing firm at Guadalajara,

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[4]Personal interview with the author.

[5]Emmanuel Carballo, "Ramón Rubín, un caso aparte," Siempre, No. 597, (December 2, 1964).

[6]M. Lerín and Marco A. Millán, 29 Cuentistas mexicanos actuales (Mexico: Revista America, 1945), p. 250.

which makes it possible for him to pursue his literary activities without undue concern for a livelihood.

Ramón Rubín and his wife, Martha González de Rubín, live in Guadalajara. Of his children he says simply that they are "tres mujeres y un hombre."[8] His mother lives in Guadalajara with her only other child, Margarita. The father died and was interred in that city in 1943.

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[8]In response to other questions about his family and his non-literary activities, Mr. Rubín answered politely: "Eso no tiene nada que ver con mi obra."

CHAPTER II

RAMÓN RUBÍN -- THE WRITER

A prolific author, Ramón Rubín has written poetry, short stories, novels, a monograph on the natural resources of Jalisco, and miscellaneous articles for newspapers. Two of his short stories he has re-worked for the cinema, and the plot of "El duelo"[1] was pirated for use in a theatrical production. Also among his literary activities must be included various critical articles on Mexican authors and a series of other articles on Mexican culture appearing in a literary review, Creación, of which Rubín was editor for about four years.

Rubín's first venture as a writer was in 1927 at the age of fifteen, when he wrote what he later called "una novela breve y de amor, cursilísima."[2] Though he states that he burned it a short while later, this novel is probably Tiempos fáciles, an intensely personal and romantic narrative bearing the date-line "Guadalajara, 1932."

It was in 1937 in the newspapers of Mazatlán that Rubín's only poetry was published. Of this "tributo a la poesía," as

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[1]Ramón Rubín, El hombre que ponía huevos (Mexico: Editorial Azteca, 1960).

[2]Carballo, op. cit.

he called it, he remarked: "cosa de juventud."[3] Though he has dedicated himself entirely to prose since that time, occasionally in both novel and short story there is a brief but forceful passage containing a poetic description of Nature:

> Una gracil pareja de garzas rosas tendió el vuelo, rompiendo con el estrépito de sus aleteos restallantes la religiosa quietud del paraje. Pero, en el centrc del charco, el fantasma blanco de un pequeño jirón de niebla siguió su lento camino sobre las linfas, como un monje ensimismado en los extraños designios de Dios.[4]

Briefer yet and epic in tone is an occasional description of the Indian in a primitive setting. In this same novel Rubín depicts the primitive virtues of a Cora boy who ascends a perilous path to a sacred lake and returns with a pitcher of its water as evidence of his manliness: "Las fieras respetaron su osadía y los abismos humilláronse ante su agilidad."[5] Though the metaphor and effective poetic expression are not entirely lacking in Rubín's works, his language, with its sententious brevity, generally accords better with prose than with poetry.

Rubín has not escaped an activity common to the careers of many leading literary figures in Latin American countries -- journalism. Not only have many of his tales, including the mestizo and the maritime adventure stories, appeared in periodical literature, but he has also expressed his opinions on

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[3]Personal interview with the author.

[4]Ramón Rubín, El canto de la grilla (Guadalajara: Ediciones Altiplano, 1952), p. 29.

[5]Ibid.

numerous subjects in newspapers in the provinces. A kind of Mexican Hemingway, as Carballo has called him,[6] he has written articles on political questions and in recent years has engaged in polemical writings in defense of lakes and other natural resources of the nation.

The first serious efforts of Ramón Rubín as an author were in 1932, when he began a series of short stories which were to appear a decade later in his Cuentos del medio rural mexicano. The stories which appeared in this volume were written between 1932 and 1936.[7] During most of this time he was in Mexico between his two principal periods of maritime service. He must have travelled extensively during or prior to this time, because his stories reveal an intimate acquaintance with the Mexican landscape. The geographical settings of these stories represent a wide distribution of towns and settlements in at least seven states other than his native Sinaloa.

In 1937, after returning home to Mazatlán from his experience in the Spanish Civil War, Rubín was in need of money with which to celebrate at a local carnival. In typically Latin American fashion, there was a literary festival in conjunction with the celebration. Rubín entered the competition for the best original short story in order to solve his immediate financial problems. There were three prizes being offered, and he entered three short stories. Each one was typed

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[6]Carballo, op. cit.

[7]Personal interview with the author.

on a different machine and presented under a different fictitious name. The first and second prizes of one hundred fifty and fifty pesos respectively he won, but not the third.

The first publication of Rubín's short stories was in the Revista de Revistas in Mexico between 1938 and 1939. Many of these stories later appeared in his first published volume of stories Cuentos del medio rural mexicano. Of the twenty-two stories which appeared in this periodical, all but seven were included in one of the volumes of his mestizo stories. Rubín stated in the prologue to the second edition of the above work that he knew nothing of the prior appearance of his stories in the Revista de Revistas, but with or without the knowledge of the author, these brief, superbly illustrated stories were the first tests of his literary skill on the reading public.

From the outset of his writing career, Rubín has disclaimed any pretensions to being a professional writer. Beset with doubts regarding the merit of his writings, he had a limited edition of stories printed in 1942 at his own expense, not intending that it should reach the general public. Some of the copies of this edition were distributed among his close friends. Others were sent to writers and critics with the expectation, as he said, that they "darían al traste con los últimos rescoldos de la hoguera de aquella pasión frustada [sic]."[8] Though the reactions of the critics were mixed, discerning remarks such as the one by Pedro Gringoire of the

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[8]Ramón Rubín, Cuentos del medio rural mexicano (Guadalajara: By the author, 1942), p. 9.

Excelsior provided enough encouragement so that Rubín did not abandon writing entirely for what he had called a "nuevo destino."[9] During the same year, he published, again at his own expense, an expanded edition of these stories of rural Mexico and released them to the booksellers.

In 1948 there appeared two more volumes of stories with rural Mexican settings, and with them came a definitive title, "Cuentos mestizos," for a series which has grown to five volumes. Rubín now began to write, not simply about the rural segment of the population, nor about the lower class, but about a particular ethnic group. Mexico has been and still is almost entirely a nation of rural dwellers, in spite of the growth of its industry. This new series title reflected the author's belief that the division of Mexico's population into ethnic groups: mestizo, Indian, and creole, has much more significance both for history and literature than any division by social classes.

A new series of short stories was introduced in 1954[10] with the publication of Cuentos de indios. The second and most recent volume of these Indian stories appeared in 1958. In this series the Indian too is brought into focus as a distinct ethnic group, though he is often found outside his

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[9] Ibid., pp. 10-13. For critical comment on the first edition of this work, see the prologue of the second edition.

[10] Leal gives this date, but does not give his source. Luis Leal, Breve historia del cuento mexicano (Mexico: Ediciones de Andrea, 1956), p. 140.

traditional communal way of life and in the mainstream of mestizo culture. Two stories from the volume Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, "Un robo fatal" and "Amores de un tarahumara," were revised and included in this new division of Rubín's stories. These two narratives represent Rubin's two different treatments of the Indian, the anthropological and the social realist treatments, which also have characterized Indianist literature throughout Mexico and all of Spanish America.

Including the two volumes of Cuentos de indios, the five volumes about the mestizo, and thirteen stories of the sea in Burbujas en el mar, Rubín has published ninety short stories. Most of these are set in the twenties and the thirties. It is uncertain just how many of them came from approximately one hundred stories from what Rubín called the "cajón de mis papeles viejos," written prior to 1940.[11] According to the author, "El negocio de don Prodigos"[12] and the "seminovela" Ese rifle sanitario,[13] which is an expansion of that short story, were written in the late forties at about the time that a shipment of cows from Brazil introduced an epidemic of hoof and mouth disease into Mexico.[14] "Los vampiros

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[11] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, p. 14.

[12] Ramón Rubín, Cuentos mestizos (Guadalajara: By the author, 1948).

[13] Ramón Rubín, Ese rifle sanitario (Mexico: Impresora Insurgentes, 1948).

[14] Rubín's writing on this theme was based on his personal observations in the infected area of Michoacán. A thorough discussion of the U. S.-Mexican Government commission for the eradication of this disease is found in Frederick Benjamin Gipson's The Cow Killers (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1956).

rabiosos,"[15] with a similar theme, probably belongs to this same period. "Uranio" and "El escollo"[16] are probably of the post-World War II period, because of their themes of global war and atomic destruction.

In 1948 a congressman friend of Rubín's, who had read the short story "El negocio de don Pródigos," asked him to develop from it a story suitable for a film production. The revised plot was to provide a leading role for an actress friend of the congressman's. As a result, don Prodigos, the wandering peddlar who seemed to thrive on the misfortunes of others, becomes a secondary figure and the mass slaughter of diseased cattle becomes a subplot. The principal plot of the revised work centers in Chahua, a young mestizo girl. An army sergeant and the son of a bracero are rivals for her affections. Whether because of the scant merits of the story or because the congressman's leading lady deserted him, the story was not filmed. The author then converted the film script into what he called a "semi-novela," Ese rifle sanitario.

Another piece which was written for the cinema and did not reach the production stage was "La esquiva ventura." The setting of the story is a typical provincial town in Mexico. The plot concerns the tragic plight of a mestizo woman in her

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[15]Ramón Rubín, Cuarto libro de cuentos mestizos (Guadalajara: By the author, 1950).

[16]Ramón Rubín, Tercer libro de cuentos mestizos (Guadalajara: By the author, 1948).

mid-twenties, abandoned by her husband only shortly after they were married. A local man of doubtful reputation creates a serious problem for the girl's family when he asks the father for her hand in marriage. Contributing to the family's dilemma are two unmarried daughters and the not inconsiderable wealth of the suitor. The story ends tragically for the disappointed wife when her brothers seriously wound the man in the act of abducting her, and she must continue waiting for the husband she knows will never return. This is a revision of the story "La abandonada," which appeared in Cuentos del medio rural mexicano. Though the story was never filmed, the author states that the script was published in a local literary review under the tital "La esquiva ventura."

In 1963 the Mexican government in an experiment planned to transport about five hundred families from the northern state of Coahuila to Campeche along Mexico's southern border in an effort to permanently resettle them. Ramón Rubín was requested to write the story of the experiment, which was to be filmed. He made a trip by truck from Torreón to Campeche and gathered the necessary data for the story, but the government project failed to materialize as did the planned film with the projected title of "El clamor del río inmóvil."[17]

"El duelo," which appears in Rubín's fifth volume of mestizo stories, was the plot source for a theatrical production which was staged in Mexico City from 1956 to 1961. The play

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[17]Personal interview with the author,

"Los cuervos están de luto" is constructed around the theme of death as the central reality of life, with all the possibilities for irony which that theme provides. Three sons attempt to arrange a respectable funeral for their father, don Bene. A staunch defender of his personal property and rights during his life, he has succeeded in alienating the sympathy of all his fellow creatures. In death, he is the victim of his own attitude of indifference toward his fellow men. Even his paid mourners must be recruited from the taverns and the brothels. The mourners' sentiments are excited, not by the death of don Bene, nor even by the sum of money promised to each one, but by the grim reminder which the corpse provides that every man is "un parroquiano obligado de la Muerte." The characterization and the classical simplicity of the plot and the setting make the story admirably suited to the stage. The play was adapted from Rubín's story without either his knowledge or consent. When the Mexican theater company attempted to sell the rights to the drama to an agent for a Uruguayan company, this agent discovered the plot source and the fact that the rights to the story had not been legally conveyed by Rubín. An agreement was signed by the three parties which permitted the play to appear on the Uruguayan stage.[18]

In June of 1953, there appeared in Guadalajara the initial issue of a literary review carrying the name Creación. The persons responsible for its publication and their respective

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[18]Personal interview with the author.

functions were: Ramón Rubín, Director; Jorge Munguía, Jefe de Redacción; and José Corona Núñez, Administrador. In this first number of Creación, the above committee printed a manifesto which announced the formation of a new association of which this periodical was to be the official voice:

> Venimos a participar al pueblo, que un grupo de hombres y mujeres intelectuales, trabajadores del pensamiento y obreros del sentimiento, nos hemos asociado bajo la denominación de 'Bloque de Obreros Intelectuales Librepensadores de Jalisco.'

The members of this "Bloque" included Jorge Munguía, administrador of the State museum of Jalisco; José Guadalupe Zuño, a fresco painter and, at the time of the last issue of Creación, the president of the organization; Lola Vidrio, a young short story writer; José Corona Núñez, author, A. Robles Castillo, author; Ricardo Delgado Román, and Ramón Rubín.

In his first editorial, Ramón Rubín set down explicitly the ideas which members of the Association held in common and the principles and the conception of literature which would govern the selection of material to be printed in ensuing issues:

> Al aparecer Creación es ineludible que tome y defina su postura en la vida cultural de México. Y esa postura responderá, primero que nada, a un concepto del arte que no concibe la actividad intelectual si ésta no obedece al afán de interpretar y compartir los sentimientos y las luchas de nuestro pueblo.
>
> Creación es, en primer término, una revista literaria.
>
> Pero en ella no cabe la pedantería hueca de los que creen escribir mejor si nadie entiende lo que escriben. Consideramos propia de los impotentes, usurpadores y farsantes de la profesión esa actitud. Y tenemos que proclamar que no pueden llamarse escritores quienes no saben hacerse entender de aquellos que hablan su mismo idioma. Ser claro y comprensible es la primera y mayor virtud de un literato.

Un escritor pródigo en frases rebuscadas, pero sin conflicto temático y sin ideas originales y propias, es un escrito para necios. La misión de la literatura, está en penetrar en la imaginación y el cerebro del lector; no en sus oidos. El autor debe buscar la originalidad y el interés en los temas y en las ideas antes que en las palabras.

Las ambigüedades y abstracciones no distraen, ni ilustren, ni despiertan ninguna emoción: solo provocan fastidio. Aquellos que jamás emplean un término con un sentido habitual, sino concediéndole un valor metáforico que no explican y que sólo el autor imaginó; los que amontonan metáfora sobre metáfora y abstracción sobre abstracción, escriben para pedantes que no entienden lo que leen, pero que jamás lo confesarían que no lo han comprendido.

El repudio de la literatura mexicana por nuestro público lector, que prefiere los libros extranjeros, no debe atribuirse al malinchismo de quienes compran los libros, sino a la necedad de los muchos que entre nosotros dicen escribir para grupos selectos y que sólo escriben para ellos mismos.

El prestigio de esta clase de escritores se debe, como el de esos juglares de plazuela, los merolicos, a la ignorancia y humildad de nuestra gente; no los entiende, pero tampoco se atreve a juzgarlos.

Para los que hacemos Creación el gran público sí es importante. Y nos acercaremos a él con sencillez; conscientes de que una idea original y claramente expresada vale mucho más que setenta arrobas de palabras desconcertantes y que cien cuartillas de frases alambicadas pero horras de trascendencia y significación.

Among the purposes of this monthly publication, an important one was that an outlet should be provided for works of merit by authors who, for the lack of economic resources or other assistance, have been unable to bring their writings before the public. An invitation was extended to all such authors to join the "Bloque" and to present their works for publication:

> Pero habrán de llegar a ellas /páginas de Creación/ a través de nuestro Bloque, y animados por el mismo propósito que nos alienta de formar en torno a esta asociación y a su revista un baluarte capaz de defendernos de aquellos a quienes influye en contra del escritor libre un mezquino sistema de intriga o la ceguera del prejuicio ideológico y de la intolerancia política, religiosa o social.

The group had announced itself as a "Bloque de Jalisco," and a large proportion of the articles appearing in the magazine represented authors and themes identified with Jalisco. Prominent among authors of Jalisco were Mariano Azuela, whose vigorous, unadorned portrayal of the human drama of the Mexican Revolution made him a favorite; Juan Rulfo, whose El llano en llamas featured realistic scenes of rural Jalisco; and Ramón Rubín, who had written three novels dealing with Jalisco and western Mexico.

Mexican reality in language comprehensible to the people of Mexico was an important tenet in the artistic creed of the "Bloque." In the fourth issue of Creación, Rubin raised objections to the pedantry and the letter correctness which the Academia de la Lengua imposed on Mexican literature and insisted on the difference between "buenos escritores" and "buenos escribientes." In the final three numbers of the magazine, scorn is heaped upon Alfonso Reyes as an example of the "buen escribiente." He is attacked for having left Mexico to write in foreign lands during the Revolution, for his lack of originality, and for the fact that he has substituted erudition for a truly national literature.

Regular features of the magazine were reviews of current books and articles on general cultural themes such as the theater, the cinema, the plastic arts, painting, the novel, and poetry. Also featured regularly were original stories and articles in the section "Trabajos Creativos," the presentation of which was the avowed principal purpose of the magazine. Complete original works and their respective authors were: Shuncos and De Cesar a marte, both by A. Robles Castillo;[19] Rincones Michoacanos, by José Corona Núñez;[20] Burbujas en el mar, by Ramón Rubín;[21] Reminiscencias de mi vida, by José Guadalupe Zuño;[22] and a poem "El buen indio Juan Domingo," anonymous.[23]

Rubín's acknowledged interest in "la prehistoria fantástica de la humanidad"[24] found expression in studies on "Las inundaciones en el mundo de los mayas," "Lazos culturales prehispánicos entre México y América del Sur," and "Vínculos prehispánicos entre México y el Perú." Other articles of a scientific nature include "Ceremonias de difuntos entre los indios huicholes," "El volcán Ceboruco," and "Ceremonias del peyote entre los huicholes." The scientific interests of the "Bloque" in general and of Rubín in particular may be partly explained by the presence in the association of the director of the State museum of Jalisco, Jorge Munguía. From the last three articles

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[19] Creación, Nos. 1-3 and 3-6 respectively.

[20] Creación, Nos. 1-12.

[21] Creación, Nos. 1-12.

[22] Creación, Nos. 8-12.

[23] Creación, No. 4.

[24] Emmanuel Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx (Mexico: Empresas Editoriales, 1964), p. 55.

cited above come an abundance of data which Rubín has incorporated into his fiction. There is an interesting dual emphasis in the review on scientific and literary topics.

Three other contributor-members of the "Bloque" were Hernando Téllex and José Vincente Palencia, both of whom wrote critical articles on the Mexican novel; and Ricardo Delgado Román, who shared Rubín's interest in the conservation of Jalisco's Lake Chapala.

Besides a common interest in Mexican literature, art, and culture, a circumstance which gave the association real cohesion was the concern of many of its members over the threat to the Lerma river basin and the Chapala lake which a government land-use project presented. Beginning in the first issue with an article "Nuestro Lago Chapala," and ending with an article entitled "Chapala y la geografía," the members of the "Bloque" vehemently expressed their views regarding the desiccation of the lake. Only when the battle to save the lake seemed lost did the group finally disband and the publication of the magazine cease.

The publication of El callado dolor de los tzotziles in 1949 marked Rubín's first real triumph as a writer and won for him wide acclaim both in Mexico and abroad. The earlier editions of his works had been published with private capital and under the author's personal responsibility and were of generally poor quality and filled with errata. This novel was marketed by a commercial publishing house and is a technically

superior edition. All of his previous works except Ese rifle sanitario also made their appearance in Guadalajara, the regional capital of western Mexico. In general, the West is characterized by sparse and relatively unimportant rural communities; and, though one of the principal urban centers of the nation, Guadalajara has long been a stronghold for traditional Spanish culture and the cultural ties between that city and the rest of the country are weak. The appearance of El callado dolor de los tzotziles in the nation's capital made possible a much wider and more rapid distribution than his other works had received.

It was the above novel, Rubín's first Indian novel, which did much to introduce Rubín's works to readers in foreign countries. This was his first work to be translated abroad. The author stated that a French translation has been published, but that the English translation of the novel in the United States has not yet been published.[25] Manuel Pedro González remarked when he received the novel: "Con humildad no exenta de contrición confieso que no tenía noticia de la existencia de Ramón Rubín. Sin embargo, éste parece ser su sexto libro."[26] The critical bibliography, though still very limited, was almost

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[25]Mr. Rubín stated that Bertha Klaussnel of New York had made the translation, but he was unable to name the publisher with which she was associated -- Personal interview with the author.

[26]Manuel Pedro González, Trayectoria de la novela en México (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1951), p. 382.

non-existent before the appearance of El callado dolor de los tzotziles. Reviews of his books in Mexican periodical literature and a brief note by Lerín and Millán[27] are all the critical commentary known to exist on Rubín's works before that date.

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[27] Lerín and Millán, op. cit.

CHAPTER III

THE INDIAN IN NEW WORLD LITERATURE

In order to assess properly the importance of the Indian as a theme in contemporary Mexican literature, especially in Rubín's writings, it will be necessary to establish the contribution of the Indian to the present cultural and racial heritage of Mexico. Recent census information indicates that the Indian, relative to the national population, has been steadily decreasing in numbers. This is one of the principal factors accounting for the rise of numerous Indianist movements and for the revival of the Indian theme in recent Mexican literature. An attempt will be made to trace the presence and the development of the Indian as a theme in some major works of Spanish America and to relate Rubín's works to the traditional Indianist literature both of Mexico and of the New World.

Mexico is the most populous of the modern nations that have developed from the Spanish colonial empire in America and has the greatest concentration of Indians in the Western Hemisphere.[1]

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[1] Howard F. Cline, Mexico (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 338.

The Indian has been an important segment of the population and a major factor in the evolution of Mexican society from the time of the Conquest. Modern research places the native population at between ten and thirteen million at the time of Cortés' arrival.[2] For a number of reasons not all clearly understood, including new diseases introduced by the conquistadores, the native population was reduced by the close of the sixteenth century to less than two million.[3]

During the earlier Colonial period, it is not difficult to distinguish the main components of Mexico's population. However, the two main groups, Spanish and Indian, soon began to interbreed. In an attempt to codify racial mixtures and to assign rights and privileges according to purity of blood, the Spanish Crown soon found it necessary to modify the original categories as relative racial simplicity gave way to a confused medley. After three centuries of interbreeding and cultural interchanges, broad likenesses among the inhabitants became more important than their differences. In 1810, nearly forty per cent of the population was classified as "mestizo."[4] The Indian population, which had been on the ascendancy after the first century, reached about three and one-half million, but this was less than sixty per cent of the total population.[5]

Reliable statistics on the Indian population in modern Mexico are difficult to obtain. Criteria such as traditional

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[2] Ibid., pp. 11, 81.
[3] Ibid., p. 11.
[4] Ibid., p. 89.
[5] Ibid., p. 88.

values, ways and practices believed to be peculiar to and derived from indigenous backgrounds, physical characteristics, and modes of dress are not in any sense absolute determiners. In many instances it is difficult to distinguish between the Indian and the semi-modern villager. With the gradual disappearance of typical native dress and customs under the constant impact of Western civilization and the continued interbreeding between the diverse racial elements, the definition of "Indian" has been complicated greatly. In many cases the question is quite emotionally charged, and, as Cline observes, "Political and intellectual prejudices also help to determine at what point the line between Indians and non-Indians is drawn."[6] The final statistical picture, then, depends on the definition of "Indian" used and the purpose of the inquiry. Wide discrepancies within short intervals of time in census estimates reveal that the criteria used by different officials and by different regimes are responsible even more than actual demographic factors for the variable proportions of the population ascribed to the Indian.

The one point on which nearly all investigators agree is that those people who use an Indian dialect are most likely to be deeply rooted in the native context. Figures on the Indian population in the national decennial census are based on linguistic traits as the sole criterion of race. Census information reveals that in 1900, there were 1,790,000 Indians above five years of age who spoke Indian languages.[7] This figure

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[6] Ibid., p. 92.

[7] Ibid.

represents about fifteen percent of the total national population at that time.[8] Though this number increased by 1950 to nearly 2,500,000,[9] those using a native tongue represented only eleven per cent of the rapidly growing population.[10] The above figures reflect all speakers of Indian languages, including those who also speak Spanish. With a stricter definition yet of the "Indian," monolingualism, Mexican Indians in 1940 over the age of five who spoke only an Indian language numbered only 1,257,000 and by 1950 were reduced to 795,000.[11] This last figure represents only 3,64% of the 1950 population of 21,810,000.

In spite of the diminishing number of Indians who cling solely to indigenous languages and traditions, the Indian presence in Mexico has left a deep impress. From the Conquest, attempts were made by European settlers to completely absorb or assimilate the Indian into European cultural patterns. Instead, there was an accommodation of European culture to New World conditions and a blending of cultures similar to the mixing of the races. The primary contributions of the Europeans were in the areas of government and administration, economics, and a "Catholic matrix of religion and culture," as Cline has expressed it.[12] Notable native contributions included new crop resources, handicraft skills and products, and a special local flavor in art and architecture. This socio-ethnic evolution has produced a culture in which both distinctly

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 93.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 92.

[12] Ibid., p. 8.

European and Indian elements in their pure forms are in the minority. Because Indian racial and cultural elements are found primarily in the rural areas, the Indian is rapidly being identified with the rural or villager group. This is a convenient classification for the anthropologist to deal with and a meaningful one for some modern Mexican writers like Juan Rulfo, who features the rural dweller of Jalisco in a volume of short stories entitled El llano en llamas;[13] and Jose Rubén Romero in one of his lesser known works Cuentos rurales.[14]

The Indian has been a popular subject for the literature of the New World since the arrival of the conquistadores. Concha Meléndez, in her essay on the Indianist novel,[15] traces the development of this theme from the early part of the sixteenth century in the writings of the chroniclers, humanitarians, and poets, up to the appearance of the first realistic novel on the Indian, Aves sin nido.[16] Wade and Archer[17] list twenty-three novels about the Indian, beginning with Alcides Arguedas' first Indian work Wuata Wuara[18] and concluding with

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[13]Juan Rulfo, El llano en llamas (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económico, 1953).

[14]José Rubén Romero, Cuentos rurales (Mexico, 1915).

[15]Concha Meléndez, La novela indianista en Hispanoamerica (Madrid, 1934).

[16]Clorinda Matto de Turner, Aves sin nido (Buenos Aires, 1889).

[17]Gerald E. Wade and William H. Archer, "The Indianista Novel Since 1889," Hispania, Vol. 33 (1950), pp. 211-220.

[18]Alcides Arguedas, Wuata Wuara (Barcelona, 1904?).

Rubín's El callado dolor de los tzotziles. Cometta Manzoni's essay on the Indian theme in the Spanish American novel complements the early work of Miss Meléndez, bringing that study up to date.[19]

Two elements which have characterized the Indianist novel of Spanish America are the picturesque-folkloric and the social content.[20] The first element is present in what Concha Meléndez identifies as the indianista series,[21] represented by Cumandá.[22] These novels were of European inspiration and reflected sentimental and superficial views both of the Indian and of his natural surroundings. The second element appears in Aves sin nido, the first novel in which the Indian is considered as a social problem. When these two elements come together, as they do in Alcides Arguedas' Raza de bronce[23] and Ciro Alegría's El mundo es ancho y ajeno,[24] with authentic anthropological detail replacing the more superficial, chivalric vision of the life of the Indian, a superior type of Indianist novel results.

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[19]Aida Cometta Manzoni, El indio en la novela de América (Buenos Aires: Editorial Futuro, 1960).

[20]Arturo Torres Ríoseco discusses what he calls the dual tradition in the Indianist novel in The Epic of Latin American Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942), pp. 188-191.

[21]Concha Meléndez, op. cit.

[22]Juan León Mera, Cumandá (Quito, 1871).

[23]Alcides Arguedas, Raza de bronce (La Paz, 1919).

[24]Ciro Alegría, El mundo es ancho y ajeno (Santiago de Chile, 1941).

The Indian first appeared in the literature of Mexico in Hernán Cortés' Cinco cartas de relación. Among other early writings in which the Indian is prominent are Bartolomé de las Casas' Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's Verdadera historia de la conquista de Nueva España. The letters of Cortés and the chronicle of Del Castillo are representative of works which are important primarily as colorful, historical documents of aboriginal life and of the Conquest period. It is with the appearance of Las Casas' Brevísima relación that the real drama of the Indian enters the literature of Mexico. Las Casas' impassioned defense of the Indian against barbarous and inhuman treatment at the hands of the early Spanish settlers is one of the most important humanitarian documents of modern times.

The first Indianist novelette or short story by a Mexican author, according to Luis Leal, was Netzula, written in 1832 by José María Lafragua.[25] This narrative, written shortly after the translation of Atala reached the New World, belongs to the indianista literature because of its sentimental, idealized presentation of the Indian.

According to Cometta Manzoni, the first true Mexican novel of Indian inspiration "saturada de esencias de tierra mexicana y de aliento indio" was Tomochic.[26] This novel,

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[25] Luis Leal, op. cit. p. 44.

[26] Cometta Manzoni, op. cit., p. 65.

published in 1905, was written by a Mexican army lientenant, Heriberto Frías, who accompanied a military mission to Chihuahua to quell a rebellion among the Temochiteco Indians. Realistic accounts of the merciless killing of the Indians by federal troops are the background for a romantic story with a tragic ending.[27]

The Indian as a theme in the novel and the short story of Mexico cannot be studied thoroughly without considering the volume of material which grew out of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Wade and Archer have included Los de abajo[28] among the novels about the Indian in their study of the indianista novel since 1889.[29] Cometta Manzoni takes into account the entire cycle of Revolutionary novels, identifying "los de abajo" with the Indian and the rural masses which have their roots in the civilization of the Indian.[30] Regarding Azuela she says,

> Por eso, cuando se estudia la novela del indio en México, el primer nombre que asoma a la consciencia del crítico, es el de Mariano Azuela, que fue el primero que evocó su audacia al romper lanzas contra una sociedad que le tenía esclavizado y, pudo encontrar su ritmo propio perdido por los encomenderos y tiranos.[31]

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[27] Ramón Rubín compares this Indian novel of Mexico with the Brazilian classic Os Sertoes by Euclides de Cunha, a Brazilian geologist, sociologist, writer, who accompanied a similar government mission in his country, "Tomochic y Os Sertoes," Creación No. 5 (October - November, 1953), pp. 43-44.

[28] Mariano Azuela, Los de abajo (El Paso, 1915).

[29] Wade and Archer, op. cit.

[30] Cometta Manzoni, op. cit.

[31] Ibid., p. 70.

In addition to the actual presence of the Indian problem in the Revolution and in the cycle of novels and short stories which grew out of the Revolution, the awakening of the nation's conscience and the resurgence of national themes in the literature following the Revolution could hardly fail to bring into focus the Indian as an important ethnic element in Mexican society.

Any account of twentieth-century Mexican literature in general and of Indianist literature in particular must include the name of Bruno Traven, a writer whose real name, national origin, and native language continue to be a mystery. Ramón Rubín names Traven as the initiator of modern Indianist literature, especially between 1930 and 1950, when he calls him "el iniciador de la lucha que hoy se desarrolla en los campos del indianismo literario."[32] Manuel Pedro González credits Traven with the most effective dramatization of the Indian problem up to the time of the publication of his study on the Mexican novel:

> Hasta el presente, ningún nativo ha aprisionado la tragedia del indio con la intensidad y la simpatía con que lo ha hecho Traven en sus novelas, particularmente en La carreta, Puente en la selva o La rebelión de los colgados, por ejemplo. Es el único que ha sabido plasmar en obra de arte superior el horror de la vida del indio y del proletariado en las haciendas, en las monterías, en las minas y en todos los distritos rurales bajo el porfiriato.[33]

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[32] Ramón Rubín, "Editorial," Creación, No. 5 (Oct. - Nov., 1953).

[33] Manuel Pedro Gonzáles, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

At about the time that the post-Revolution novel began to appear, the problem of the Indian also began to find new expression in prose fiction. One of the earliest and the best known of the Indianist novels of the thirties was El indio.[34] Appearing in the same year were Aztlán, Tierra de Garzas;[35] and Campo Celis.[36] Following the same theme, El Resplandor[37] and Quetzalcoatl, sueño y vigilia[38] appeared in 1937. Though the Indianist novel did not altogether cease, the theme receded from prominence at about the same time as the Revolutionary novel. Miguel Ángel Menéndez' Nayar[39] and Emilio Abreu Gómez' Canek[40] were among the last of this series of novels on the Indian theme.

Two movements undoubtedly exercised a noteworthy influence on the Indianist novels of that period: the social and agrarian reforms of the Cardenas administration,[41] which attempted to provide guarantees of social justice for the Indian; and the muralist movement. Though a positive relationship

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[34]Gregorio López y Fuentes, El indio (Mexico, 1935).

[35]Ruben M. Campos, Aztlán, tierra de garzas (Mexico, 1935).

[36]Mauricio Magdaleno, Campo Celis (Mexico, 1935).

[37]Mauricio Magdaleno, El Resplandor (Mexico, 1937).

[38]Emilio Abreu Gómez, Quetzalcoatl, sueño y vigilia (Mexico, 1937).

[39]Miguel Ángel Menéndez, Nayar (Mexico, 1941).

[40]Emilio Abreu Gómez, Canek (Mexico, 1940).

[41]General Lázaro Cárdenas was president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940.

cannot be established between the reforms of that administration and the Indianist novels of the corresponding period, it was a very propitious time for the novels to appear and both circumstances were mutually reinforcing. The muralist movement was a popular art movement which dramatized the heroism of the campesino masses, including the Indian, during the years of the Revolution. This movement reached its peak internationally in the thirties and undoubtedly contributed to the rise of popular themes in Mexican literature such as the Indian and the institutional reforms of the post-Revolution period.

In his study of the twentieth-century Mexico short story, Emmanuel Carballo has identified characteristics common to Indianist authors of the thirties, novelists and short story writers alike: "En la década de los años treinta surge un grupo de novelistas que exalta al indígena, se conduele de sus infortunios y se demora en sus costumbres extravagantes."[42] In an interview between Carballo and Joseph Sommers, in which Gregorio López y Fuentes' El indio, Mauricio Magdaleno's El resplandor, and Bruno Traven's La rebelión de los colgados were cited as examples, these characteristics were amplified by Sommers:

> En general se puede decir que sus novelas se escribieron con un propósito redentor. Éstos miraron al indio con simpatía, y ateniéndose a su condición miserable formularon una protesta en sus libros contra las personas que los explotan. Esta protesta la enfocaron desde los puntos de vista social y económico. Se puede decir que en sus novelas se supedita la anécdota y la caracterización de los personajes a la postura ideológica. Estos

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[42]Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, op. cit., p. 86.

> novelistas partían de un esquema ideológico: sus novelas ejemplifican detalladamente sus puntos de vista. Ninguno de los tres conocía en forma profunda al indígena.[43]

In brief, characteristics of the Indianist novels of this generation were as follows: the point of departure was primarily ideological; the authors were deeply sympathetic with the plight of the Indian; the works were published when the Indian problem was at the center of the stage in national politics; though the artistic merit of these works is generally undisputed, they are primarily documents of the abuses suffered by the Indian in the social and economic realms; the anecdote, character development, and profound psychological penetration of the Indian as a human being are notably weak or absent.

Though the theme of the Indian has continued in an unbroken succession from the thirties up to the present time,[44] a group of Indianist writers whose works began to be published in the late forties make up a new generation whose approach to the Indianist novel is significantly different from that of the thirties. Joseph Sommers identifies the principal members

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[43] Ibid., p. 87.

[44] Renato Rosaldo, "A General Survey of the Contemporary Novel in Mexico," Arizona Quarterly, Vol. 11 (1955), pp. 101-116; Gerald E. Wade and William H. Archer, "The Indianista Novel Since 1889," Hispania, Vol. 33 (1950), pp. 211-220; and Manuel Pedro González, op. cit., pp. 312-326 collectively give the principal Indianist authors and their works in twentieth-century Mexico.

of this generation of the forties and their works.[45] He has further identified them as the "Ciclo de Chiapas," because all of them have written Indianist novels with settings in that heavily Indian populated state. They are distinguished by Sommers from the preceding generation by their attention to contemporary novelistic trends, by their handling of both style and structure, by their relatively greater success in creating flesh and blood characters, and by the influence of anthropological detail on the presentation of a more authentic subject matter -- the Indian and his environment.[46]

Novelistic techniques and character development differ among the writers of this group, but a trait that persists in all of their works and the one that is their most distinguishing feature is the use of social anthropological data to penetrate the Indian's mentality and to give a convincing picture of the cultural context in which he lives. Sommers evaluates the influence of anthropology on their works:

> Se advierte en ellos la influencia de la antropología: esta ciencia les ha permitido dejar atrás el pintoresquismo y el folklore. La antropología les ha permitido entrar a la psicología, las creencias y la realidid -- medio fantástica, medio terrenal -- del mundo indígena.
> .....
> El indígena real aparace tal cual es en estos cuentos y novelas. La realidad que describen los narradores no se queda en la superficie, penetra hasta los dominios del

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[45] Ricardo Pozas, Juan Pérez Jolote (1948); Ramón Rubín, El callado dolor de los tzotziles (1949); Carlo Antonio Castro, Los hombres verdaderos (1959); Eraclio Zepeda, Benzulul (1959); María Lombardo de Caso, La culebra tapó el río (1962); and Rosario Castellanos, Balún Canán (1957), Ciudad real (1960), and Oficio de tinieblas (1962).

[46] Joseph Sommers, "El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria," Cuadernos Americanos, Vol. 33, No. 2 (March-April, 1964), pp. 246-261.

> mito, que aun hoy es vigente en la vida indígena. Presentan estos narradores una realidad en la que se mezclan estos elementos en la vida del mestizo mexicano. Se trata de una realidad más profunda que la que retratan los narradores indigenistas de los años treinta.[47]

With every detail of his existence carefully and scientifically documented, the Indian is no longer a romantic, folkloric creature remote from modern day realities, he is a believeable human being. So thoroughly do these authors inquire into the psychology and the customs of the Indian that the classification of their works as novels is imperiled. Brushwood and Garcidueñas say of Ricardo Pozas' novel Juan Perez Jolote, "...como novela es dificiente por lo extremadamente simple de su construcción, pero es valiosa como testimonio etnográfico de la psicología y condiciones de vida, actuales, de uno de los grupos indígenas de Chiapas."[48]

This new attitude toward the Indian is not unique in the Indianist novel of Mexico. It is also evident in various works by Miguel Ángel Asturias, including Hombres de maíz and Papa verde. Though this last novel is not primarily an Indianist novel, it contains much material about the Mayan Indian of Guatemala. Sommers also traces this attitude in Augusto Roa Bastos' Hijo de hombre, which deals with the Indian in presentday Paraguay.[49]

Ramón Rubín's first publication of short stories in

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[47] Joseph Sommers, as quoted by Emmanuel Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, op. cit., p. 88.

[48] John S. Brushwood and José Rojas Garcidueñas, Breve historia de la novela mexicana (Mexico: Ediciones de Andrea, 1959), p. 118.

[49] Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, op. cit., p. 89.

1942, Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, included stories about the Indian.[50] Though the Indian in rural Mexico is not always easy to distinguish from the campesino, even to the trained eye, the author has written stories in which the protagonists are distinctly Indian. They are identified as belonging to specific tribes and they are associated with a native language or with distinctively indigenous traditions and customs, or both. Beginning in 1948 with the publication of Cuentos mestizos, designated by the author at that time as the second volume of his series of mestizo stories, these tales of rural Mexico rarely include communities or individuals that are clearly identifiable as Indian. El callado dolor de los tzotziles was Rubín's first complete work that was distinctly and exclusively Indian in theme. Of the remainder of Rubín's novels and short stories, the Indian theme is predominant in the two-volume series Cuentos de indios, and in three novels: El canto de la grilla, La bruma lo vuelva azul, and Cuando el táguaro agoniza.

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[50]Rubín, Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, op. cit., "Un robo fatal," "Mal del pinto," "El yaqui," and "Amores de un tarahumara."

CHAPTER IV

THE INDIAN IN HIS NATIVE HABITAT IN RUBÍN'S WRITINGS

It is readily apparent even to the casual reader that Rubín is greatly preoccupied with the early history and with the aboriginal cultures of his native country. This interest has led him to the study of what he terms "...la prehistoria fantástica de la humanidad."[1] Evidence of a rather intensive inquiry into Mexico's past comes from articles which appeared in several numbers of Creación.[2] Rubín's writings about the Indian as a separate ethnic group in Mexico include the use of a vast amount of this anthropological data. It is this fact, it has already been pointed out, which identifies Rubín with the new generation of Indianist writers both in Mexico and throughout Spanish America. The accumulation of scientific

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[1]Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, op. cit., p. 55.

[2]Creación, op. cit.: "Exploraciones arqueológicas," No. 2 (July, 1953); "Vínculos prehistóricos entre México y el Perú," No. 5 (Oct. - Nov., 1953); "De aquel Mexico colonial," No. 7 (Feb. - June, 1954); "Ceremonias de difuntos entre los indios huicholes," No. 8 (June - Sept., 1954); "Ceremonia del peyote entre los indios huicholes," No. 9 (Oct. - Dec., 1954); "Lazos culturales prehispánicos entre México y América del Sur," No. 11 (June - Sept., 1955); and "Las inundaciones en el mundo de los mayas," No. 12 (Oct. 1955 - Feb. 1956).

material makes of his writings on the Indian a veritable treasure house of information on the folkways and the customs of the Indian tribes of which he writes.[3] With this cultural data the author attempts to penetrate the mentality of the Indian as it is so adequately described by González:

> La mentalidad indígena ... con sus terribles complejos, con sus conflictos psicológicos, religiosos y sociales; con sus teogonías, sus ritos de magia, sus leyendas y tradiciones; con su sincretismo religioso y cultural; con su tragedia íntima, sus resentimientos, sus represiones emocionales, su personalidad espiritual dividida y solicitada por dos culturas y dos religiones incompatibles, dos formas de vida y de economía que se excluyen y no pueden conjugarse....[4]

Rubín is not satisfied to write just about an entire aboriginal race *in toto*, however. Neither can his writings about the Indian be classified with *El indio*[5] as a "mass novel," in which a nameless community of Indians cry out as a single protagonist against injustices suffered at the hands of a race of white-skinned intruders. Each of Rubín's stories and novels on the Indian theme identifies a specific tribe of Indians in a community with a precise geographical setting and with its own special problems and circumstances. Within this community,

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[3]It is apparent that Rubín has made an intensive study of the Indian, but the verification of the data he presents is beyond the scope of this study. González credits Rubín with an effective novelistic technique in *El callado dolor de los tzotziles*, because of his use of this data, but adds: "Para verificar la autenticidad de todos estos elementos aquí utilizados, se requiere una preparación antropológica de la que el que escribe carece en absoluto." Gonzalez, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 14.

[5]Gregorio López y Fuentes, *El indio*, *op. cit.*

individual Indians, human beings in particular, become protagonists in a drama that has its roots in the customs and the traditions of a particular and named indigenous culture, a drama that is both authentically Indian in context and intensely human and universal in scope.

Rubín's short stories and novels about the Indian embrace the heavily Indian to the light Indian population areas, and they range from the southern state of Chiapas to the northern and western states of Sonora and Chihuahua. As mentioned earlier, the first Indian novel El callado dolor de los tzotziles was set in Chiapas. Other states represented are: Sonora, in Cuando el táguaro agoniza; Nayarit, Jalisco, and Zacatecas, in La bruma lo vuelve azul and El canto de la grilla; Hidalgo, in "Un robo fatal"; Oaxaca, in "Mal del pinto"; and Durango and Chihuahua, in "Los amores de un tarahumara" -- all of which appear in Cuentos del medio rural mexicano; the isthmus of Tehuantepec, in "El último despojo"; and the island of Tiburón, in "La mula muerta" -- both in Cuentos de indios, libro primero. It is readily apparent that though Rubín's first Indian novel identified him with southern Mexico and with the "Ciclo de Chiapas," by far the greater number of his short stories and novels on the Indian theme are set in the western and northwestern parts of Mexico.

Of the twenty-eight Mexican Indian languages spoken in 1950 by at least one-hundred monolinguals above the age of five,[6] nine are spoken by Indian communities represented in

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[6]Cline, op. cit., p. 339.

Rubín's fiction. These Indians and the works in which they appear are: the Coras, El canto de la grilla; the Huicholes, El canto de la grilla, La bruma lo vuelve azul, and "Caza menor," in Cuentos de indios, libro primero; the Tzotziles, El callado dolor de los tzotziles; the Mixtecos, "El mal del pinto"; the Yaquis, "El yaqui"; and the Otomís, "un robo fatal" -- all of which appear in Cuentos del medio rural mexicano; the Zoques, "El dilema de la zoque"; and the Tarascos, "La milagrosa pitzecua" -- both in Cuentos de indios, libro primero; the Tarahumaras, "Los amores de un tarahumara," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano; and "El ánima de Juan Cocospe," Cuentos de indios, libro segundo. In addition, Indians belonging to groups in which Cline shows that there were fewer than one-hundred monolinguals[7] and which are included in Rubín's fiction are: the Pápagos, Cuando el táguaro agoniza; the Huaves, "El último despojo," and the Seris, "La mula muerta," both in Cuentos de indios, libro segundo. OtherIndian tribes, linguistic divisions, which are mentioned but do not figure importantly in these writings are: the Pimas, Cuando el táguaro agoniza; the Tehuanas, El seno de la esperanza; the Tepehuanes, El canto de la grilla; the Tepecanos, the Tacuichamonas, and the Mayos, all in La bruma lo vuelva azul. In a discussion with the writer on the Indian in his works, Rubín pointed to the fact that his Indianist writings were broadly representative and were not restricted to any one region or tribe.[8]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Personal interview with the author.

Rubín's writings on the Indian are so heavily documented that they are quite valuable as sources for students of these aboriginal cultures. Occasionally, however, much less elaboration than the author provides would have sufficed. In the short work La bruma lo vuelve azul,[9] this detail is so meticulous and so disproportionate to the narrative content of the novel that it prompted Brushwood and Garcidueñas to lament that Rubín has not laid aside his " ... notas documentales y sus conocimientos etnológos en el lugar que les corresponde."[10] Though at times in some of his works the accumulation of customs and of descriptive detail is distracting, for the most part the factual material which the author introduces into his narratives enhances their literary value.

Besides having access to material in both national and regional archives, Rubín stated to the writer that he has lived among the Indians about which he has written for brief periods in order to document particular aspects of their respective cultures.[11] Through whatever avenue this knowledge may have come to him, Rubín demonstrates a deep insight into the life and the folkways of the Indian.[12] Even if the subject matter

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[9]Apart from the index and the vocabulary, the novel has only ninety-nine pages.

[10]Brushwood and Garcidueñas, op. cit., p. 119.

[11]Personal interview with the author.

[12]Rubín does not claim final authority for his data: "Al fin y al cabo, su obra no tiene pretensiones antropológicas. Y, en tal virtud no le preocupa el rigor por lo exacto ni le desvela la posibilidad de una polémica." El canto de la grilla, p. 194.

is not entirely authentic, the technique is convincing.[13] His utilization of this vast amount of cultural material reveals not only the author's desire to authenticate the Indian in his works, but also his belief that there is a vital link between the culture and the psychology of the human being.

There appears to be no system for the organization or the presentation of the data on the Indian except the requirements of the particular narrative in progress. All of the novels and many of the short stories on the Indian have plots that center in some deeply personal or domestic conflict. Courtship and marriage customs are the ones most frequently related. In order to explain the importance of the myth and of religion in the psychology of the Indian, much space is given by the author to religious beliefs and practices and to what the author himself calls "superstitions," What Rubín seems most concerned with, however, in the selection of these customs is that the reader see the Indian, not as a remote folkloric creature, but as a human being. He is shown capable of the entire gamut of human emotions and experiences: greed, intolerance, fear, remorse, superstition, passion, filial love, loyalty, dignity, devotion to noble principles, and a lofty conception of justice. There is a tendency to dwell on the Indian's virtues, just as there is a tendency to magnify

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[13]González comments on Rubín's skillful use of Indian customs and traditions: "Rubín debe estar íntimamente familiarizado con la vida y costumbres de estos indios, o de lo contrario, poseer una inusitada habilidad para adentrarse en el alma de sus personajes, identificarse con ellos e infundirles aliento y vida artísticos," op. cit., p. 383.

the evil practices of the white man, but, as with all human beings, the Indian in Rubín's pages is capable of wrongdoing. A considerable quantity of anthropological detail from selected works, especially the novels, will be presented for the purpose of demonstrating the thoroughness with which Rubín has researched the customs and the traditions of the Indian and the manner in which he has incorporated them into his fiction.

Members of the Mayan family, the Tzotziles are located in the south of Mexico, near the Guatemalan border. Their primitive huts of mud are scattered over the high grasslands of the southern Sierras. They are sedentary in contrast with the nomadic condition of the Indians of western and northern Mexico. A surprisingly high percentage, eighty per cent, of their number cling stubbornly to the native language exclusively and to native customs and industries, so that they have only casual contacts with the whites and the mestizos. They have been exposed to the Christian religion since colonial times. There is a village totem pole in the form of a bat,[14] which serves only as a dark reminder of their tribal legends. The nearly forgotten sacred mountain of Tzontehuitz is frequented only by exiles and occasional devotees of the ancient rite. Their practice of the Christian religion, however, is mingled with symbols, names, and rituals which are distinctly pagan in origin. The Christian religion was brought to them by early Dominican friars and the famed Bishop of Chiapas, Las Casas,

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[14]The word "tzotzil" means "hombre murciélago" or "hombre vampiro," according to the author.

is a name well-known among them.

The Tzotziles practice a rude, subsistence agriculture; tend sheep and goats for their wool; make wearing apparel of wool and native fibers; and produce a great deal of pottery from a native white clay both for domestic use and for external markets. A small number of the tribe -- Rubín calls them "trashumantes" or "plebeyos" -- have learned Spanish; they traffic freely in the ladino[15] villages, selling a surplus of domestic manufactures and flowers; and commonly hire out as chamulas, or burden bearers, a term commonly applied to all members of the tribe because of their excellent physique.

The tribe is ruled by a supreme governor called the "ajau." His office is hereditary and permanent, and his authority is recognized by the Mexican government. Each local community is ruled by its own chief, called a "halach-uinic," who is assisted by a tribal council of elders. The decisions of the chief and of the council are final and are not subject to appeal.

The plot of El callado dolor de los tzotziles is centered in José Damián. The spiritual and psychological upheaval which this Tzotzil youth experiences has its beginning in a moving domestic situation. Rubín takes great pains to describe in narrative fashion the customs of the tribe regarding marriage. María Manuela had been betrothed to Jose with the consent

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[15]"Ladino" is a term used by the Indians to refer collectively to both mestizos and whites.

of both families when he was fifteen and she was only five. According to tribal custom, they did not begin to live together until the girl reached pubescence. María's loyalty, industry, and humble submissiveness endeared her greatly to her husband. But her lingering physical immaturity and the ravages of tuberculosis made her the victim of the most dreaded of all plagues to the Indian woman, barrenness. After three years, she had no child. Even the girl's family disowned her for the shame which her barrenness brought both to her husband and to them. There were few cases of sterility among their women. In every case the wife alone bore the blame. No Tzotzil husband would continue to bear this affront to his dignity. José was forced by tribal custom to appeal to the chief and to the tribal council for a legal separation. The decision was deferred for one year, obstensibly because José did not have enough animals to divide with his wife and still pay the chief's customary fee. Another year failed to bring any change and final separation was inevitable. The severe consequences of this custom for both husband and wife are described by the author:

> Según el rito de la comunidad, ninguno de los dos podía volverse a casar, aunque estaba tolerado que el hombre se amancebara e hiciese vida matrimonial con alguna otra india, viuda o desamparada. A la estéril, ningún tzotzil se hubiese humillado a aceptarla por esposa ni siquiera por concubina, ni a mirarle a la cara. El estigma de su infecundidad se le volvía más triste que lo que pudiera serlo la peste misma, la onchocercosis o la propia lepra.[16]

Had José been of noble rank he might have taken other wives and better borne the tragedy of this separation. He might also,

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[16]Rubín, El callado dolor de los tzotziles, p. 37.

even as a commoner, have taken a woman widowed or destitute to share his life, but there was none in the community. The alternative which he chose was to leave the village and to hire out to the mestizos and whites for a while to escape his great sorrow.

In his description of the exile of María Manuela, for that was her sentence, Rubín provides a sympathetic picture of the plight of the Indian woman. When José returned home froma day's labor, his wife was there to humbly and joyfully serve him:

> María Manuela lo veía o sentía comer, pero no participaba del festín. Más que la esposa era la esclava; y no estaba autorizada a ello sino después de que el hombre hubiese terminada su refacción y se quedase sola... Ni aun cuando aquella fuese la última comida que debiera servirle.... A ellas, de todos modos, les respetó siempre el marido, con esa imponente autoridad de semidiós, de la que solo para su bochorno y abyección lograrían escapar. Ellas no necesitaban más tirano que el marido, pues la despótica facultad que éste ejercía era tan estrecha, que anulaba prácticamente todos los resuellos de su indiscutible condición humana.[17]

The wife does not even share the husband's tapexco, a bed of small branches cushioned with leaves, but must occupy an humble fiber mat nearby and tend the embers to provide him warmth. Women are not allowed to attend the one fiesta alegre which the tribe celebrates yearly, but encircle the celebration site and view it at a distance. On journies away from the village, they must follow forgotten paths along the countryside to avoid meeting men, even of their own village, while their husbands use the main routes. They must perform all

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[17]Rubín, El callado dolor de los tzotziles, pp. 27, 33.

their domestic duties and then serve the whims of the husband at evening time without even the reward of gratitude. At the separation ceremony, María was not allowed to speak in her own defense. Barrenness is punishable by exile along with the witches, the prostitutes, and the thieves on the tribe's sacred mountain.

Most of the customs and traditions of the Tzotziles are described in the first eight of the novel's thirty divisions. It is upon José's return to his village and to María and the son she has borne him in his absence that the author resumes the recounting of Tzotziles' distinctive customs. The celebration of the quin-tajimoltic, the Indians' annual fiesta, besides providing the setting for the fierce attack of the Indians upon José for his violation of tribal percepts, also is the source of some of the most colorful and interesting practices of the tribe.

The fiesta is held at San Juan Chamula near the site of the chapel where most of their Christian ceremonies are performed. Only members of the Tzotzil tribe are allowed to witness and participate in the spectacle. The celebration is also restricted to the men. Three Indians are chosen by tribal elders as presidents of the fiesta. If it is not colorful and joyous, they are subject to severe punishment. These three also are actors who participate in native farces representing historical and legendary events. The opening farce is a processional by Doña Malinche, a Spanish conquistador representing

Cortés, and an Indian dignitary of that period. The role of Malinche is assumed by a man, who undergoes an elaborate ritual marking his temporary sexual transmutation:

> Para conseguirlo, se recurre a complicados sahumerios y a pueriles exorcismos, a ayunos y a infusiones preparadas con zumos de plantas durante setenta y dos horas, transcurridas las cuales se considera que ya ha adquirido la nueva personalidad, con los amaneramientos femeninos que lo facultan para asumir competentemente su papel en el ritual. Entonces se le dan unas vestiduras de mujer, con las cuales se atavia ilusionada y sale contoneándose grotescamente, en medio del júbilo de todos los que le admiran.[18]

This procession signals the beginning of the festival. Rubín describes both the movements and the musical background of this opening ceremony:

> Esta singular 'Malinche' se une a 'Cortés' y al alto jerarca indígena. Y comienzan un solumne recorrido hasta la plaza principal, seguidos por una muchedumbre emocionada y al son de numerosos conjuntos musicales, entre los que prevalecen los ejecutantes del arpa, al tambor, la chirmia, el sencillo pito de barro, las trompetas o clarines de pregonero heráldico, conservados y transmitidos durante siglos de generación y muy abollados y rotos.[19]

The principal ceremony of the four-day festival is the dance of the tiger:

> La ceremonia central... se lleva a cabo arrojando en el atrio de la engalanada iglesia un indígena que porta sobre la espalda una piel de tigre. Allí es sahumado por los mayores de la tribu y sale corriendo alrededor del baldío, perseguido por las delirantes comparsas que le dan alcance y simbólicamente lo azotan con bastones y reatas, hasta obligarlo a hincarse ante los grupos de cruces que existen en los distintos ángulos de la plaza. Cuando el 'castigo' recibido por el 'animal' se juzga suficiente, éste se simula muerto. Y entonces el pueblo lo levanta en vilo, siempre envuelto en la piel de tigre, para irlo a depositar de nuevo en el atrio de la iglesia....[20]

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[18] Ibid., pp. 182-3. [19] Ibid., p. 183.

[20] Ibid., p. 184.

The second day is marked by a dance of two hundred Tzotziles on layers of burning grass, symbolizing man's battle with the elements. As with the preceding ceremony, this dance ends with the consumption of great quantities of alcohol.

The third ritual is dintinctly a pagan sacrifice. A specially prepared bull is encircled by a mass of Tzotzil men. They gradually close the circle until they have rendered him helpless. Then the animal is taken to a prepared site where it is sacrificed. His blood is drunk by some of the Indians who claim that the bull's great strength is thereby transmitted to them. The principals of the festival then consume the bull's cooked flesh -- and the drinking and the revelry continue. The fiesta ends with another ritual which marks the return of 'Malinche' to his original sex.

The principal theme of the novel is the "trastorno psicológico" of José Damián when he leaves his village to work at the coffee plantation among the ladinos. The first significant event in this psychological drama, the killing of a sheep, is comprehensible only when the attitude of the Tzotzil Indians toward this animal is understood. Sheep were introduced into this area during the early Colonial years by Las Casas and his Dominican friars. From these humanitarian missionaries, the Tzotziles learned to weave warm protective clothing so necessary for resisting the bitter winds of the high Sierras. Rubín describes the attitude which these friars instilled in these Indians toward the sheep:

> Desde los primeros años de la Colonia, en que los frailes dominicanos introdujeron en sus pueblos la cría del borrego y los enseñaron á aprovechar la lana para fabricar abrigos que los protegiesen del intenso frío que durante el invierno prevalece en sus altas montañas, los tzotzíles respetaban al animal como a algo que les había sido confiado por una amable disposición divina, y era para ellos intocable y casi sagrado. Matarle hubiera sido tanto a más abominable que matar a un semejante indefenso; y probando su carne se hubieran sentido antropofagos....[21]

Because of its relationship to Christian symbolism as well as its importance to their existence, the sheep became to them an object of veneration. For José Damián, the killing of his first sheep was the symbolic act of violence against his race and marked the first rung on the ladder descending into the white man's world. This attitude toward sheep, though it became characteristic of the entire tribe, was a borrowing from Christianity and from Western civilization, a part of the religious and the cultural syncretism which Rubín attempts to show is responsible for the decline of the Indian.

In El canto de la grilla, the customs of the Cora Indian predominate. Though the languages of the Cora and the Huichol tribes are different, their religious practices and customs are generally compatible and in some instances are quite similar. An attempt will be made to describe some of the customs of the Coras which are distinct from cultural elements also ascribed to the Huicholes.

Though the Coras are a very small group, even for western Mexico, they are the masters of several docile groups

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[21] Ibid., p. 60.

including the Huicholes and the Tepehuanes -- much in the same manner that the whites and the mestizos rule over them. The Coras have proven to be almost impervious to Western customs, religion, and dress. A singular exception is the borrowing of Spanish titles to designate government officials and nobility. Ruling over the Coras is an Emperor who resides in their village. The office is hereditary. In the absence of the Emperor, his office is filled by his wife. A council of elders meeting in the common hall is presided over by the Emperor. An alguacil functions as policeman and administers punishment. Esmeraldo, the principal herbman of the Coras in this novel, had received the title of conde for curing the Emperor of his tribe. Although Rubín does not describe the entire noble caste, he indicates that the Coras have seventeen different ranks of nobility, presumably patterned after the Spanish system. Mention is made of an Emperador de Emperadores whom the Cora Emperor visited every five years in Tenochtitlán: " ... el Sumo Emperador de todos los indios mexicanos, el presunto, desleído y apócrifo sucesor de Moctezuma, que aun solía explotar las rancias tradiciones y la ignorancia de sus súbditos parapetado en un trono espúreo instalado en el cerro del Tepeyac."[22] This is the only mention that Rubín has made of any such successor to Moctezuma and Cuautémoc..

The Cora system of justice is described in detail in the scene in which Mateo appears before the tribal council to

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[22] Ibid., p. 146.

answer the charge of striking his father. Respect for elders and especially for the father is the fundamental principle that underlies their society. Rubín observes that theirs is a patriarchal system strangely related to that of the Jews.[23] The Emperor's wife presided in the common hall. The accused sat in the center of a circle of alguaciles. A prosecutor rose to denounce the crimes of the boy. A tribal elder too poured out his indignation so that any defense was futile. The Emperor's wife then pronounced sentence. Three forms of punishment might result: internment in a vermin-infested jail, a punishment used for lesser crimes; the bramadero, a form of public exposure similar to stocks with complete abstinence from food and water required; and the maximum penalty, the columpio de sacrificio. Mateo was to suffer this latter punishment, which was a brutal form of execution. The victim was suspended with ropes around his wrists from a scaffold, his feet hanging just off the ground. The elders kept a vigil while preparations were being made. The victim was to be a messenger to the gods and was dressed and fed for the long journey he must undertake. Individual Indians tied corn to his waist so that he might carry their offerings into the presence of the gods. Complete abstinence from food and water were required. No one but the victim's wife might approach him. Death was almost always the outcome.

The deities of the Cora tribe are fewer in number than those of the Huicholes as are the rituals for appeasing them.

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[23] Ibid., p. 67.

It is not completely clear which gods are recognized by both tribes, however. The principal god of the Coras is Xuravet, who controls the rain. Tayaopa, god of the sun, is revered by them. Coatza, represented by the common crow, is the god of lovers, and the law of the crow is the code of love. The sacred lake Tite is the mother of their ancestors, and water taken from her basin at midnight is believed to have the power to cure leprosy and to restore paralyzed limbs. Tecuats, ancestors of the Coras, are represented by peaks of rock that overlook their valley. The appearance of an owl is an evil omen, for the Coras believe that it bears the spirit of an ancestor who has returned to trouble them. Offerings of food and drink are placed before these rocks in order to placate offended ancestors.

The Cora Indians look down on the Huicholes for their very superstitious practices. When one of their own number is found guilty of the "nefandas prácticas de la brujería," he is exiled to the San Buena mountains. Nevertheless, their more "scientific" herbmen apply remedies prepared from bark, herbs, flowers, and animals. These are applied amidst prolonged vigils and fastings under the beneficent influence of peyote.

The Coras, along with the Tarahumaras and the Huicholes, practice the peyote cult. Rubín describes preparations for one of their annual journies into San Luis Potosí in search of the small plant for their religious ceremonies. The journey

is made on foot and lasts two months. Only food and vessels to receive the peyote are taken along. Lovers are considered impure, so that Mateo was not allowed to attend. The Indians feared that thoughts of an Indian's lover might offend the gods and their mission would be frustrated.

The romantic love between Mateo and Iyali is the most important sub-plot of the novel. The triple ceremony in which the Huichol girl Iyali was repudiated by her tribe for marrying a member of the Cora tribe, received into the tribe of her betrothed, and finally married to Mateo is colorfully described by Rubín. In the first act, Iyali was publicly disrobed, denounced by an old Huichol shaman, and disowned by her family. Then Mateo and three Cora women clothed and groomed her for the ceremony which was to follow. The Cora chief recited a brief litany, while he put a necklace of snail shells about her neck. He then gave her deer meat wrapped in tortillas and some native drink. After prayers were offered to Kuravet that she be admitted to the tribe, a priest took the tail of a deer and sprinkled water from the sacred lake of the tribe on Iyali and in the four directions of the compass. Her initiation into the tribe was then complete. Throughout the entire ceremony, bystanders -- Huichol and Cora alike -- danced, drank, and ate freely. The tempo of the fiesta was accelerated and the bride-to-be stood alone, head down, for several hours while the celebration was in progress. The wedding ceremony itself was begun with the sacrifice of a sheep. Mateo stood

at its head, Iyali at its tail, and the two fathers offered their children each to the other, along with admonitions and instructions. With the animals legs stretched unmercifully, the priest warned the pair that unfaithfulness on the part of either would be recompensed with death. The sheep was parted with a single blow of a knife and the pair joined hands in the pool of blood. The priest lifted his sceptre above their heads in a gesture of absolution, and from that moment the two were married. The final step in the marriage ceremony was the willing acceptance by the bride of the marriage bed. Any reluctance on her part for any reason, illness included, required that the husband renounce her and seek the dissolution of the marriage bonds.

The relatively optimistic note with which El canto de la grilla concludes is undoubtedly due to the fact that neither Christianity nor any other institution of the Western world had been able to alter significantly the customs and the traditions of the Cora tribe. This is indeed Rubín's most effective presentation of an Indian society.

Rubín has written more about the Huicholes than about any other tribe though their number is very small.[24] Of the Nahuatl family, these Indians live in the western Sierra Madre range, principally in the states of Nayarit, Jalisco, and Zacatacas. They are a nomadic people, spending only three or more months during the rainy season in their home villages,

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[24]Cline, op. cit., p. 338, shows that there were only 1000 of these Indians in 1950 who spoke only the native language.

tending a crop of corn that is planted and harvested by methods which antedate the Conquest. The author explains their nomadic condition with both logic and language admirably suited to the Indian mentality:

> Y si se han mantenido nómadas es por inclinación congénita, a la par que por cierto convencimiento, no del todo equivocado, de que los viajes proporcionan energías al cuerpo, solaz al espíritu y una mejor aptitud para comprender la vida. En ellos radica precisamente el origen de la sabiduría de sus dioses. Estos pueden recorrer a caballo en las nubes o en los vientos que administran, grandes porciones del mundo, con lo que obtienen una perspectiva más amplia de su mecanismo. Igual que las aves, que resultan muy enteradas a merced de la facilidad para desplazarse que sus alas les proporcionan .... Y aun el gusano no se libera, dignifica y deja de ser deleznable hasta que le brotan élitros y se ve convertido en mariposa.
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> Diríase que el huichol, con su pañolón aleteante de franela colorida y su afán de vagar de un punto a otro, trata de imitar a estos insectos, disputándoles su dominio de la gracia y la sapiencia.[25]

During their nomadic journies, the Huicholes wander north into Durango and Sinaloa and toward the coast into the villages of the vecinos.[26] Their provisions consist of pinole, a specially prepared mixture of corn; tejuino, a primitive fermented drink; and peyote, which enables them to walk great distances without feeling fatigue. They are fabled marksmen and subsist on the creatures of the wild which their arrows seek out. In addition, they eat roots, wild fruits, and wild honey.

The Huicholes are fundamentally peacable and acts of violence among them are rare. They are well received in the

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[25]Ramón Rubín, La bruma lo vuelve azul (Fondo de Cultura Económico, 1954), p. 27.

[26]A term used by these Indians to refer to any non-Indian outsider.

Mexican towns which they visit, where they receive small gratuities for sweet, monorhythmic tunes sung to the accompaniment of a one- or two-stringed voilin and the ponderous movements of their native dance.

By the Coras among whom they live during the remainder of the year, the Huicholes are considered social outcasts. One of the important elements of the drama in El canto de la grilla is the fierce resistance of Esmeraldo, a Cora priest, to the union between his son and a Huichol girl. In Rubín's words " ... dichos indígenas pertenecían a una de las ramas étnicas más despreciables, bárbaras y estúpidas de la diversísima especie humana,"[27] and for no other group of Indians does he betray a comparable sympathy and tenderness. The reason for the despised lot of the Huicholes among the Coras is their extremely superstitious way of life:

> Además, para ellos, nacidos y criados en el mundo fantasmagórico de una cultura que no reconoce un solo movimiento humano que no esté presidido por la voluntad de un dios y que los proclamaba hijos predilectos de esas deidades omniscientes, los razonamientos de aquellos apostatas, modelados conforme al criterio más racional del hombre blanco, carecían de valor y de poder persuasivo.[28]

One of the principal occupations of the Huicholes during the rainy season is the worship and the appeasement of their many gods. Some of their number have been nominally Christianized, but, like Iyali's parents, they consider that " ... antes que cristianos eran huicholes."[29] About one-fourth

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[27] El canto de la grilla, p. 51.

[28] La bruma lo vuelve azul, p. 63.

[29] Ibid., p. 61.

of the adult members of the tribe exercise the office of "shaman," sometimes spelled "xaman," which is a minor doctor-priest.[30] In each separate community, the principal religious functionary is called a mariacán. His duties include the baptism of infants and communication with the tribe's many deities. The tenancha is an aid who assists in the pagan temple in a manner similar to that of the Christian sacristan. In the purification rite of Lupe Küyertzituxa, the wife of Antonio Mijares, the four other wives of the offended husband participated as rezanderos. Tribal elders and officials often participate in ceremonies which are both religious and civil in nature, so that there is no clear line of demarcation between civil and religious functions and personnages. The roles of priest and governor were combined in Antonio Mijares, who was the mariacán of his community when he was elected tribal governor for a year. Principal dieties like Tatehuarit the god of fire have their special priests.

At least fifteen different tribal gods are identified by Rubín as something of a divine galaxy overseeing the everyday life of the Huichol Indians. About half of these are instrumental in some way in bringing the much needed water and rain, permitting crops to grow: Nacahué, the goddess of life, lives below the surface of the earth and makes trees and plants to grow; Tatei Jautzi Cupuri is the goddess of the

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[30] Norma Fitzgerald Jones, "The Folk-Doctor in Representative Modern Mexican Fiction" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Department of Modern Languages, University of Oklahoma, 1961), gives valuable information on this topic.

morning dew; Tatei Ja Tochane watches over the still waters; Tatei Ja Urima and Chacán are the gods of rivers and running waters; Arama is the god of the sea, the principal source of the rain, a god whom the Huicholes are careful to honor on their annual trips to the coast; Xuravet, who is the principal god of the Coras, has power over both rain and sun -- it is his insignia, an eight-pointed star, which is used to unite the Coras and the Huicholes against a common enemy, usually the vecino. The supreme god of the tribe is Tayaopa, the sun. His wife and the mother of all other Huichol deities is Metzere, the moon. Tatutsi-vistehuarit, god of infancy, demands that an offering of the placenta of a newborn child be left for him in the tree tops; Vericahuimale is the royal eagle and mother who sustains the Huichol world from her claws. On their annual journies through the Sierras, the Huicholes seek protection from Tzacaimota, god of the forest. Curaré is the goddess whose clear fountain runs in the sacred cave Te-acata, in which infants are baptized and in which every adult Huichol bathes once yearly for purification. Tatehuarit, god of fire, purifies body and soul in special rites in the sacred calihué.[31] And finally, Jiculi, the name given to peyote, gives the Huichol Indian unusual powers. Under its influence he believes that he,

> ... puede escuchar las pisadas de un yagui ... es capaz de adivinar él pensamiento de quienes conversan con el o lo contemplan al paso desde el borde del camino.

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[31]The Huichol temple located at Santa Catarina.

Sabe si lloverá o si va a hacer buen tiempo.

Se halla en condiciones de marchar a pie indefinidamente, sin desfallecimientos.[32]

When Kanamayé became the adopted son of a Huichol priest, the old man gave the boy some peyote in order to let him "... gozar enervándose con los ensueños paradisíacos que la masticación del peyote favorece."[33] Upon his return to his people, after six years of schooling in the government institution for Indians, Kanamayé had no more faith in his tribal gods and he exchanged his peyote for fermented spirits.

The tribe has a governor who is selected annually. His function is little more than to preside over the tribal council of elders, and he remains without any special status upon completing his one-year term. The annual election is a festive occasion for the entire tribe. It is enlivened by a fiesta of violins, which features violins, drums, and flageolets, and an abundance of food and native liquors. The principal ceremony at this fiesta is called "cambiar la vara," because the governor's wooden scepter is passed on to the new ruler. Though elders are accorded special honor and positions within the tribe, the governorship apparently devolves upon the man, whether young or old, who seems best fitted at the time to lead the tribe. In La bruma lo vuelve azul, a

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[32]La bruma lo vuelve azul, p. 22.

[33]Ibid., p. 61.

group of mestizo bandits had long been threatening the security of the tribe and molesting their women. One of them had forced the wife of Antonio Mijares. When he returned to the village with the scrotum of his enemy, so impressed was the entire tribe with what appeared to be a display of his manliness and courage, that they made him governor.

Two lesser officials are mentioned by Rubín: the xayacate, or elder, who gives counsel to the governor; and the topil, who administers punishment and functions generally as a policeman. Matters for judgement are brought before the council in the common hall. Their decisions are binding and are not subject to appeal. A person adjudged guilty may be placed in stocks and required to abstain from both food and water for a specified period of time, or he may be beaten with a whip with five cutting appendages. When Antonio Mijares ignored the decision of the council and chose to chastise his wife when she had been judged innocent, he was beaten severely with the whip and left in the stocks for five days with neither food or water. One year later, his limbs and torso were still swollen and half of his face was frozen into a wry grin, so severe had his punishment been.

A very remarkable domestic custom appears in La bruma lo vuelve azul, in which Kanamayé, the son of Antonio Mijares, is given to an herbman as payment for curing the boy's half sister. When Kanamayé arrived at his new home, the old man and the boy sat on the floor of the hut and, in a simple rite,

the boy was officially adopted:

> Y sin ocuparse de saludar a la anciana, tullida y echada en un rincon, tomó del tanate una tortilla fría y, partiéndola con solemnidad por el médio, le ofreció un pedazo al chico, en tanto que exclamaba:
>
> Neticuani[34] ... Esta será dende 'hora tu casa.
>
> El uchi,[35] al tanto del ritual, recibió la mitad de la tortilla, partióla a su vez en dos pedazos y mordió uno sin apresuramiento, arrojando el otro por encima del hombro y hacia atrás para ayuda de los necesitados, a los que nunca se debe olvidar.[36]

The Huicholes have conserved an ancient system of counting based on the number five. The units in their system of counting go only to five. All other numbers are made of units of five in a system that is surprisingly similar to the decimal system. "Mano," the word used to express the quantity of five entities, is the number of good luck. It is used whenever possible. In weddings, the lucky number is five. A marriage is not complete until one wife and four concubines are taken. "Arroba" is the word used to refer to twenty-five units. An arroba is a measure of twenty-five pounds. Two arrobas with the whip was the judgement pronounced on Antonio Mijares.

Very little about the intimate habits of the Huicholes is provided by the author, for, he insists, it is impossible for anyone to go in and live among them.[37] It is apparent

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[34] "Come de eso," in Huichol.

[35] "Boy" in Huichol.

[36] La bruma lo vuelve azul, p. 58.

[37] Personal interview with the author.

that some of the information that he has gathered is not first-hand. The burial customs of the Huicholes, described in detail in La bruma lo vuelve azul, appeared at about the same time in Creación.[38] Credit for the information is given to Sotero Partida, who accompanied Leon Diguet y Preuss on an expedition into the Sierras of Nayarit at the end of the nineteenth century. Using the material found at this report, Rubín describes the burial of Lupe Kuyertzituxa, the wife of Antonio Mijares:

> El entierro de Lupe Kuyertzituca fue sencillo y despojado de toda emoción. Entre los huicholes es ésta una ceremonia que no se celebra, tal vez por demasiado triste. Allí no basta expirar para ser tenido por difunto. La amplitud de su mundo supersticioso suple el aliento que apagó la muerte y mantiene el cuerpo entre los vivos, ambulando en esencia por el pueblo, visitando sus lugares queridos y despidiéndose de sus deudos y amistades, como corresponde a la buena crianza, antes de partir definitivamente hacia el Mucchita.
>
> Es el ritual del velorio o duelo el que determina el momento de la extinción.
>
> La fecha de esta ceremonia varia, según quien haya sido el muerto. Si se trata de un varón adulto, deberá realizarse a los cinco días de su fallecimiento; si de una criatura, a las veinticuatro horas; y si, como en el caso de Lupe, fue una mujer, a los tres días de su defuncion ....
>
> Al tercer día, los parientes y amigos de la muerta comenzaron a reunirse en torno al kihí familiar. Procedían a condimentar los alimentos que fueran predilectos de la difunta, e iban colocándolos en recipientes de barro o sobre tortillas de maíz, en un petate extendido a mitad del único aposento del jacal. Partiendo de la parte de éste, en dirección al oriente, los hombres clavaban estacas formando un callejón de unos veinte metros de largo y adornánolas con ramas verdes de quelite y de carrizo. Ellos, a la vez, se protegían las cabezas trenzándose sobre el sobrero ramas de zapote, también

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[38] Creación, "Ceremonias de difuntos entre los indios huicholes," No. 8 (June - Sept., 1954).

verdes, para espantar a la endermedad que la mató. Y luego se sentaban a esperar, fumando silenciosos e ingiriendo toch, el arribo de la muerta, que no tardaría en llegar.

. . . . . .

Cuando llegó la hora concertada para la última visita de la difunta, los parientes dijeron presentirla cruzando por el callejón de enramada con rumbo hacia el interior del jacal, en donde las viandas eran tentación para su apetito y el sustento necesario para que pudiese realizar sin desmayos su largo viaje hasta la Mucchita ....

. . . . . .

Todos permanecían sentados un poco lejos de la casucha de piedra techada con paja, bebiendo, fumando y conversando con cierta animación, mientras la muerta gustaba los platillos que le sirvieron en el interior hasta quedar ahita.

. . . . . .

Así transcurrió el tiempo. Hasta que tuvo a bien levantarse un viejo mariacán. Era ésta la señal de que ya habían permanecido a la expectativa por un término razonable, y de que debían incorporarse todos los demás para dar comienzo a la parte activa del duelo.

Formáronse en caravana e invadieron el callejón de estacada, llorando amargamente por la necesidad de tener que ahuyentar a la difunta. Esgrimían ramascos verdes y gesticulaban sacudiendo el aire con ellos, a la vez que iban profiriendo voces amenazadores, encaminades a requérir de Lupe Kuyertzituxa que, satisfechos su hambre y su sed, los dejara vivir en paz, libres de apariciones y de malas influencias, largándose de allí hacia donde la esperaba un mundo mueho mejor, todo el de huicholes.

. . . . . .

¡Vete!...¡Márchate ya!... -- le exigía un coro de voces.

Y como si aquellos que se la representaban en su imaginación la viesen huir, salieron tras ella, persiguiéndola callejón adelante, corriendo y enarbolando con ademanes de falsa cólera los ramascos o borrando con estos la huella que en el polvo del camino dejaban sus pies invisibles.

. . . . . .

Fue perseguida hasta el borde de la primera barranca, donde ella continuó corriendo por el viento y cuantos le iban en pos tuvieron que detenerse.

> Su cuerpo, aunque invisible e intangible, seguía viviendo. Y en tributo a su inexcusable condición de nomada iba a caminar noche y día sin cansancio, como bajo el efecto bienhechor del Hermano Jiculi, semanas y semanas por un sendero blando y amable, hasta el otro lado de las altas cumbres que la bruma volvía azules sobre el horizonte oriental. Al cabo, encontraría el sagrado Chapa, un zalate frondoso a cuyo pie el camino del otro mundo se bifurca en sendas que conducen a paraísos distintos, donde los miembros de cada tribu se reunen en mundo exclusivos para que, elevados por las experiencias de la vida terrenal, vivan una segunda existencia más feliz, rodeados de todos los suyos.
>
> La gente recogió una piedra blanca, envolviéronla en lana y en pochote, la adhirieron al carrizo de una flecha y la fueron a clavar en la techumbre del pequeño calihué del pueblo, donde representaría el alma de Lupe Kuyertzituxa, fiel a los suyos hasta que el tiempo y el olvido la derribasen de allí.[39]

This long description of the burial customs and beliefs of the Huicholes with its abundance of detail is a good example of Rubín's meticulous documentation, which, particularly in this instance, approaches a text book style of writing. Both the information and the language found in the article in Creación correspond closely with this account of Lupe's burial.

Cuando el táguaro agoniza is a hybrid Indian-mestizo novel. Because the scattered Pápago settlements have come under such continuous and concentrated attacks from Western cultural influences, only remnants of the tribe's former glory remain. Their nearly forgotten customs and rituals are preserved only in the memory of the tribal elders. The plot centers in a mestizo girl, born of a Pápago mother and a North American father, who still lives among her mother's people.

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[39] La bruma lo vuelve azul, pp. 44-48.

An old mestizo prospector and a Pápago man are rivals for her hand. Resorting to violent methods, the old prospector defeats his rival. He then leaves the Pápago community with his young bride and little more is related about the Indians and their customs.

Only two major customs appear in the novel: the mutilli, a native marriage custom, and the molohua, a rite in which two men enter a condition of very close friendship. In the latter, a dance called the dagüinameca between the two principals is followed by a solemn exchange of gifts in a public ceremony. Rubín declares that this new relationship is so binding, that to help a molohua a man will forsake his own family if necessary.

The mutilli is a marriage custom so primitive and so forgotten that the old Pápago chief, himself half white, had to explain it to the tribe. All marriageable girls and young men who desire to participate gather at the appointed place. The girls are elaborately groomed and dressed by their mothers. On a signal from the chief, the girls flee on foot into the desert undergrowth. Minutes later, the impatient men are released to pursue the girl they desire to marry. Customarily, a tacit agreement exists among the men about which girl each will pursue; but a rivalry for the same girl can produce an interesting conflict, such as the author presents here. A girl can make the task easy or difficult for her pursuer. Once she is caught, the man returns with her to the site of the fiesta, clutching her left breast in his hand. When the

couple rejoin the celebrants, they are considered legally married. The rejoicing young men then join in the dance of the *táguaro*, in which arrows and bullets are fired at a doll representing the traditional enemy of the Pápagos, the Apaches.

The Tarahumaras are one of the larger tribes of northern Mexico.[40] They live in the Sierras of Durango and Chihuahua. Like the Huicholes, they are nomadic and practice the peyote cult. An examination of their superstitions and of their burial practices in "El ánima de Juan Cocospe"[41] and *La bruma lo vuelve azul* reveals other remarkable similarities.

In one of his most gripping dramas, Rubín describes the custom of courtship and marriage among the Tarahumaras. When an Indian youth wishes to take a certain girl for his wife, he presents himself before the hut of the girl's family early one morning with gifts. The father may not ignore his presence, but must accept or reject the proposal. He may go out and accept the gifts and the two then proceed to seal the marriage agreement. If he rejects the suitor's petition, he must accompany him to the tribal dueling grounds, where each will seek to vindicate his offended honor. If the youth succeeds in killing the father, he must fight one by one any brothers who may be present to contest his right to marry the girl. A final victory gives him possession of the family dwelling and property and the undisputed right to marry the

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[40] Cline, op. cit., p. 339, states that there were 8,200 monolingual Tarahumaras in 1950.

[41] *Cuentos mestizos*.

girl he has chosen. So binding is the custom, that the girl does not have the right to choose her own destiny nor even to commit suicide.

Though one of the larger tribes of Mexican Indians,[42] the Otomís are backward compared to other indigenous cultures. "Un robo fatal," which is set in the state of Hidalgo and along the highway connecting Vera Cruz with Mexico City, provides a terse and fragmentary account of the marriage customs of this tribe:

> ... siguiendo las costumbres ancestrales de los suyos, le habían escogido para esposa sus padres y los de ella. Previos graves y ceremoniosos consejos de familia, intercambio de obsequios, largos rezos, cortesías protocolarias entre los mayores de los contrayentes y ritos tan estrafalarios como el de enterrar tres pollos vivos y con la cabeza de fuera, con mucha música de monótonos compases, danzas, abundante mole de guajolote y descomunales borracheras, quedaron por marido y mujer.[43]

The Zoques like the Tzotziles live near the Guatemalan border in the state of Chiapas. Very little detail about the life of these Indians is provided by Rubín, but the plot source for the story "El dilema de la zoque"[44] is that it is considered a mark of virility to carry a heavier pack than ones neighbor, and competition is so strenuous that it frequently leads to hernia. The dramatic possibilities of the story are increased by the relative maturity of the girl and of the two rivals for her hand.

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[42]Cline, op. cit., p. 339, states that there were 57,600 monolinguals in 1950.

[43]Ramón Rubín, Cuentos de indios, libro segundo (Guadalajara: Ediciones Altiplano, 1958), pp. 67-8.

[44]Ramón Rubín, Cuentos de indios, libro primero (Guadalajara: Ediciones Altiplano, 1954).

Within the tribe, Rubín identifies two subcultures, both of which developed in the post-Conquest era. The picoayes are those who fled to the hills from the infamous encomenderos. Their mode of existence remained quite primitive and their primary industry consisted of selling timber, which they brought down to the valley on their backs. The jayapacuayes had apparently remained in the valley where they developed an economy around the cultivation of sugar cane.

It was one of the poorer picoaye boys who first asked for the hand of this jayapacuaye girl. After the parents of the girl had accepted the boy's gifts of silver money and native liquor, the girl stipulated the conditions of the trial of strength:

> Se convino, pues, en que durante los siete días de una semana se iba a ocupar de ir llevando a casa de los padres de la india sendos cargamentos de ramascos y barañas para dejar el protocolo satisfecho y obtener el derecho a un trato en firme sobre la celebración de la boda.[45]

At the conclusion of the testing period, the picoaye boy attempted to carry a load of more than 600 pounds of wood, balanced precariously on his back, and deposit it before the hut of the girl's family. As he descended the hill, the sight of his rival tempting the girl with sugar cane caused him to stumble. His spine twisted as he fell, blood exuded from his skin all over his body, and he was hopelessly ruptured. The girl was released from her moral and legal contract to the boy and his presents were returned.

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[45] Ibid., p. 41.

In addition to a great quantity of customs and traditions of particular tribes of Indians, some of the salient characteristics of the entire race are given by the author to complete his picture of the authentic Indian. Of particular importance are the Indian's relationship to his natural environment and his disposition toward group rather than individual action.

The Indian as portrayed by Rubín is a simple creature who feels deeply the ties that unite him to his natural environment. Any attempt to capture the essence of the Indian artistically, the author has demonstrated, must reflect Nature as an integral part of the Indian's characterization. The existence of the Indian is intimately bound up in the tangible, physical world about him. He is a part of nature and is a son of the soil from which he nourished. The drama of his existence is shared by Nature. An almost human landscape greets the reader in the opening lines of El canto de la grilla:

> Desde el barranco contiguo, en cuya hondura reptaba quedamente el fatigado río, parecía subir un magro aliento húmedo, cuya caricia se disputaban los follajes sedientos de los oyameles e iba bruñendo el pálido matiz solferino de los botones del pitahayo. Agónicos casi, extenuados por la anemia, los escuálidos brazos de las salvias contorsionaban su doliente y unánime desnudez flagelada por el latigazo cruel de las tempranas canículas. Y el tenue y grato aroma del poleo, la albahaca y el anisillo, perseverantes en la brana del manantial que brota al pie de una frondosa ceiba, venía a malograrse entre el aliento a chamusquina difundido por la calcinada hojarasca que estaba cubriendo el espinazo colorado de las lomas.[46]

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[46] El canto de la grilla, p. 9.

Just before Mateo is suspended on the scaffold for his alleged crime, the felling of the pine tree from which the scaffold will be made is described in language as graphic and as moving as the execution of the condemned boy:

> Los pinos, en tanto reverenciaban a Dios en la gran serenidad del cerrerío....
>
> Hubieran querido huir, pues, uno de ellos, en vano defensivamente rígido, estaba siendo cercenado de manera brutal.
>
> Derribábalo a mordiscos el filo romo del hacha de los coras, que pretendían elevar a expensas suyas el trágico cadalso. Y aquel seco exabrupto de sus goples retumbaba como una blasfemia contumaz bajo la bóveda verde de las arboledas.
>
> Sus lágrimas de trementina llegaron pronto al suelo.
>
> Y el avance de la feroz cercenadura acabó por desgarrar sus tejidos, dando con él de bruces sobre el rojizo polvo de la vertiente, por donde descendió rebotando estrepitoso.
>
> Entonces vino a quedar a merced de sus verdugos, que le mutilaron de uno en uno todos sus brazos y pusiéronse a estrangularle con ásperas ligadures el torso muerto. Después, jalando de él en grupos de dos, lleváronlo arrastrando, como a un difunto despreciable, a cumplir la misión para la cual fue asesinado.
>
> Las flores de la calvellina, que iba arrollando a su paso, tejieron piadosas una corona fúnebre en torno al cadáver yerto. Y, ungido por ella, descendió en su inadvertido funeral por la ladera, hasta llegar al baldío. Allí, junto a los dos agujeros profundos que otros indios escarbasen en la tierra, fue seccionado en tres pedazos. Dos de las trozas se clavaron a pique en las exavaciones, formando su propio y doble túmulo. Y con la tercera atravesada horizontalmente sobre ellas en el extremo más alto, y firmemente segura gracias a un sólido amarre con las sogas de pita, se completó el dolmen.
>
> Entonces, era dolmen, cadáver y cadalso.[47]

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[47] Ibid., pp. 155-156.

The great natural phenomena like the wind, the sun, the rivers and other bodies of water, the forests, and the mountains are the primary causes which affect his existence. For the Indian the natural and the spiritual worlds are one. The catalogue of Indian deities is ample evidence of this fact. Almost without exception, each god which the Indians must placate plays a part in the daily life of the tribe. The Coras became enraged at Mateo'a alleged crime against his father because they believed that Nature had been offended and would avenge itself on the entire tribe:

> Al faltarle a tu tata nos pusites en mal con los dioses que vienen arriando las nubes de la lluvia pa' nuestra milpita, y ellos no nos las trairán este año, manque no sea pa' otra que pa' no mirarte la cara, que les 'bia de causar horror por lo que hicites.[48]

The execution of Mateo -- with the finery in which he was attired; the generous meal given him; the soft, inoffensive words last spoken to him; and the gifts he was expected to bear before the gods -- resembled more the almost forgotten practice of human sacrifice to the gods of Nature than an act of civil justice.

An important part of the relationship of the Indian to Nature is the animals who share his daily existence. In Rubín's works, animals are not just an embellishment, but are integral to the author's portrayal of the Indian. Because the Indian's existence is simple, there is little to distinguish him from the other animals of the earth. At times, human

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[48] Ibid., p. 148.

qualities are ascribed to animals. In "La venganza de Cándido," the Indian and his burro Ruperto are co-protagonists. The animal returns his master's affection and greets him. The author states that both have the same timeless conception of life. The offended Indian gives the name of his burro companion as his own to a newborn white child, whose parents had insulted his animal and had been the cause of its death: "Pa' que otra vez se rían de mi burro."[49]

The Indian's grave concern for the welfare of his animals is demonstrated in "Su perro heroico."[50] An Indian mother passes the night alone with her newborn child under the hot breath of coyotes who have invaded her hut. When the husband returns in the morning and sees the coyote tracks around the hut, his first thought is for the band of goats which he has left in the care of his dog. He is so overjoyed that none is missing, that he completely forgets his wife and infant child who have been exposed to the same danger.

An even more intensely human relationship between Indian and beast is brought out in El collado dolor de los tzotziles. José Damián does not mind killing a bull or an oxen, for these are commonly sacrificed to his tribal gods; but to take the life of a sheep is another matter altogether: " ... la simple idea de degollar un borrego le resultaba horripilante a sus principios morales...; tanto o más que si se tratara de

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[49] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, p. 119.

[50] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

un hermano."[51]

Animals often mirror the actions of the Indians and provide a kind of emotional environment in which they act. When María Manuela left to go into exile with the male culls of the flock, the watch dog seemed to sense the tragedy and the injustice and chose to follow his mistress: "Acaso más ecuánime y comprensivo que las personas, el perro de José Damián se habia unido a María."[52] This action by the dog helped María to bear her tragic plight. On the other hand, the feeling of loss which José experienced on the departure of the dog was a factor in his leaving the village to work among the ladinos.

When the quiet of a village is described, it is done in terms of its animal inhabitants:

> En el pueblo todo era reposo y oscuridad. Iban diluyéndose en la discreción de su cauto merodeo los aullidos del coyote. Y sólo vibraba distinto a intervalos entre el concierto acompasado de la grilla, el mugido quejumbroso de una res o el ladrar tristón de un perro. Por el escampado central, apaciblemente echados, los rebaños de chivos rumiaban el producto de sus ramoneos del día.[53]

Animals as special messengers of Indian deities may portend evil happenings. When Esmeraldo was on one of his journies into the wilds to replenish his supply of herbs,

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[51] El callado dolor de los tzotziles, p. 100.

[52] Ibid., p. 44.

[53] El canto de la grilla, p. 27.

while thinking of his son Mateo, the appearance of two birds successively presaged disaster for him in the village:

> ... el saltapared se había posado en la barda de piedra de un potrero vecino.
>
> Aquel ave nefasta piaba llamándole la atención, y daba saltitos sobre los ásperos cantos, como queriendo dejarle bien enterado de la desventura que pendía sobre su cabeza. La aparición de ese pajaro en circunstancias tales tiénese por augurio de que alguien acecha a espaldas de quien lo esta viendo, listo a perjudicarle. Y lo único que el afectado por el mal agüero puede hacer para conjurar la jetatura es apresurarse a matar al bicho.[54]

Esmeraldo failed in six attempts to bring down the bird. The evil omen was repeated in the appearance of the huitlacoche:

> Pero las cosas se le tornaron todavía más graves cuando, confirmando esa amenaza, muy poco antes del alba de la mañana siguiente oyó cantar al huitlacoche entre las ramas de una guasima a cuyo amparo se socorriese para pernoctar. Esto constituía otra advertencia, extraordinariamente prestigiosa y lúcida, de que alguien que intrigabe contra sus intereses se disponía a recurrir al empleo de la miserable calumnia.[55]

Esmeraldo turned his steps immediately toward his home. His son met him at the door, " ... ridículamente vestido de manso."[56] For the Cora Indians, the owl is a messenger of evil tidings, frequently bearing the soul of an ancestor who has returned to trouble them. The ancestor must be placated with an offering of food and drink if trouble is to be avoided.

The Indian's notion of time is vague by our standards, and, as González states, in almost all Indianist novels the

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[54] Ibid., p. 63.

[55] Ibid., p. 64.

[56] Ibid., pp. 64-65.

element of time is intentionally vague.[57] In Rubín's works, the Indian's concept of time is almost entirely dependent upon natural phenomena. His days are defined by nature, not by clocks. It is here that the animal is indispensable. When a new day appears, it may be announced by mentioning some activity of the animals in the community:

> Ameneció un día de radiante sol el de la fiesta.
>
> ... y el la calma dormida y honda de los barrancos
> el mugido de las reses cimarronas difundía los colgados
> quejumbrosos de su despertar.[58]

The end of the day is marked among the Coras by the singing of the cricket, which they call "la grilla."

Fundamental to Indian culture is a tightly-knit social organism in which, as Chase says, "Group security, incorporating individual security, is the basic desideratum."[59] Conceptions of private property in land and in natural resources have not taken root in those communities in which the native language and other indigenous living patterns persist. The rights and the will of the individual are always subordinate to the welfare and the determination of the community. The individual does not exist apart from the group. Much of the drama in the Indian novels and short stories by Rubín comes as the result of a conflict between an individual Indian and the community

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[57] González, op. cit., p. 266.

[58] El canto de la grilla, p. 93.

[59] Stuart Chase, Mexico (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1938), p. 54.

to which he belongs. The breach in the solidarity of the customs and the traditions of the tribe always comes as the result of an outside force or influence. José Damián leaves his village and sacrifices the precepts of his tribe for the symbols of personal power. His complete spiritual disintegration is the final tragedy of the novel.[60] Mateo takes a fatal path when personal sentiment is allowed temporarily to displace respect for his father and for the elders of his tribe. He is not long in recognizing, however, that apart from the tribe death is preferable to life: "No tenía para que permanecer en la vida cuando la pérdida del afecto paterno y de la estimación de todos los suyos habíale despojado de la posibilidad de disfrutar de sus dones más apreciables."[61] In the end, he chooses to identify himself again with the tribe, and he is able to do so; but he must pay a severe penalty for his crime against his race. Antonio Mijares' individual rebellion against the collective judgement of the Huichol elders bears tragic fruit in his son Kanamayé, who loses all semblance of being a true Huichol, though his blood is pure.[62] The severity with which this principle operates, perhaps more than any other single factor, distinguishes the culture of the Indian from that of the Western world.

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[60] El callado dolor de los tzotziles.

[61] El canto de la grilla, pp. 153-4.

[62] La bruma lo vuelva azul.

The emphasis of Ramón Rubín on the ambiente in his Indianist writings is so great that characters do not exist apart from their natural environment and the customs and traditions of the tribe. The ambiente is a necessary part of the characterization of the Indian, and the characters themselves are a part of the ambiente. In his discussion of the importance of this element to the Indianist novel, Manuel Pedro González says:

> El indio vive su sueño de muerte, impasible, inmutable, siempre igual a sí mismo vertiéndose hacia dentro, aprisionado por sus viejas creencias, pos sus dioses y sus ritos. Un quietismo fatalista lo domina. Hoy como ayer. Mañana como hoy. Las ideas de evolución, de cambio o de superación carecen de sentido para él. Es un ser clavado en una dimensión temporal a la que de antemano ha renunciado. El vive fuera -- o al margen -- de toda noción temporal. Y la novela que en él se inspire tiene que ser necesariamente ambiental porque estas idiosincrasias primitivas, infantiles y simples como la naturaleza misma no dan para más.[63]

Both the cultural context and the natural environment have been thoroughly documented, so that there emerges from these pages a convincingly human picture of the Mexican Indian.

Rubín's Indianist writings give evidence of his profound knowledge of the Indian's mores and a deep appreciation for the Indian as a human being. The use of abundant social anthropological material makes possible psychological insights which could not otherwise have been achieved. Several critics have noted Rubín's emphasis on the human condition of the Indian and on the relationship between the Indian's psychology

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[63]González, op. cit., p. 379.

and his culture. El canto de la grilla has been called " ... una novela de pasiones y conflictos humanos, sin que por eso el elemento indio padezca o se obscurezca, sino que por el contrario, alcanza más realce al formar una parte de lo simplemente humano."[64] Helena Percas points out that this novel reveals "The author's thorough knowledge of the Indian mores but, above all, his keen understanding of mankind...."[65] Manuel Pedro González' review of El callado dolor de los tzotziles emphasizes " ... la capacidad del autor para el retrato psicológico."[66]

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[64]E. G., Review of El canto de la grilla, Revista Hispánica Moderna, Vol. 21, No. 2 (April, 1955), pp. 150-1.

[65]Percas, op. cit.

[66]González, op. cit., p. 383.

CHAPTER V

THE INDIAN PROBLEM IN RUBIN'S WRITINGS

There has been a great deal written in the past century about the exploited Indian. Since Clorinda Matto de Turner's Aves sin nido, modern Indianist novelists have attempted to explore the many facets of the Indian's problem and to stir the public conscience on his behalf. Particular attention is given by Miss Turner to the importance of the land in the Indian's way of life and to his forced removal from lands which he has traditionally occupied. Coupled with this is the age-old problem of the exploitation of Indian labor.

The next socially-oriented Indianist novelist of which there is any record is the Bolivian Alcides Argüedas. In his celebrated Raza de bronce, he established the modern vogue of championing the underdog Indian. It was also Argüedas who developed the formula for the modern Indianist novel, in which the positive aspects of Indian life are first presented and then a protest is made concerning the abuses of which the Indian race is victim. Though there are criticisms directed at all the social and political institutions which adversely affect the Indian, the problem of the Indian is seen by Argüedas also as being essentially related to the land. The Indian's

communal lands are expropriated by the government and he is then exploited by the large landowners, who treat him as a beast of burden. Emerging from this novel are the three despoilers of the Indian who are present in almost all of the modern Indianist novels: the large landowner, the priest, and a government official.

One of the best known novels on the Indian problem, Huasipungo, emphasizes with great conviction the degraded condition of the Indian in modern Ecuador. The theme of exploitation and the character types, the unholy three, are present, but the positive aspects of the Indian way of life are smothered under the incessant superlatives and the morbidity with which the author underscores his outrage over the treatment of the Indian.

El mundo es ancho y ajeno is called by Wade and Archer perhaps the most articulate of the Indianist novels which have appeared to date.[1] The reasons given for this opinion are that Alegría presents a three-dimensional picture, truly an epic of the Indian, while still effectively recapitulating the oppressions by the white man and the Indian's hopes for social and economic justice. Alegría's writing is done with as much conviction as that of the earlier Indianist writers, but the poetic quality and the finesse of his language commend the humanity of the Indians more effectively than the styles of Arguedas and of Icaza. Especially does it contrast with

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[1]Wade and Archer, op. cit., p. 215.

the brutality and the filth employed by Icaza in Huasipungo. Alegría too follows Arguedas' example in detailing the life and the customs of the Indians and then presenting their plight. Though the landowner and the government official are present as oppressors of the Indian, the priest is remarkable more for his indifference than for an active role in the exploitation of the Indian.

Indianist literature in Mexico has few examples before the Revolution. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the Revolution is replete with examples of the suffering of "los de abajo." Cometta Manzoni sees "la pasión indigenista" in all the works inspired by that historical event:

> En la obra de todos estos escritores alienta la pasión indigenista. El indio y su mundo, con sus angustias, sus problemas y las peculariadades propias de su raza están muy presentes. Porque en todas ellas es el pueblo de Mexico el que vive, sufre, y actúa y ya lo dijimos antes, este pueblo tiene sus raíces perfectamente entroncadas con la raza indígena.[2]

Four centuries of accumulated oppressions by mestizos and whites were avenged by the blind rage of the underdogs whose heritage was almost entirely Indian.

One of the most important promises of the leaders of the Revolution was the redemption of the Indian masses. Particular attention to the Indian's plight was given by General Lázaro Cárdenas during the thirties, and it was during his presidency that much effort was expended to improve the lot of the Indian. It was also during this time that Mexico's

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[2]Cometta Manzoni, op. cit., p. 72.

Indianist literature really flowered. The writings of Traven and López y Fuentes reflect the ideological conflict that was raging in Mexico during those years and the programs which were designed to bring about the complete integration of the Indian into Mexican society. A greatly expanded rural educational system was one of Mexico's principal boasts during these years. Agrarian and economic reforms were also attempted with the aim of redeeming the Indian from ignorance and poverty.

López y Fuentes' El indio is perhaps the most representative work of that generation. He sees the lamentable condition of the Indian as the inevitable result of centuries of cruel exploitation. He advocates the restoration to the Indian of his ancestral land holdings. He exposes the greed and the cruelty of large landowners and the failure of the government to provide roads and schools for the benefit of the Indian. The priest, the third of the character types who have traditionally exploited the Inaian, is also present. He takes advantage of their ignorance and superstition to get them to build him a church.

All of the Indianist writers considered so far in this division have made the primary purpose of their works an appeal for justice for the Indian in terms of social and economic, particularly agrarian, reforms. They have revealed the sub-standard living conditions of the Indians and exposed the abuses which they have suffered at the hands of the mestizos and the whites. In every case, redress of wrongs committed or the

amelioration of bad living conditions lay within the immediate reach of responsible social or political institutions.

Ramón Rubín has not focused primarily on social and economic programs for the redemption of the Indian.[3] However, some of the elements of traditional Indianist literature are present in nearly all of his works on that theme. There are frequent allusions to the problem of the land and to the exploitation of Indian labor, though these matters are not treated extensively. By the time that Rubín began to write about the Indian, he had been almost completely freed from the power of the hacendado. In one allusion to the exploitation of the Indian by landowners, he says:

> La civilización occidental o cristiana libró a los indios del esclavista para traerles el encomendero. Luego redimióles del encomendero; pero les trajo el hacendado que se quedaría con todas las tierras.... Ahora trataba de emanciparlos del hacendado, y sólo Dios podía saber lo que les traería.[4]

In the same novel, mention is made of the Tzotzil Indians hiring out on coffee plantations at very low wages and under very poor working conditions, but no mention is made of any physical cruelty or any other unusual treatment of the workers. The story "El ánima de Juan Cocospe"[5] contains a reference to the well-known peonage system, but the Indians avoided borrowing

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[3]Gerald E. Wade, Review of El callado dolor de los tzotziles, Books Abroad, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer 1950), p. 289. In noting this variation from the traditional formula, Wade remarks: "Unlike most indianista novels it lacks the socializing or propagandistic element which seeks to expose and ameliorate the bad living conditions of the Indians."

[4]El callado dolor de los tzotziles, p. 33.

[5]Cuentos de indios, segundo libro.

money and hiring out to the mestizo who the author said lay in wait to exploit them. In Cuando el táguaro agoniza, don Cruz Kino looks for gold on lands adjacent to the " ... voraz latifundio de Las Cuatro Ces,"[6] but there is no confrontation between the Indians and this powerful man.

The hacendado figures prominently in only one story, "Las cinco palabras."[7] This is the single narrative by Rubín which is set in the Porfirian era. Taking advantage of the land laws which permitted the seizure of idle lands from the Indians, a large landholder gradually evicts some Huichol Indians from their communal lands by systematically moving the boundary markers separating their lands. Being a nomadic people, the Huicholes scarcely till the soil. They do not even clear the land from which they harvest their crops of maize, and they absent themselves from their villages for the greater part of the year. The landholder will not hear their complaints. Díaz's famed rurales come in to suppress any possible rebellion and to protect the rich white landholder. The Indians are denied justice by local officials. A delegation of five Huichol elders make an epic journey to the Capital on foot for the purpose of appealing their case to the dictator himself. One of their number dies en route and, though they are finally successful in gaining an audience, the other four have little

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[6]Ramón Rubín, Cuando el táguaro agoniza (Mexico: Editorial Azteca, 1960), p. 174.

[7]Cuentos de indios, libro primero.

hope of regaining their tribal land holdings.

The influence of the Christian religion on the Indian is an important element in Rubín's Indian narratives, but nowhere is the priest found defrauding or coercing the Indian as an accomplice of the landowner or a government official. It is rather the superficial role of Christianity in the life of the Indian and the failure of the Church to comprehend the basic human condition of the Indian that preoccupies the author.

The role of the army, the police, and other government agencies is also markedly different in Rubín's writings from the role assigned them in traditional Indianist literature. It is not so much that they have victimized the Indian or that nothing or too little has been done to lift the Indian out of his misery, but that the society that is trying to redeem him is itself in need of redeeming and that the Indian is corrupted by "... una civilización agobiada de codicias y de apremios."[8]

The Indian problem is indeed the subject of all Rubín's Indianist writings, but the approach varies from the traditional formula. The fabric of the Indian's humanity is both the artistic and the thematic content of these works. By a masterful use of anthropological detail, Rubín reveals, as Percas has stated, " ... the psychology, the primitive wisdom, moral concepts, subconscious restraints, prejudices, and

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[8]Cuentos de indios, segundo libro, "El último despojo," p. 89.

inflexible ways of the Indian."[9] Indianist literature has always given abundant testimony of the effect of the environment on the Indian, but few records exist of the Indian's reactions to his environment and of the interpersonal relationships that are carried on among members of the same indigenous community. Rubín's Indian narratives are deeply human and personal. This panorama of Indian life reveals both the virtues and the defects of the Indian, as the author sees them.

Having established a context that is thoroughly Indian, and within this context characters who experience genuine human passions and conflicts, the author then moves the central character into a new dimension of experience -- contact with the outside world. In El callado dolor de los tzotziles, La bruma lo vuelve azul, and Cuando el táguaro agoniza, the principal Indian character is removed from his native environment into a world in which the mestizo and the white man predominate. In this new world, the Indian is completely inarticulate before the ladino and before his culture and technology, and in turn he himself is totally incomprehensible to the ladino. In El canto de la grilla, it is the intrusion of the ladino into the Indian world which introduces tragedy into the lives of the Indians. In every case, when the Indian comes into contact with ladino or Western culture, it is the Indian who

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[9]Helena Percas, Review of El canto de la grilla, Books Abroad, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Summer 1953), pp. 294-5.

suffers. It is Rubín's thesis that Western civilization has failed to assimilate the Indian, but has rather superimposed on the Indian race values and a way of life to which the Indian is psychologically unsuited. No solution is proposed.

The epigraph with which the author introduces El callado dolor de los tzotziles is suited not only to this particular work, but also to his entire series of Indianist novels and short stories. It is the author's introduction to a kind of spiritual biography of the Indian under the domination and influence of various institutions of Western civilization:

> La civilización es como los abismos: resulta fácil resbalar por ella...; pero el que intenta salir una vez que alcanzó el fondo pierde lamentablemente el tiempo.[10]

The drama of this novel springs from the tribal custom which forces José Damián to seek a legal separation from his young wife of sixteen, to whom he is deeply devoted, because she has borne him no child. Though the villagers offer him food, drink, and consolation, his anguish mounts. He proposes to go down to the coast to work among the ladinos. The warning of one of the tribal elders against that course of action turns out to be a prophecy of what is to happen: "Cambias un mal por otro mas pior... Pue que allí encontres mujer; pero las gentes ladinas son ruinas con los indios como tú; y te harán sufrir."[11]

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[10] El callado dolor de los tzotziles, p. 7.

[11] Ibid., p. 54.

Until José left his village, outside cultural influences had had but very little influence on his personality. The Tzotziles had been nominally Christianized, but there was no center of Christian worship nor any priest near this community. Baptism is the only Christian rite that is mentioned in the story. Tzotzil and Christian rituals and symbols were mingled freely. In the annual festival of the tribe at San Juan Chamula, traditional native rites were celebrated simultaneously with Catholic observances, and on the site of the Catholic temple. When José was on the point of leaving his village for the coast, he prayed before his pagan deities and wept before the Christian God, but he received no consolation from either source. Ironically, it was a teaching which the tribe had received from the early Dominican fathers which proved to be José's downfall. The introduction of sheep into the economic life of the Tzotziles was accompanied by instruction which gave to the animal not only a practical but a religious significance:

> La oveja es para ellos no sólo el símbolo mismo de su prosperidad o su pobreza y el determinante en el valor del patrimonio que de sus ancestros reciben y que ellos han de legar a sus hijos. La identificación metafórica que la religión cristiana les ofrece en sus máximas y parabolas representando la humildad de los buenos fieles de Cristo en el cordero, típicamente manso, conjugada con el respeto al animal que los frailes dominicanos les enseñaron, ha contribuido a que le concedan un carácter semi-rreligioso al noble rumiante.[12]

The teachings of these humanitarian missionaries regarding the

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[12] Ibid., pp. 147-8.

sheep had degenerated into a vague half-pagan, half-Christian superstition which hung over the Indian community like a cloud. José's need to change his attitude toward the sheep in order to adjust to life in the ladino world was the beginning of his psychological upheaval. José Damián went down from the mountains to Soconusco to find work in the coffee harvest alongside the other Tzotzil men. From this point the author carefully documents his descent into what he calls "the valley of civilization." From that valley he would never emerge.

When José arrived at the hacienda, he was ragged, fatigued, and weak from two days of gnawing hunger. The dogs which were alerted by his arrival reflected the attitude with which their masters would greet him: "Eran de esos perros envilecidos cuya perversión de instinto les hace confundir la humildad con la bellaquería."[13] For the lonely Indian, the first words from the ladino were unfriendly: "Nuay trabajo."[14] From asking the Indian turned to pleading for work and for food. The mestizo enjoyed seeing the proud Indian humbled. He knew the reverence of the Tzotziles for sheep and decided to offer him employment in the slaughter house. The author describes the cruelty of the mestizo's purpose: "El mestizo tuvo una maligna idea, pues una sonrisa cruel se retorcío entre sus labios burlones y puso un chispazo de espúrea alegría en sus pardos ojuelos."[15]

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[13] Ibid., p. 57. [14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

Jose's terrified reaction was, "¡No! Borreguitas no, cashlán!"[16] Before further enticing, the Indian began to succumb. He agreed to butcher any of the other animals except the sheep. Then, as the smell of food and feelings of loneliness and desolation swept over him, he began to reason: " ...al fin y al cabo, tenía roto el sentido mismo de su existencia desde su separación matrimonial, y que acaso fuera mejor quedarse para siempre entre los mestizos y olvidar de una vez los preceptos de los suyos."[17] He realized that if he took the position offered him, he must identify himself with the world of the ladino, for his own people would consider him a criminal and an outcast. The Indian was rendered helpless by his misery, hunger and fatigue. "Échame, pues, el cuchillo ...."[18] were the words with which he sealed off his past and entered the strange and hostile world. The author says of the mestizo's cruel role in this affair that he "Había encontrado un extraño placer morboso induciendo al indígena a cometer aquello que sabía era para él un infamente crimen."[19]

The tortured Indian was taken to the slaughter house where another mestizo, Polonio, required him to kill his first sheep before they would even give him a simple meal. The profound moral crisis through which the Indian passed as he actually put his knife to the throat of the sheep is very

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[16] Ibid., p. 58.
[17] Ibid., p. 61.
[18] Ibid., p. 63.
[19] Ibid.

convincingly portrayed. He had in that moment severed himself from his race under the brutal, impatient urging of the mestizo who looked on. The full implication of his action was soon to be realized: "Se hallaba moralmente deshecho y lamentablemente decepcionado de sí mismo. Aun temblaba. Pero su conmoción parecía salir entonces de más adentro."[20]

During this first year, José became quite skillful in his duties. He was at first stimulated by a desire to become like the ladinos among whom he lived and worked. Soon he began to experience an artistic satisfaction and pride in his macabre profession. Then he felt ashamed over his former attitude toward sheep. His fellow workers had convinced him that his attitude betrayed a lack of manliness as well as a foolish and savage obsession. Finally the desire to escape the sneers and the insinuations of the mestizos led to another transformation in his character which the author explains as a criminal complex, a love of violence and the exercise of power: "Era todo un incipiente complejo criminal, cultivado en un ansia sorda de distraer las miserias de su propia vida haciendo daño por el simple placer vengativo de sentirse dueño y capaz de lastimar a otros...."[21]

Now that all possibility was removed for his return to live among the Tzotziles, José decided to throw himself with abandon into the life and habits of the mestizos. The other Indians would no longer associate with him because of his

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[20] Ibid., p. 69. [21] Ibid., p. 73.

work in the slaughter house. His efforts to follow his new companions to town after hours only brought him sorrow. He fell into fits of melancholy and anger, when they made fun of his simplicity and his appearance. He tried to drown his feelings of remorsein wine and often became menacing and uncontrollable with his knife. Then his hysterical weepings would only humiliate him all the more before the mestizos. For all that he tried to do, José was unable to become a part of the ladino world.

When the coffee harvest was over, the other Tzotziles left for home. Even though José had not been able to mingle with them, their presence had been a moral support for him. Their departure left him truly alone. The mestizos intensified their mocking treatment of the lone Indian. The only person for whom José had any respect, Polonio, gave him only pity instead of companionship.

José Damián's experiences with a mestizo woman finally convinced him that happiness for the Indian in the world of the ladino was impossible. Her presence in his hut filled his need for a woman, now that María Manuela seemed forever lost to him. For a time his temperament softened and life seemed to regain some of its lost meaning for him. Soon he realized, however, that instead of feeling any affection, respect, or even pity for him, the mestizo woman's only purpose was to betray his affections and to wound him deeply. The return of the Tzotzil workers to another coffee harvest made him long for life in his home community.

In an attempt to purify himself from the blood of the sheep he had slaughtered, José asked for work in the harvest field. The hostility of the Indian workers made his situation all but unbearable. He had gained from the mestizos the idea that money alone is sufficient to wipe away the vilest of misdeeds. José applied himself with frenzy to his work so that he might return home rich. The news that María Manuela was back in the village with his child heightened his desire to return. After a full year in the harvest fields he started home -- alone.

José was well received by his community, for his people had not yet learned of his activities on the coast. His new personality was not long in expressing itself, however. In lonely, drunken vigils he carressed his knife, the symbol of the greed and the violence he had learned to savour in the world of the ladino. Before long, one of José's own sheep was found with a clean, gaping wound at the base of its neck, and the tribe was gripped with superstitious terror. When María Manuela discovered that her husband was the criminal, she was torn between devotion to her husband and her obligation to her race. Other sheep died at his hands. José had decided to kill many sheep, preserve their hides, and return with enough money to buy the plantation and to avenge the humiliation he had experienced at the hands of the mestizos.

At the tribe's annual festival, Tzotziles from other communities accused José of having butchered sheep at the

coffee plantation. The Tzotziles then knew certainly that it had been he who slaughtered the sheep in his own community. With his crime exposed, José fled into the darkness. He would not allow María Manuela and their son to go with him. His reply came to her from the shadows:

> No irás nada -- repuso la sombra -- . Tenes que quedarte cuidando m'hijo. Yo me voy con los ladinos, a sus haciendas...y no podre regresar más nunca... Pero tu tenes que cuidar m'hijo.
> . . . . . .
> No. Él no debe ir con los ladinos... Tú sabes lo que m'hicieron a mí... ¡Acórdate, María Manuela![22]

The spectral aspect of José Damián gives his words a broader, symbolic meaning. María did not know whether it was he or his spirit that spoke to her. His sorrow is the sorrow of his race. The future of María and of her child is equally tragic. Their destiny is to share the solitude of the tribe's sacred mountain with the persecuted and the abandoned. The entire race is swallowed up in tragedy. According to the author, the Indian's life among the ladinos introduces into his personality elements which make him completely unsuited to live among his own race, and yet he may never expect to be accepted as their equal because of his race. El callado dolor de los tzotziles is an eloquent expression of Rubín's view of the Indian as the victim of a way of life which has been imposed on him and which threatens his extinction.

La bruma lo vuelve azul too is a story about the receding hope of the Indian in a world which is dominated by

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[22] Ibid., p. 205.

the white man. The circumstance around which the plot is constructed is the rape of the wife of Antonio Mijares by a mestizo bandit, Cuatrodedos. The band of outlaws had committed many outrages against the tribe -- stealing their cattle, plundering their corn fields, profaning their temples -- and the federal government had failed to provide adequate protection for them. There is abundant material here for a story about some of the abuses of the Indian found in the traditional and psychological dimensions of the Indian's experience.

The major portion of the novel has its setting in the Huichol domain. The offended honor of Antonio is not avenged to his satisfaction by the elders of his tribe; for, instead of publicly scourging her for not defending his honor to death, they have pronounced her blameless and purified her body and spirit in a special ceremony. The only other avenue for avenging his honor is cut off when he finds that his enemy has already been killed by federal troops. He is only able to multilate the body. He is further enraged to find that his wife, who had been barren, is pregnant, for he believes that she bears the child of the mestizo bandit. In spite of the admonitions and the cruel punishment which he receives from the officials of the tribe, Mijares beats his defenseless wife for a period of ten years, until she dies. Through these formative years, Kanamayé the son had no memory of his father but those scenes in which his

mother lay helpless on the ground shielding him in her bosom from the drunken wrath of her husband. The father seemed to delight in the look of abhorrence which he detected in the eyes of the child. It was in the father that the Huichol tribe first began to emerge as Kanamayé's enemy. When his mother died, he did not understand the significance of the burial rite, especially when the entire tribe cried out hostilely against his mother's departed spirit to frighten it outside the limits of the village: "La tribu era entonces su enemiga. Y él seguía clamando en vano su desolación: -- ¡Tatei! ¡Tatei!"[23]

After the death of Kanamayé's mother, Mijares did not beat or abuse the boy. He did, however, treat him as an outsider, for that was his opinion of the boy. Even though Kanamayé had all the physical traits of the other Huichol boys, Mijares would not accept him as his own. He threatened him, gave him the base and the arduous tasks to perform about the home, and allotted him only enough food to keep him alive. The boy's hatred of his father grew: " ... odiaba tan hondamente a su padre, que no hubiera acertado a concebirlo dentro de una actitud más benévola."[24] Of the children born to the other wives of Mijares, especially one of the boy's half-sisters, Kopitzahui, began to be attentive to him and to supply some of the affection that he no longer received from his mother. He delighted in being her protector on the tribe's

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[23] La bruma lo vuelve azul, p. 49.

[24] Ibid., p. 51.

annual journies into the Sierras.

When Kopitzahui fell sick, the local Huichol priestess was unable to cure her. A renowned herb man refused to treat the girl without payment. The author explains the herb man's attitude by saying that he had taken on much of the greed of the vecino: " ... no trabajaba gratis, pues había asimilado mucho de esa maña codiciosa del vecino."[25] Mijares took this opportunity to trade the unwanted boy to the herb man for his services. Kanamayé accepted this as an opportunity to make a great sacrifice for the sister that he loved. The exchange was made and the old man cured the girl. Life with the herb man seemed to offer some opportunity for Kanamayé to lead a normal life. Soon, however, he was greatly disillusioned when the sister who owed him her life would not even return his greeting, but scorned him. The great sacrifice he had made and his new life suddenly became void of all meaning.

Up to this point in the story, the author has demonstrated the impact of the tragedy which the mestizo introduced into the family of Antonio Mijares by the rape of the latter's wife. Though the reactions of Mijares appear unusual and cruel, he -- though an Indian -- had dignity and honor to regain. The son whom he denied he believed to be the child of a mestizo. His anger and cruelty were directed not so much at the innocent wife and the helpless child as at the bandit who was beyond the reach of the laws and the gods of his tribe. The

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[25] Ibid., p. 54.

disintegration of the family had its greatest effect on the outcast son Kanamayé. Not only did the boy find himself unwanted by his family, but the entire tribe seemed hostile toward him. The personality of this young Huichol boy had undergone a great change as the result of forces over which he had had no control.

The next event marked a significant turning point in Kanamayé's life. Some federal soldiers appeared before the hut of Tata Chuy the herb man, leading a long string of Huichol children behind them. They had come with carbines and revolvers to demand that children of school age be released to their care for education in the Indian school at Mezquitic. The herb man had profited greatly from the work which Kanamayé had performed around the hut, but their relationship was not that of father and son, and he did not choose to risk his life to protect the boy. Rubín says that Indian parents often hid their children and even fought with the squad of soldiers to save their children. In his first book of Indian short stories, which was published in the same year as this novel, Rubín used this same circumstance and developed another moving story about the Huichol Indians which he called "Caza menor." In this story, the soldiers had to climb a tree and lasso the child, while he was shooting tiny darts at them. Alerted by the cries of the child, the father returned to help him. Rather than allow the soldiers to carry his son away to the Indian school and teach him the ways of the <u>vecino</u>, the father fired an arrow

into his son's throat, wounding him so severely that the soldiers left him behind -- with his dead father and weeping mother. When Kanamayé saw that Tata Chuy did not try to save him from the Mexican soldiers, he felt that his last tie with the tribe had been broken. Certain now that no one at home would be concerned about him, Kanamayé resigned himself to his fate, even though he at first believed with the other Huichol children that they were to be fattened and eaten.

Once in the school, the boy gained great satisfaction from the idea that he would return to his village with superior knowledge and skills to flaunt before those who mistreated him. The children learned to read, write, and work with numbers. They were taught dances with no religious significance and games which were too rigorous for their frail constitutions. They were despoiled of their fatalistic conception of life and of belief in their native deities, without being given anything else to take the place of these. The rights and the merits of the individual were praised over the indigenous concept of collective action and the common good. The result was an immense moral void. They were told that they must return to their people and help them live a better life, without themselves knowing how to go about realizing for themselves this better life.

The teaching regarding individualism and competition among individuals awakened among the Indian children a spirit of rivalry. They delighted in telling Kanamayé that he was not

of pure Huichol blood. He had not previously heard any mention of the mestizo bandit. He finally decided that this was the logical explanation for all the tragedy that had befallen him in his tribe. He began to feel strangely superior to the Indian children, and soon all the Indians seemed to him as enemies. The man who had killed his mother was an assassin; the old man who had bought him so cheaply, an exploiter of his strength and virtue; the girl who owed him her life and showed herself unthankful, a foolish, ungrateful girl who would pay dearly; and the bandit Cuatrodedos, a victim of the cruelty and the treachery of irresponsible Indians. He began to interpret his life from the viewpoint of his mestizo teachers. Ironically, from what he was able to learn of the man he now supposed to be his father, he began to consider that Cuatrodedos was the embodiment of all the ideals of his new Mexican education: he was bold, enterprising, skillful and wise enough to accumulate great wealth, and perfectly independent in all of his actions. He resembled perfectly the heroes in the textbooks which had been assigned for him to read. Kanamayé resolved to go out and emulate the legendary successes of his new hero and father.

After six years in the school, the Indian children were asked to return to their people and preach what Rubín calls " ... el evangelio de aquella absurda civilización superior.[26] All but Kanamayé went instead to the cities to

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[26] Ibid., p. 70.

reap the benefits of the new life they had been taught. It was not the intention of this lone missionary to convert the Huicholes to a new way of life, however, but to avenge the suffering he believed they had inflicted on him. The effect of this education on the personality of Kanamayé is summarized by Rubín:

> La fiera individualista que la educación a base de una cultura de proyecciones occidentales desatara en su interior alimentaba la explosión de sus pasiones en la gran carga de resentimientos que traía en su memoria. Había perdido el respeto a las autoridades y leyes de los indios, sin asimilar la devoción por las de los mexicanos, en las que ni sus propios mentores confiaban. Y no tenían por que arredrarle los sacerdotes y los governadores de su pueblo, cuyo poder estriba en la sabiduría que les confiere un buen penacho de plumas, porque había aprendido que el podía volar como los pájaros utilizando un aeroplano, y obtener con ello de fuente más original, de primera mano, el dominio de equella misma sapiencia.[27]

Kanamayé accepted a set of carpenter tools, Western clothing, and a small sum of money and set out in the direction of his home. But he sold his tools at the first opportunity. He scorned the company of the Indians and sought conversation with the mestizos and the whites. He was deeply hurt when they scorned him because of his Indian features. Of their racial prejudice, Rubín remarks: "Son pues personas de criterio profundamente occidental. Y por ello mismo, detestan al indio...."[28] Kanamayé noticed that all whites all rode either a horse or a mule, rather than walk like the Huicholes. He was slowly divesting himself of all the habits and the characteristics of his tribe in order to become like

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[27] Ibid., p. 71.

[28] Ibid., p. 76.

his presumed father. At nightfall, under the influence of the mezcal which a mestizo miner offered him, Kanamayé ungratefully killed the man whose campfire he had shared in order to get his mule, his money, and his gun. The greed and the egotism which he had learned in the Mexican school were at work. Instead of lifting the Indian out of barbarism, the author says, this education had only awakened his animal instincts. It is like a wild beast within: "La fiera individualista, libre de una razón moral que la maniatara, se paseaba y rugía incitándole a admitir que la astucia y la combatividad constituían los únicos elementos capaces de ayudarle a escalar los sitiales del mérito."[29] With the murder of the mestizo miner, Kanamayé found himself cut off from the world of the white man.

Kanamayé now set out to find someone who knew something definite about the deceased bandit Cuatrodedos. From scattered accounts he learned that he had been much feared and very brave, but that he had abused Indian women, both old and young. He turned toward his own village for the vengeance he had planned for six years. He resolved to force his ungrateful half-sister as his supposed bandit father had done to his mother. He intercepted Kopitzahui while she was looking for a herd of goats. His rude questions in Spanish contrasted sharply with her soft replies in the Huichol language. When she did not seem to recognize him, he was infuriated and attacked her. When she escaped and fled toward her village, he

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[29] Ibid., p. 81.

knew that he could never return to his tribe. Both worlds were now closed to him.

Kanamayé's desire for vengeance and violence left him. His feeling of loss was overwhelming. He fled in desperation toward the hut of his foster father, the only living person who held any affection for him, knowing that both Huichol and Mexican policemen would be in pursuit. Two of the latter anticipated his move and were there to arrest him. He seemed oblivious of their presence and showed no concern for the threat to his life which their presence represented. His only concern was the doubt that had haunted him since his early days in the Mexican school about his true parentage and his race. He asked the question repeatedly and urgently as the policemen ordered him to mount: "Soy huichol de bien a bien o soy cuarteron de vecino..?"[30] The damning reply of the old herb man came to him like the sentence of death: "Lo más pior que podías 'ber sido, m'hijo: un indio avecinado."[31]

The education which Kanamayé had received was unsuited to his temperament as an Indian. The violent transformation which took place in him was due to the incompatibility between the psychology of the Indian and the individual-centered values which Mexican education attempted to force upon him. The Indian identified the ideals of this new society with the compelling motives of the bandit he believed to be his father: lawlessness, egotism, and greed. Rubín sees his tragic end

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[30] Ibid., p. 103. [31] Ibid., p. 104.

as the inevitable outcome when the Indian is forced to learn the ways of the Western world. Ironically, Kanamayé was being led away to certain punishment by agents of the same civilization which six years earlier had forcibly removed him to the Indian school in order to teach him a better way of life.

El canto de la grilla is the only indianista novel by Rubín which is set entirely in the Indian community. Instead of taking the Indian protagonist outside his village and putting him at the mercy of the whites and the mestizos as he has done in El callado dolor de los tzotziles and La bruma lo vuelve azul, the author introduces into the Indian community elements of the completely alien culture of the Western world. In no other novel does Rubín study so thoroughly the reactions of the Indian within his own native environment, and the artistic value of the novel is greatly enhanced by this emphasis on the Indian as a human being.

The plot centers in the love between Iyali, a Huichol Indian girl, and Mateo, a Cora Indian boy. The principal conflict in the novel is between two members of the same tribe; in fact, of the same family -- Mateo and his father Esmeraldo. The latter is bitterly opposed to the marriage of his son to a member of another tribe, and he commits a hideous crime, partly because of his unswerving loyalty to the traditions of his tribe. The enmity which exists between the Cora and the Huichol tribes is one of the basic reasons for this conflict. This enmity finds expression in the rivalry between Esmeraldo,

the most important religious figure of the Cora tribe, and Cayetana, a lesser priestess of the Huichol tribe. There is a general antipathy between both Indian tribes and the small community of whites and mestizos nearby. It is in the rancor and the open hostility between Esmeraldo and the Catholic priest that the wuthor best dramatizes the conflict between the Indian world and the outside world of the white man.

Rubín's thesis that tragedy is inevitable for the Indian when the two worlds meet is repeated in El canto de la grilla. He attempts to illustrate this by injecting into the lives of these two tribes of Indians, and in particular into the lives of Iyali, Mateo, and Esmeraldo, the influence of the Western world through character types that are not strange to other Indianist novels. In descending order of importance, the Western world is represented by a Catholic priest, a garrison of soldiers stationed on the perimeter of the Indian settlement, and merchants who barter with the natives. There are also occasional references to the white man in general and to his influence on the Indian. The emphasis in this novel, however, as in Rubín's other Indianist writings, is on the resulting moral degradation of the Indian rather than on his worsened social and economic status.

The two vices of the white man which the Indian learns first, according to the author, are violence and greed. The second of these is illustrated only mildly in Mateo. When he is overcome by curiosity and dips his fingers into the baptimal font in the Catholic church, he is stricken by his conscience

for what he feels was a theft. The author takes the opportunity here to comment on these vices of the so-called civilized world. He states that they are rare among the Coras until they have come into contact with the white man. Attributing the thoughts to Esmeraldo, he says:

> Tomábala el patriarca como motivo de befa y escarnio contra el hombre blanco, asegurando enfático que era aquel uno de los numerosos vicios abominables que padece el degradado y estúpido vecino. Ellos los que se dicen civilizados, ñacen ya ladrones de condición ... y tienen que mantener, por añadidura, un populoso ejército de gendarmes armados de pistolas y carabinas, el cual se ha venido convirtiendo, a la larga, en dueño absoluto e irresponsable de la voluntad y el destino de todos los hombres pacíficos.... Pero, si no lo hicieran así, su perversión e iniquidad naturales los perderían, llevándolos a matarse como las más feroces bestias en la eterna disputa por sus pertenencias.... Sólo los indígenas que frecuentan los pueblos de los civilizados vecinos retornan, a veces, maleados por esas tendencias insensatas y vienen resultando víctimas de las mismas entre sus hermanos raciales.[32]

Esmeraldo explained this contrast between the whites and the Indians by the beneficent influence of communal life on the Indians as contrasted with the strongly individualistic society of the vecino:

> Y, como el carácter communal de sus bienes más esenciales los hace desprendidos y generosos en su disfrute, nadie entre ellos experimenta la tentación absurda de robar. Cuando alguno desea intensamente un objeto de los que posee otro indio, se lo pide. Y si su propietario se lo llegara a negar, sabrá resignarse sin él en tanto que lo busca y lo consigue por otro lado....[33]

The two Indian tribes followed their own laws and customs with a minimum of direct interference on the part of the white and the mestizos. Still, the influence of Western

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[32] El canto de la grilla, pp. 19-20. [33] Ibid., p. 20.

ideas on the living patterns of the Indians is unmistakable. Not only did some of the Indians leave their village for short periods of time to find work in the cities, but an undetermined number also hired out regularly as servants to families of the soldiers and the merchants who lived nearby. These employers exercised a great deal of influence on their Indian servants, whom they considered to be savage. They required them to cover their nearly naked bodies with Western clothing and to speak Spanish, the more "civilized" language of their masters. They also required them to learn the Christian catechism and to receive Christian baptism. Many of the Indians to whom Iyali was teaching the Lord's prayer were in this category. The Indians who adopted the dress, the religion, and the language of the Western world are referred to in the novel by the other Indians as mansos. Iyali and her parents are included in this classification. When Esmeraldo returned home and found his son wearing Western clothing he began vehemently to oppose his association with Iyali, who had sewn them for him. Especially Esmeraldo was scornful of all the mansos, both Cora and Huichol. He considered the primitive cave-dwelling Indians superior to the supposedly civilized mansos:

> ... los indios que se mestizan, cuyo afán de imitación al invasor de sus tierras provocábale instintive repugnancia y cuya complicada vestimenta le movía a risa bajo la juiciosa consideración de que siendo tan ridícula y molesta, ni siquiera acertaron a disponerla de modo tal que prtegiese sus carnes contra las picaduras del escorpión y la víbora. A juicio suyo, la muda elocuencia de esta imprevisión bastaba para establecer concienzudamente que eran los más auténticos brutos de la colectividad.[34]

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[34] Ibid., p. 66.

Though the *mansos* accepted superficial Western forms, many of them still participated in the life and the customs of their respective tribes. They were not ostracized officially by their own people as long as they remained amenable to their own tribal laws and to the authority of the elders.

In the traditional *indianista* novel, government troops or policemen are cast in the role of oppressors of the Indian. They are shown abusing the Indian with a conscienceless brutality, considering him little more than an animal. The presence of the Mexican garrison near the Indian community in *El canto de la grilla* has quite a different meaning. Instead of committing acts of violence against the Indian community, the soldiers are motivated by self-interest in failing to act positively at a moment when their intervention was morally required. The official policy of the Mexican government toward the Indians is one of non-interference. The Indians are permitted to rule themselves and the government attempts to remain apart from all their purely domestic affairs. The activity of the soldiers is restricted to gathering tax money, punishing crimes of violence, and keeping down insurrections or bloodshed among the several tribes of that region. Still, as a representative of the dominant culture of the white man, the presence of the garrison is an affront to the dignity of the Indians and a threat to the integrity of their way of life. Rubín has made of the garrison a symbol of the violent methods by which the white man has imposed his civilization on the aboriginal Mexican.

The armed forces of the white man's civilized society, in the words of Esmeraldo, " ... se ha venido convirtiendo, a la larga, en dueño irresponsable de la voluntad y el destino de todos los hombres pacíficos."[35]

Instead of atrocities originating with the army, the Indian system of justice itself appears to be the source of a very great cruelty. The author has carefully laid the groundwork for this development. So sacred is the Cora tenet of respect for elders, and so necessary is it to the communal existence which they follow that Mateo, though the son of the chief priest of the tribe, must pay the extreme penalty for his alleged violation of that principle. The justification for the cruel punishment lies in the common good of the tribe. The condemned boy himself finds consolation in the fact that, though unjustly accused of striking his father, his punishment will heal a breach in the solidarity of tribal customs and will restore him to the favor of tribal deities. Just before the trial he is tempted by a friend to flee. His decision not to do so effectively saved him from the greatest catastrophe which could have happened to him as an Indian: separation from his tribe and his race and subsequent spiritual and moral disintegration.

The author has chosen the army sergeant as a study in contrast to Mateo. The resolute action of Mateo and his superior morality contrast sharply with the vacillation and the

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[35] Ibid., p. 20.

complete lack of moral courage on the part of the sergeant. In the absence of his lieutenant, the sergeant is in complete charge of the garrison. He has the troops and the firepower to impose on the Indians any condition he may judge to be just and proper. Before the lieutenant left, however, he cautioned the sergeant not to intervene in the affairs of the Indians, unless bloodshed were involved. It is before this technicality and before the possibility that he might lost his chevrons that the sergeant wavered. He showed himself to be totally unprincipled and incapable of unselfish action. In the words of the Catholic priest, "El sargento que manda el destacamento aquí no tiene criterio propio ni toma iniciativas ...."[36] The sergeant was made aware of the execution proceedings when a group from the military compound went down to witness the cruelty of the execution and returned with their report. He went to talk with Mateo, but did not promise to deliver him from the scaffold. He only offered the possibility of delaying the execution. He returned to his quarters quieting his conscience with the fact that the condemned boy had refused the temporary stay. He had not been moved by any consideration for the suffering of the Indian, nor by the cruelty of the execution, but by the possibility that he might receive an official reprimand if he let the boy die without offering to intervene: "Su conflicto nacía del temor a que, dejando morir al condenado sin interceder en su defensa, se pudiese granjear

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[36] Ibid., p. 172.

una soberana reprimenda y tal vez la pérdida de sus galones al regreso del tiniente."[37] He was also confronted with the same possibility should an intervention prove unsatisfactory.

When at last Esmeraldo approached the sergeant and asked him to save his innocent son from execution, the sergeant became annoyed; Mateo was only an Indian: "Érale muy penoso reconocerlo pues se trataba de un indio semidesnudo, pagano e infeliz, como los que siempre había tratado él con infatuada suficiencia...."[38] When he considered that Esmeraldo was one of the principal elders of the Coras, he again feared the possibility of difficulties with his superior officer. He argued with Esmeraldo that his help had already been refused by his son. Esmeraldo countered that the execution could be delayed until the lieutenant returned. The sergeant wavered up to the moment of assembling the troops:

> --¿Tú crees que eso es lo que debo hacer?
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> --Estoy a la segura.
>
> --Y no repelarán los indios si lo bajo a fuerzas?
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> --Onque repelen... Tú trais tu autoridá y siempre jue por sobre la de nosotros.[39]

According to the third possible outcome of the story, and the one which Rubín says is most readily admissible, the sergeant succeeded only in prolonging the agony of Mateo. The

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[37] Ibid., p. 181.

[38] Ibid., p. 190.

[39] Ibid., p. 191.

condemned Indian was subjected again to the ordeal of the scaffold and expired under the laws of his tribe. The sergeant could offer no real solution to the Indian's problem. He rather became a part of the problem and only intensified the tragedy.

Nowhere did cultural syncretism have such tragic results for these Indians as in the area of religion. Historically, the same violent methods by which Western customs in general were introduced among the Indians were employed to uproot their pagan religious practices and to substitute them with Cristian beliefs and practices. It appears unlikely that a Catholic mission would have flourished in this community without official support from the Mexican government. It is significant that there is a military complement in the community to provide guarantees of safety for the white and mestizo residents, including the Catholic priest. On his first day in the village, the new priest established himself as an enemy of the Indians and by the end of the novel he had failed to form any real friendships or to appeal to the religious sensibilities of the Indians. In order to determine whether he was a "frastero amigo" or an "espía vecino," the Coras presented him with a special dish called "la pachanga." His disdain for their hospitality and his failure to comprehend and accept their native customs made him a <u>persona non grata</u>. There is every reason to believe that the proud, warlike Coras would have driven the priest from their village had the soldiers' presence not restrained them from doing so. Though

Esmeraldo came to consider the Catholic priest as his arch enemy and the primary cause of his son's alienation from his tribal religion and from his own father, he could do nothing to get revenge on the white priest. Instead, he took out his rage on Iyali, a member of the lowly Huicholes and the one his son was determined to marry. Coercion was the primary instrument used to gain converts to the Catholic faith. The families of the white community required their Indian servants to receive Christian baptism as a part of their indoctrination into Western life. Few were attracted to the Catholic temple of their own volition.

Even among the Indians who considered themselves believers, the influence of Christian beliefs on their everyday lives appeared quite superficial. Many more of the lowly, superstitious Huicholes than of the proud Coras were nominally Christianized. Iyali's parents were among the Christian converts. The faith of these and many other Indians was in a condition as ruinous as the Catholic temple, because of the long absence of a priest. Rubín says of Iyali and of her family:

> Sin embargo, el cristianismo de los padres era tan superficial como suele entenderse entre toda aquella gente. Y, debido a que en los últimos años no hubo en el pueblo ni en sus proximidades ningún ministro de la religión católica que administrase sus ruinosos templos, la chica permanecía sin bautizar.[40]

To the Huicholes, the bonds of race and of tradition were of far more meaning than the tenets of their new religion: "Bien

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[40] Ibid., p. 32.

que los dos huicholes se decían cristianos. Pero antes que cristianos eran huicholes."[41] The priest had been a long while attracting his first three Indians to catechism, and even then he was forced to admit that it was a "curiosidad profana" that had brought them inside the temple. It was the priest's catechist Iyali who allured Mateo into the church with the soft singing of prayers, not any lofty religious sentiments. A few Indians could be counted as baptized converts, but before Mateo and Iyali the Catholic priest had celebrated no Christian wedding. The space given for this Christian rite is brief. The couple seemed almost unaware of the priest, and the Christian ceremony was paled into insignificance by the impressive triple ritual which led to their union under the laws of the Cora tribe.

The primary effect of the conversion of the Indians to the Catholic faith was a negative one. In addition to the fact that the new converts failed to become genuine believers, they were drawn away from implicit faith in the gods of their ancestors, so that they were without the solace which either religion might provide. Iyali's parents were in that position: "Cierto que por ser católicos antiguos y consecuentes no debieron temer la legítima cólera de sus dioses natovos."[42] The result was a syncretism of the two religious systems that left the Indian converts to Christianity in a spiritual void.

The few so-called Christianized Indians continued to

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[41] Ibid., p. 61.

[42] Ibid., p. 51.

practice their indigenous religious customs within the framework of Christian principles. This barbarous fusion of the two religions is effectively presented in the joint celebration of the Indian's religious festival, the mitote, and of Holy Friday. In the mitote, the Indians honored the gods responsible for sending them rain. Their drinking, feasting, and dancing took place outdoors at the same time as the Christian services in the enclosure of the temple, so that the two observances were one and the same:

> Tejieron arcos de flores para adornar las puertas y fachadas del edificio del templo. Confeccionaron guirnaldas de funcia verde para formar con ellas una bóveda sobre el atrio y la campana. Mandaron traer de Jesús María seis damajuanas de aguardiente. Sacrificaron un buey gordo para banquetearse con su carne y tener hartos y contentos a sus dioses aborígenes, que no practicaba la vigila. Y solicitaron la co-operación de los ejecutantes del mitote pascual de su religion, para que les marcaran el ritmo a los animosos grupos de danzantes, que con sus evoluciones y los pintorescos colorines de sus penachos y capas habían de prestarle la dignidad apropiada al acontecimiento.
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> . . . . . .
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> La pantomima de la Pasión del Señor, que gracias a la autorizada cooperación de un grupo de visitantes conversos organizaron en el interior del templo los dos sacerdotes, se desbordó muy pronto por las puertas del mismo y vino a confundirse con las danzas, banquetes y libaciones de afuera.[43]

It was during these joint pagan and Christian ceremonies that Iyali and Mateo were married by the priests of both religions. It was soon after these festivities and the farces of Pontius Pilate and Veronica that the tragedy for Mateo began to unfold. The result was that Mateo was suspended on a scaffold in order

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[43] Ibid., pp. 78-9.

to placate offended Indian deities and in a redemptive posture striking for its resemblance to that of the Christ.

Each of the three ethnic groups represented in the novel had religious practices quite different from the others. The Huicholes were the most barbarously superstitious, though none of them is regarded by the author as being entirely free from superstition. In his summary of the art of the Huichol priestess Cayetana, Rubín provides an excellent description of some Huichol religious practices:

> Esta doctora podía no ser, como herbolaria, de muchas polendas. Pero constituían un cuantioso refuerzo al valor medicinal de algunas infusiones a base de cortezas de árboles hervidas, los pavorosos exorcismos y complicadas rezanderías de que solía valerse. Trazaba en el suelo con tierra de diferentes colores círculos concéntricos que debían proteger a sus pacientes, manteniendo alejados a los espíritus nocivos, portadores del mal; entonaba cánticos religiosos encaminados a aplacar la furia de los dioses; y sahumaba con densas nubes de humo de copal el ya de suyo estrecho y sofocado interior de la chihti. Además, era ducha en menesteres tales como el de extraer, mediante aparatosa succión y a través de un canuto cuyo extremo apoyaba en las partes adoloridas del enfermo, las causas del tormento que éste sufría, y que lograba materializar en desconcertantes granos de maíz que, en medio de grandes muestras de fatiga por la intensidad del esfuerzo, acababa escupiendo sobre la lumbre purificadora para que no volviesen a penetrar y a inferir daño en su organismo o en el de cualquier otro ser humano. Por añadidura ... sus setenta y cinco kilos bailaban fatigosas danzas en torno al tapexte del paciente, para aplacar el padecimiento; y hasta personalmente se sometía a grades disciplinas y ayunos con el fin de atraer el apoyo de lo sobrenatural en ayuda de la eficacia de sus remedios.[44]

In spite of their many superstitious practices, the author is careful to relate that the Huicholes at least are not guilty

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[44] Ibid., pp. 135-6.

of hatred and violence which characterize the whites, and even some of the Coras.

The religion of the Coras was by comparison quite simple. It is briefly summarized by the author: " ... adoraron a divinidades que, sin pedirles nada, proporcionabanles un buen modo de procurarse sustento: los montes, la lluvia, el arca y la flecha."[45] Though relatively free from superstition, the Coras were contemptuous and intolerant of the lowly Huicholes over whom they ruled. Esmeraldo provides valuable insights into the character and the religious practices of the Coras. He believed himself to be a "sensato curandero científico" who relied solely on the curative properties of herbs and natural substances for the practice of healing. Two years of his boyhood had been spent in the service of a white man who had come to that area to study the therapeutic powers of certain herbs and barks. Through this white scientist, Esmeraldo had rediscovered some of the ancient healing arts of his race and had learned to apply reason and the scientific method to his practice. In spite of his tribe's innate hatred of the whites, Esmeraldo had acquired both his professional knowledge and his professional ethics from his white teacher. He had learned from him both the healing properties and the destructive powers that lay in the combination of certain herbs. This influence of the white man was quite significant in the religion of the Coras and in the character of Esmeraldo. The

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[45] Ibid., p. 38.

progression of Esmeraldo from egotism to intolerance to violence and his transformation from scientific herb man into a malevolent brujo is perhaps the author's chief triumph in this novel. These changes may be attributed to his association with the Western scientist. The seeds of evil are matured when he comes into contact with the white priest.

The Catholic priest is a minor character in the novel, but it is through him that tragedy is introduced into the Indian community. There is no direct attack on the Church or on its dogma, but there are inescapable comparisons between the blessed water in the baptismal font and the water from the sacred Lake Tité, between the strange religious vestments of the priest and the colorful adornments of the Cora Emperor, and between the Latin mumblings of the Catholic priest and the magical phrases of Cayetana, the Huichol priestess. The priest and his religion are regarded by the Indians, and by the author, as being in no way superior to their religions. He is rather considered by them as an intruder.

From his first day in the village, the priest revealed his ignorance of the basic human condition of the Indians he had come to convert to Christianity. After the baptism of his first three Indian converts, he repelled the curious onlookers who wanted to discover the magical qualities of his baptismal water. To the Indians, this behavior was perfectly natural for a Westerner: "Resultábales evidente que el misionero no hubiese podido menos de comportarse con tal egoísmo. No era

más que un vecino taimado y hostil, y como tal, perfectamente incapaz de compartir sus tesoros como lo hacían ellos."[46] Mateo regarded this as greed on the part of the priest and determined to scoop some of the mysterious water from the font itself. The priest's awkward persecution of Mateo for this minor crime shows his inability to comprehend the Indian mentality.

When Mateo began to frequent the catechism sessions, the priest required him to wear Western clothing instead of the abbreviated cloth used by Cora men. Because Esmeraldo had been the one who had pronounced the social death sentence on the priest when he first entered the village, the priest at first feared to attempt Mateo's conversion. When Mateo began to show an interest in Iyali, however, the priest decided to take the necessary risks in order that he might celebrate his first Christian wedding among the Indians. He encouraged the boy's open rebellion against his father who refused permission for the wedding. Both the Catholic and the Cora priests realized that their prestige and their influence respectively in the village depended on the outcome of the battle that raged between them for Mateo.

After the priest had succeeded in uniting his young converts in marriage, Esmeraldo began to take out his wrath on Iyali. Gravely ill, she called for the priest, who indignantly scolded Mateo for calling him for such an occasion: "¡Tenían que ir a despertarme para nada!... Tú mujer está

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[46] Ibid., p. 17.

enferma; lo que necesitas es un médico que la cure, y no un sacerdote."[47] The priest refused to accept the consequences of his involvement in the lives of the young couple and allowed them to suffer alone. With Mateo suspended on the scaffold, falsely condemned for striking his father, Iyali thought again of going to the priest and remembered that " ... resultaba inconveniente importunar a aquellas horas al cura católico."[48] Still, in desperation she went and spoke to him through an interpreter. Seeing her come, he hurriedly began to say mass, for he had no taste for her problems. He had no comprehension of nor sympathy with the human problems of his converts: "Era un hombre exaltado y nervioso; y le irrataban las dificultades y conflictos ajenos cuando alguien venía a pedirle que intercediera y los compartiese."[49] He rationalized his failure to help by saying that his mission there was to save souls, not bodies. He then began hypocritically to heap condemnation upon Mateo for breaking the fourth commandment. His final message to Mateo was that the boy should not forget to pray. He told Iyali that she should go to the foot of the scaffold and pray for her husband; he would go to the church and pray and even dedicate a mass for the forgiveness of the young man's sins when he should die.

Christianity is regarded by the author as inseparable from Western culture. He refers often to the "civilización

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[47] Ibid., p. 121.

[48] Ibid., p. 165.

[49] Ibid., p. 168.

but he rejects the final authority of any religion and roundly condemns those who impose one religious system upon another. In a personal interview which this writer had with the author, these views were succintly restated: "La religión es necesaria, porque es un consuelo para la gente.... Todos son víctimas de la superstición: el criollo, el mestizo, el indio, el blanco .... Toda religión es la misma cosa. Nada se resuelve supliendo una por otra. Es mi punto de vista."[50] Regarding the Catholic priest and the Catholic religion in El canto de la grilla, he said: "El cura es parte del problema, y cuando se enfrenta con un problema verdadero, no puede nada."[51]

Both Mateo and Esmeraldo voluntarily atone for their crimes against their race through death and exile respectively. They are thereby restored spiritually to the traditions of their tribe. Though this novel ends with a tragedy of considerable emotional appeal, there is very little of the bitterness which characterizes the other Indianist novels, because the Indian is spared the ultimate tragedy: spiritual and moral death through separation from his race.

In the three novels just discussed, Rubín has dealt with Indian communities which have conserved a large body of indigenous customs and the basic integrity of their respective cultures. His purpose has been to show in what ways the influence of the Western world has brought about the decline of each of these societies. In Cuando el taguaro agoniza, the

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[50]Personal interview with the author. [51]Ibid.

author's interest shifts to an Indian culture that is almost entirely decadent, that of the Pápagos. These Indians inhabit the northern state of Sonora and the contiguous desert lands of Arizona. Of those living in Mexico very few cling exclusively to the native language. The hard core which strive against increasing odds to maintain the traditions of their tribe are scattered throughout the Sonora desert, so that their tribal identity is quite as precarious as their struggle for a livelihood.

The Pápagos are closely related to the Pimas, and in this novel the tribal chieftan is not even Pápago, but half Pima and half yori.[52] The proximity of these Indians to the United States made them in the past century open to the attack of the warring Apaches from across the border. These raids threatened the very existence of the tribe and were so severe as to cause grave concern on the part of Mexican officials and strained relationships between the two governments. The Pápago custom from which the story derives its name is the dance of the Táguaro, which Rubín explains thus: " ... danza guerrera de los indios pimas cuya culminación consiste en un ejercicio general de la puntería, disparándole flechas o bâlas a un muñeco con el que se representa al enemigo apache."[53]

Though the traditional figure of the Apache was still

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[52]"Yori" is the term used by northern Indians to refer to the white man.

[53]Cuando el táguaro agoniza, p. 194.

the principal interest of the Táguaro dance, the real and far more insidious threat to the existence of the small remains of the tribe, as Rubín see it, lay in the invasion of the North American and the mestizo into Pápago territory, which had been going on for several decades. The novel is set in the thirties, after the military phase of the Mexican Revolution. Foreign business had already begun a slow recovery from losses suffered during the initial hostilities. Mentioned in the novel are the cattle barons of the Cananea Consolidated Cattle Company; hordes of gold prospectors; and, finally, a new wave of speculators in the cotton market.

The Pápago Indians, as Rubín presents them, have already nearly lost their identity as a tribe. The author calls them " ... esta decandente y miserable poblado indígena...."[54] Since the early years of the Porfirio Díaz regime, large numbers of foreigners had disputed with the Indians the possession of their ancestral land and its wealth. The presence of these outsiders seriously affected the structure and the traditions of these Indian tribes whose land they had invaded. There was a free mingling of Indians, mestizos, and whites. However, a significant number of Indians rebelled against the influence of the yori on their indigenous customs. Betónica's community was among these. Even their resistance, however, was fading:

> " ... Betónica se ha criado con su madre en el seno de la rebelde tribu pápaga ... y sometida a los preceptos arcaicos que, contrariando la doble presión de las

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[54] Ibid., p. 10.

> influencias extrañas que la acosan, la mexicana y la estadounidense, logran mantener aun parcialmente autónomos a unos pocos pueblos de la raza.[55]

With them the foreigners brought their pistols, their insatiable greed, and their disdain for the Indian. In spite of the fact that the Indians were slow to accept the trappings of Western civilization, they fell prey to the greed and the ambition which drove the prospectors and the adventurers into their territory: "Pero no faltan algunos indios pápagos, los cuales, mucho antes que el modo de hablar, de calzar y de vestir del hombre blanco han asimilado de sus habitos las implacables leyes de la codicia."[56]

The principal characters of the novel are don Cruz Kino, and old prospector; and Betónica, daughter of a Pápago woman, Micaila, and a Gringo prospector named Jones, who is now dead. Don Kino has just found a large quantity of gold by following an old Indian superstition regarding the jojoba bush. He is taking advantage of his newly acquired wealth to bargain for the hand of the sixteen year old mestizo Betónica. His age and his race are against him; so also is the stubborn independence of the Pápagos. Greed is the wedge which he uses to gain his ambition: "Cuenta, en primer lugar, con el formidable aglutinante de voluntades que suele ser el dinero."[57] This is the story of the metamorphosis of greed

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[55] Ibid., p. 11.

[56] Ibid., p. 104.

[57] Ibid., p. 11.

in the life of don Kino and of the tragic consequences of greed in the lives of the Pápago Indians, especially Betónica.

Don Kino chooses to celebrate his gold strike by providing a lavish fiesta in the Pápago settlement of Zoñi. The fiesta attracts a large number of mestizo prospectors as well as the entire Pápago tribe. This is an example of the fact that at no point in the novel does the author give the reader a picture of an Indian settlement undisturbed by the presence of the mestizo and the white man. During his sixty years of searching for gold in the Sonora desert, don Kino succeeded in entering into a pact of brotherhood with the Pápago chief, Zacarías Vega, in a ceremony called the molohua. He used this relationship, which the Indians regarded as more binding than family ties, to secure the help of the chief in organizing the fiesta and in overcoming the barriers of native traditions to his marriage with the half-Pápago girl. The chief consented without hesitation and reminded his mestizo brother that even he was the child of a white man. He assured his rich friend that what he desired was much more possible now than it would have been in former times. Don Kino insured the cooperation of both the tribal chief and the old local chief by presenting them with a prized stallion and his coveted Savage rifle in a reenactment of the molohua ceremony before the assembled Pápagos. The free flow of gold in the fiesta also easily induced the girl's mother to cooperate with the designs of the old prospector. As a young girl, she herself

had married a North American prospector. Zacarias Vega arranged for the observance of a nearly forgotten marriage custom of the tribe as a convenient way for don Kino to claim Betónica as his wife. His special relationship to the two Pápago leaders entitled him to participate.

Betónica was not interested in marrying the mestizo and, under urging from the chief, Micaila talked to her about the old man's gold. The author describes the effect of this conversation on the girl: "En el incipiente interés de la pequeña se estremece un orgasmo de codicia. Y su influjo la mueve a preguntar: -- Cree que esté muy rico 'amá?"[58] The mother assured her that the old man was rich enough to grant her lifelong ambition to make a trip to the United States in a car. Betónica overcame her natural revulsion for the old prospector when that possibility was presented to her. The author considers this greed as a quality inherited from her father and from her mother, who had made a similar decision in her youth:

> Salir del pozo oscuro aislado en medio de radiante civilización que Zoñi representa, es ya un bien que pesa con suprema densidad sobre cualquier consideración que se le oponga. Ella ha heredado, en efecto, algo de esa ambición que justifica todas las fatigas y todos los oprobios. Y lleva, como su padre y como la india que la dio a la luz, el fetiche del dinero en el altar mayor de sus devociones, por todo el bien material que no ha conocido y que sólo el oro puede proporcionar.[59]

The first division of the novel "Para sacarse una espino" ends with this ceremony. The presence of a sixth man threatens

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[58] Ibid., p. 31.

[59] Ibid., p. 34.

the success of don Kino's project. Petronilo Naúchuc, a bitter enemy of don Kino, enters the competition with no other object than the humiliation of the mestizo. The Pápago man finds Betónica first, and don Kino shoots his enemy and rival in order to claim her. The joyous occasion ends with this tragedy. Don Kino and his young bride leave Naúchuc's body in the desert and leave the community together.

In the second division of the Novel "El negro polvo de oro," the story moves entirely away from the Pápago settlement. Don Kino has been driven so long by illusions of wealth, that he cannot stop to enjoy the results of his strike. Rubín describes the change which greed has brought about in him:

> Largos años de inútil codicia lo contemplan y estimulan.
> . . . . . .
> Ha existido anhelando, angustiado; en la triple ansiedad de la codicia, lo arrebatado y lo inseguro.[60]

When a North American adventurer invites him to invest his remaining four thousand pesos in a mining venture, don Kino casts aside all his illusions of comfort and happiness, and those of Betónica, and embarks on what proves to be his last quest for wealth. Both don Kino and Betónica are victims of the way of life they have chosen. During several months in the desert, the old prospector's desire for gold outweighs any consideration for his young wife. Her dreams of visiting the land of her father are never realized. Don Kino abandons her to the care of a friend in a labor camp, where she falls

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[60] Ibid., pp. 141, 179.

before the insinuations and the temptations of a young mestizo, Romancito Salas. After don Kino's death, even this youth abandons her to follow his wild schemes for a utopian society. Betónica bears Romancito's child, but even the child dies. The young widow is the victim of the life of greed which she has chosen. Her tragic end is told in the final chapter of the novel, "La noche de la demente." The last act of don Kino before his death was to discover a deep spring of water in the desert. His discovery was to signal the arrival of others, who would come for this liquid gold, and the desert would soon be transformed into a vast cotton field. With this new breed of prospector would come the various institutions of Western civilization, which would finally and completely enslave the Indian and rob him of all his identity: "Con ellos vendría la escuela para standarizarlos, la ley y la cárcel a someterlos y, con el fin de arrebatarles los beneficios del salario, un núcleo mayor y mucho mejor organizado de cantinas y garitos."[61]

In the other novels on the Indian theme, the principal character is an Indian. Cuando el táguaro agoniza is an exception. At the outset of the novel the Indian is already beyond redemption, unalterably corrupted by the civilization of the Western world, and the mestizo and the white man predominate. Don Kino, as the author presents him, is the embodiment of the two salient characteristics of the culture that he represents:

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[61] Ibid., pp. 187-8.

violence and greed: Zacarías Vega is a type of the degenerate, decadent Indian; and Betónica and her tragic end are symbolic of the fate of a race that is moving rapidly toward extinction.

In the two volumes of Cuentos de indios and in four of the stories of Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, Rubín provides twelve colorful episodes which reveal his intimate acquaintance with the psychology of the Indian. All but two of these stories contain a lesson or a commentary on the tragic experience of the Indian under the domination of Western civilization. "Los amores de un tarahumara" is a captivating narrative about a custom which to the Westerner may appear strange, unacceptable, even cruel. Even in this story, however, the author accepts the right of this primitive people to their own customs: "Tal vez haya mucho de sano en esa verdad sin distorsión de las culturas primitivas."[62] In "La milagrosa pitzecua,"[63] he mercilessly exposes the superstition of the Tarasco Indians and the deceitful practices of the doctor-priest Nuberto. The realism of these portraits of the Indian is thereby greatly enhanced.

Common to the other ten stories is the historic oppression of the Indian by the white man and the mutal distrust, fear, and hostility which exist between the two races. "El yaqui"[64] is the bitterest expression of this deep-seated

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[62] Cuentos de indios, libro primero, p. 80.

[63] Cuentos de indios, libro primero.

[64] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

animosity. A Yaqui Indian, who had been impressed in 1929 into Revolutionary forces in Sonora, sits impassively watching a building burn with its two white occupants, reciting a tragic litany: "El yori te quitó tus tierras; el yori te robó tus ganados; el yori violó tus mujeres; el yori asesinó a tu padre...."[65] In "Un robo fatal,"[66] the Indian's race is a barrier which prevents his being incorporated into Mexican society in spite of the roads of penetration designed for that purpose. His removal into the world of the white man brings disaster. "Mal del pinto"[67] is a possible allusion to the stigma of the Indian's race, which makes it impossible for him to find happiness as an equal partner of the mestizo.[68]

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[65] Ibid. [66] Ibid. [67] Ibid.

[68] An article appearing in the same year that this story was published gives vital information on this malady: "Los que sufren del "mal del pinto" tienen en las extremidades, y a veces por todo el cuerpo, zonas de contorno irregular y de color rojizo, azulado, plomizo, violáceo, pardusco o de un blanco puro que contrasta fuertemente con el tono bronceado normal. A menudo estas manchas invaden la cara y dan a quienes las portan un aspecto entra grotesco y asqueroso.... Esta policromía de piel no se acompaña, es verdad, de dolor o molestia física para el paciente, ni la dolencia amenaza en modo alguno su vida, pero, en cambio, el deterioro que sufre el aspecto físico del "pinto" obliga a éste a vivir para siempre recluído en los lugares en donde haya otros con la misma lacra que él...." Manuel Martínez Baez, "El mal del pinto," Cuadernos Americanos, No. 2 (May-April, 1942), pp. 63-80.

The first recorded mention of this malady, according to Martínez Baez, was made by Hernán Cortés in a letter to the Emperor. He noted certain "rarezas de color" among the Indians. Scientific interest has been excited about the nature and origin of this phenomenon. In 1927, González Herrejón believed that he had discovered a relationship between the "mal del pinto" and syphillis.

Cortes unexplained allusion, says Martines Baez, may be taken as a commentary on the unusual coloring of the Indians

In "El dilema de la zoque,"[69] Rubín shows the effect of the imposition of a Western marriage custom on that tribe of Indians. The dilemma of the Indian girl stems from the fact that she follows the mestizo custom which permits her to personally select a husband, rather than the Indian practice of the parents making the choice. In "La mula muerta,"[70] the author portrays the most decadent and primitive of all the Indian cultures about which he has written, the Seris. Still, the extreme cruelty of the white man toward these people on the pretext of superiority is condemned. The Huave Indians in "El último despojo"[71] learn that the further they get from the white man's civilization with its greed and violence the happier they will be. From the Christian religion, Rubin says, they have only learned that there are more gods to appease. The Tarahumaras in "El ánima de Juan Cocospe"[72] choose to suffer the ravages of a smallpox epidemic rather than submit to federal health officials who come with troops to vaccinate them. The hated white man makes life impossible for them,

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or as a mention of a discoloration of the skin now identified as "mal del pinto." Rubín is more concerned with the superstitious and popular reaction to this phenomenon than about its scientific aspects. He begins his story with Chema's employer cautioning him against marrying anyone but a Mixteca Indian. After he marries the costeña, symptoms appear on him as though this were intended as something of an allegory on the race problem in Mexico.

[69] Cuentos de indios, libro primero.

[70] Cuentos de indios, libro segundo.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

and for them heaven is a fraternity from which the white man will be absent.

"Las cinco palabras"[73] is the only story that Rubín has written which is primarily an idealized picture of the Indian. The legendary wisdom, the superior concept of justice, and the inherently noble disposition of the Huicholes is presented in contrast to the corruption and the base motives of the exponents of progress during the Porfirian era. In "Caza menor,"[74] a Huichol father shoots a dart into the throat of his child, rather than see him carried away to the government school for Indians. There is in this story the persistent theme that however cruel or barbaric the life and customs of an Indian tribe, it has a right to follow that life and those customs without interference from what the author calls that "disparatada civilización atómica," which, with its force and armament, is more cruel and more barbaric than the most primitive of Indian cultures. The lesson in "Una rázon aplastante"[75] is that after four centuries of trying to incorporate the Huichol tribe into a better way of life, represented by what Rubín calls "la civilización cristiano-atómica," neither religious missionaries, nor Indianist institutes, nor official Indian boarding schools have succeeded in persuading that

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[73] Cuentos de indios, libro primero.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Cuentos de indios, libro segundo.

rebellious nucleus of primitive Indians of the inferiority of their way of life. An Indian who is asked why he does not work like "people" instead of migrating throughout the wilds of the Sierras for nine months of the year points to a passing wretched Mexican laborer with a load of wood on his back. He asks if that is the so-called better way of life which he is to expect in exchange for the simple existence he now follows.[76]

Rubín's Indianist writings differ from the traditional novels and short stories on that theme in that the author does not plead for the social regeneration of the Indian. Percas remarks about the absence of this social propaganda from El canto de la grilla: "Unlike most Indian novels it offers no revindication of the Indian, but a realistic, non-idealized panorama of Indian life...."[77] Rather than dwell on the inferior social and economic status of the Indian, Rubín focuses on the spiritual and moral decline which the Indian has suffered since the Conquest. His works about the Indian might well be subtitled "The Last Years of the Indian," because they signal the eclipse of the Indian era. In selected anecdotes about the Indian in contact with the white man and his civilization, the author has pointed out the change which has taken place in the Indian. This change takes place in localized situations

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[76]Rubín expressed to the writer that this story is his most convincing argument for leaving the Indian unmolested in the way of life he has chosen.

[77]Percas, op. cit.

and on a very personal scale, but it is intended to represent the drama of an entire race. González says of José Damián in El callado dolor de los tzotziles: "La evolucion o cambio que en el alma de José Damián opera el contacto con los ladinos y sus costumbres el complejo de culpabilidad que en él se desarrolla y el sadismo que revela en la comisión de lo que según la tradición de su raza son crímenes imperdonables...."[78] Rubín indicates that Western civilization predominated over the Indian, not because of its basic superiority, but because of its more advanced technical knowledge. He presents the psychological, the religious, and the economic differences between the two cultures which make them incompatible. He points out, without excessive idealization of the Indian, the simple virtues of the indigenous man of America: courtesy, honor, dignity, and a strong sense of social responsibility developed in his communal form of life. The defects of the Indian: superstition, ignorance, and a failure to respond to change, are not overlooked. Western civilization is characterized by its exclusiveness, its ego-centered values, and the violent methods by which it subdues weaker cultures. Progress, from the viewpoint of the creole, the mestizo, and the North American, is the source of much irony in these Indian narratives. For the Indian, the asphalt highway and the white man's school are nothing more than instruments of an alien culture and add nothing to his way of life. The many attempts of the Western

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[78]González, op. cit., p. 384.

world to redeem the Indian by incorporating him into cultural patterns based on alien ideas of social and economic progress Rubín rejects as invalid, even unjust. The Indian's suffering is only intensified by these intrusions. Wherever the Indian is found outside the boundaries or the traditions of his own tribe, tragedy is inevitable. When outside elements penetrate the life of the Indian, they are repelled or the Indian is crushed, or -- worse yet, according to Rubín -- the Indian's basic integrity is violated and he becomes avecinado.

Ramón Rubín describes for the Mexican Indian a tragic position in the modern world similar to that of the Guatemalan Indian in Monteforte Toldeo's Entre la piedra y la cruz: the Indian is the victim of a basic incompatibility of two ways of life and his annihilation is inevitable. In his presentation of the Indian's plight, Rubín offers no solution. In response to a question by the writer about the tragedy of the Indian and what Mexico should do, Rubín said: "Que debe México volver al México del indio, pero es imposible. Hay valores y también defectos en toda civilización." [79] Rubín's is fundamentally a romantic attitude toward the Indian. He shares Rousseau's nostalgia for the disappearing virtues of aboriginal society, but, unlike the Frenchman, he fails to become reconciled to the realities of his time. Still, the author's ability to penetrate the psychology of the Mexican Indian and his chronicle of the disappearing Indian under the impact of Western civilization are important contributions to contemporary Mexican prose.

[79] Personal interview with the author.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEME OF THE REVOLUTION IN RUBIN'S FICTION

The Revolution of 1910 has been one of the most important thematic sources for both novel and short story in twentieth-century Mexico. González has identified more than three hundred novels inspired by that event.[1] Of the 1,300 short stories used by McMurray for his survey of the themes of the contemporary Mexican short story, four hundred -- easily the largest group -- dealt with social and political problems related to the Revolution.[2] As a writer who is preoccupied with the forces that are shaping present-day Mexican reality, Rubín has reflected this most significant social-political event in seven of his short stories and in one novel. This writer has found only two prior mentions of the theme of the Revolution in Rubín's writings. Luis Leal comments briefly that some of Rubín's short stories treat that theme;[3] and

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[1]Manuel Pedro González, op. cit., p. 144.

[2]George Ray McMurray, "Recurring Themes and Techniques in the Mexican Short Story of the Twentieth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Romance Languages, University of Nebraska, 1955), p. 309.

[3]Luis Leal and Edmundo Valades, La revolución y las letras (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1960), p. 114.

McMurray considers "la venganza de Cándido" in his survey of Mexican short stories of the Revolution.[4] González' study of the Mexican novel[5] was published before Rubín's La sombra del techincuagüe[6] appeared, so that this novel about the Cristero rebellion is not included in his chapter on the Cristero novel.

The first writers of the revolutionary cycle dealt primarily with the anecdotal narration of the military phase of that event. Obregón, Carranza, and Villa -- in ascending order of importance -- are the heroes of their works. Examples of these are two of the acknowledged masterworks of the revolutionary novel: Los de abajo[7] and El águila y la serpiente.[8] In these novels, a great personality, a particular geographical sector, or a single aspect or event of the Revolution is at the center of the chain of episodes which make up each individual work. Although there is a deep pessimism and in some an implied social thesis, like the Revolution itself, these novels are lacking in well defined ideals and in a concrete social program for the betterment of Mexico.

Fiction of the post-Revolution is characterized by a concern of the author over the outcomes of the civil war. The tendency toward presenting ideas of social reform was begun in the short story, according to Luis Leal, by Celestino

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[4]McMurray, op. cit. [5]González, op. cit.

[6]Ramón Rubín, La sombra del techincuagüe (Guadalajara: Ediciones Altiplano, 1955).

[7]Mariano Azuela, Los de abajo (El Paso, Texas, 1916).

[8]Martin Luis Guzman, El aguila y la serpiente (Mexico: 1928).

Herrera Frimont in his collection La línea de fuego.[9] In these stories, there is an abundance of psychological motives: heroism, patriotism, injustice, sacrifice, death, cruelty, sadism, disenchantment, greed, daring, stoicism, valor, and at times humor. This tendency toward the social thesis in the short story of the Revolution intensified in the early thirties. Psychological motives and social theses are present in the revolutionary novels of the thirties, including those of Rubén Romero[10] and of Jorge Ferretis.[11] The interest of all these writers was not so much in simple anecdotal narration as in the results and the consequences of the Revolution. Satire and a deep disillusionment are the dominant notes in these novels and short stories of the post-Revolution.

Rubín's first stories about the Revolution were written during the period 1932 to 1936.[12] Five of these appeared in his first volume of mestizo tales: "El tonto de Pueblo Viejo," "La venganza de Cándido," "Pitafio el villista," "El yaqui," and "Los caballos de Azoyu."[13] "La mula de las talegas,"[14]

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[9]Celestiono Herrera Frimont, La línea de fuego (Mexico: 1929).

[10]José Rubén Romero, El pueblo inocente (Mexico: 1934); Mi caballo, mi perro, y mi rifle (Mexico: 1936); and La vida inutil de Pito Perez (Mexico: 1938).

[11]Jorge Ferretis, Cuando engorda el Quijote (Mexico: 1937).

[12]Personal interview with the author.

[13]Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

[14]Cuarto libro de cuentos mestizos.

"Después de la tracatera," and "El colgado"[15] complete Rubín's short stories on the theme of the Revolution. The first appearance of these stories was in the Revista de Revistas in 1938 and 1939,[16] Other stories by Rubín of rural Mexico and of the Indian are closely related to these in content, but they do not deal specifically with the violent years of the Revolution.

In the one novel which Rubín has written about the Revolution, La sombra del techincuagüe,[17] the author provides sketchy background events of the Reform movement of the last century and of the Revolution of 1910, but the central plot concerns a revolt of the Church against the Mexican government, and most of the action described takes place between 1926 and 1929. This novel belongs to that segment of literature on the Revolution which González calls the Cristero novel.[18]

Most of the material which Rubín has written about the Revolution is set in the twenties. The Rubín family left Mexico shortly after the overthrow of Madero and did not return until 1928. Ramón, who was only sixteen years old at that time, was deeply impressed by the hostilities which he personally witnessed. Only "Pitafio el villista" is set entirely

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[15] El hombre que ponía huevos, op. cit.

[16] "Los caballos de Azoyú," XXVIII (September 11, 1938); "El yaqui," XXX (July 30, 1939); "Después de la tracatera," XXX (September 10, 1939); and "Pitafio el villista," XXX (October 22, 1939, Revista de Revistas.

[17] It is more properly of the post-Revolution period.

[18] González, op. cit., "La novela cristera," pp. 296-311.

in the preceding decade and is therefore a re-telling of events which the author himself could not have known firsthand. Another story, "La mula de las talegas," appears to be set during the revolt of Adolfo de la Huerta against the candidacy of Calles in 1923. "El colgado" spans the entire period of the Revolution from the fall of Díaz to the mid-twenties, but most of the action described takes place during the twenties. "El tonto de Pueblo Viejo" and "El yaqui" have their time setting in 1929, at about the time that Calles organized the Partido Nacional Revolucionario to break the supremacy of the army in Mexican politics, and a revolt was suppressed on the occasion of Ortiz Rubio's accession to the presidency. "Después de la tracatera" is a short story about the Cristero revolt and represents the period of the late twenties or early thirties. "La venganza de Cándido" and "Los caballos de Azoyú" are stories inspired by the Revolution, but they are impossible to date precisely.

Almost all the stories and the one novel about the Revolution have identifiable geographical settings, with the action taking place in western Mexico. Of the stories, three are set in Jalisco: "La mula de las talegas," "Despues de la tracatera," and "El colgado"; two are set in Sinaloa: "El tonto de Pueblo Viejo" and "El yaqui"; one takes place in Baja California: "Pitafio el villista"; one, in Guerrero: "Los caballos de Azayú." La sombra del techincuagüe has its principal setting in Nayarit. "La venganza de Cándido," set in

a region near Juales, is the only story which cannot be located positively in the West.

Rubín's writings about the early years of the Revolution are not eye witness accounts. Not only was he absent from Mexico during the early years of the conflict, but in Jalisco, particularly in the region of Los Altos which he knows so well, the land problem and the conflict between landowner and peasant were not critical:

> Los alteños fuimos espectadores un poco despectivos de esas batallas cuya dinámica nos era difícil comprender. A no ser los de La Trasquila, en este lado de nuestra región nunca existieron hacendados y peones como en el resto del país. Y la pugna mortal que lo asolaba había nacido de una rivalidad entre estas dos clases sociales tan extremosas.[19]

In only two of these works is there any attention given to the historical developments which led to the civil war. In La sombra del techincuagüe, Rubín traces the conflict between the clergy and the liberal elements in national politics up to the third decade of this century. In "El colgado," he provides a brief sketch of the oppression of the Díaz regime and the tension between landholders and peasants. He then gives an example of the outburst of the animosity of the underdogs toward a former member of the feared police force of the dictator. In both narratives, the author addresses himself to an underlying cause of the conflict.

Most of the accounts of the first decade of revolution, as well as of the years preceding, are sketchy and contain

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[19] El hombre que ponía huevos, op. cit., "El colgado," p. 32.

very few particulars about military engagements or political maneuvers. In a single paragraph of "El colgado," Rubín summarizes the incessant marches of Zapata's southern hordes and of Villa's northern marauders across the plains of Los Altos:

> Del norte del país veíamos descender marejadas humanas que comandaban unos extraños generales de polainas altas, sombrero tejano y, a veces, ostentosas coquetas en el lóbulo de sus orejas. Eran hombres de estatura tan elevada como la nuestra. Y, siempre con el fusil y las cananas terciadas a la espalda y sobre el pecho, chocaban en batallas estrepitosas con otros revolucionarios, menudos y más prietitos, que procedían del sur, arrasándolo todo a su paso como si fueran mangas de langosta. Carneaban las reses, llevábanse nuestros caballos y sometían a saqueo las trojes y los almiares. Las mujeres tenían que vivir muy alerta para ocultar a tiempo a sus hijas guapas....[20]

The only military encounter prior to the time of the Cristero rebellion which Rubín describes in detail is an engagement between the forces of Villa and Carranza in the story "Pitafio el villista." This brief foray of one of Villa's generals into a small town held by Carranza's soldiers is not, however, the matter of central importance to the author. The din of battle is only the spectacle. The real drama lies in the ironic twist of fate which brings an idiot to his death. In "La mula de las talegas," the action of the story begins at the perimeter of a battle scene and gradually recedes with the uneven waves of deserters from the de la Huerta ranks. Only a few fragments of the battle account are provided. The reader learns more concrete detail about this battle in a casual conversation

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[20] Ibid.

recorded in La canoa perdida -- a novel with no substantial interest in the Revolution as a theme -- than in this entire short story:

> Poco después, brotó una enconada disputa entre Martín y Rubén en torno a cierto episodio de la rebelión delahuertista que tuvo a Ocotlán por escenario de una de sus cruentas batallas.
>
> Durante muchos días, las tropas del general Estrada, parapetadas a la orilla norte del río Santiago, contuvieron a las obregonistas que las asediaban desde la ribera sur, en la cual se encuentra la población. Y aún perduran en las casas en los puentes señales elocuentísimas de la ferocidad de aquellos combates. Teniendo los de Estrada su base de operaciones en Poncitlán, habían llenado de soldados e intendencias en toda la vega de Santa Cruz el Grande y los llanos y cerros contiguos a lo que ahora es la Celanesa. Obregón y los suyos bombardeaban aquellas posiciones desde la estación del tren de Ocotlán. Y acaso no hubieran desalojado nunca a sus enemigos, a no ser porque el jefe del destacamento estradista que defendía el paso del río en Poncitlán se vendió a los federales, permitiéndoles atacar a sus compañeros por la retaguardia.[21]

Treachery by an officer of the Estrada forces is implied in the short story, as the senior officer tells his nephew and friend that their forces havebeen cut off by Obregón's forces in a surprise maneuver. The focus of the narrative is not on the military encounter, but on the cowardly and selfish conduct of the retreating Estrada forces.

Heroic action and legendary heroes are almost entirely absent from Rubín's writings on the Revolution. Emiliano Zapata, Álvaro Obregón, and Adolfo de la Huerta are only shadowy figures who do not make a personal appearance. Neither

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[21]Ramón Rubín, La canoa perdida (Guadalajara: Ediciones Altiplano, 1951), pp. 161-162.

their ideals, their causes, nor their military feats are of any interest to the author. Of the two most prominent military figures in the chronicles of the Mexican Revolution, Carranza and Villa, the latter is the only one whom the reader either sees or hears.

In "Pitafio el villista," Rubín adds another chapter to the voluminous Villa legend. Pitafio is a town idiot in Santa Rosalía, presumably in Baja California. Though the town is occupied by a garrison of Carranza soldiers, Pitafio continually emits vivid imitations of a train whistle, cries of "Viva Villa," and rude insults of all Carranza partisans -- trademarks of a Villa attack. No serious effort is made to halt these demonstrations. The local commander does, however, repeatedly jail him and sentence him to base tasks in the military compound. On one such occasion, one of Villa's bands attacks the town. Pitafio is awakened from his drunken stupor by the noise of battle only to find himself naked and cold near the water trough in which he has been dipped by the Carranza soldiers. He dresses himself in the clothing of a dead Carranza soldier, unaware of the peril to which he is thereby exposing himself. The attackers win the day. Among the prisoners taken to the plaza to be punished at dawn is Pitafio, still dressed in a Carranza uniform. Oblivious of his plight, he is still hurling insults at his hapless fellow prisoners and crying "Viva Villa." The general of the Villa force, knowing nothing about the undaunted martyr of the Villa cause,

is annoyed at the apparently cowardly conduct of Pitafio and brutally severs his ear with a knife. One week later, Villa himself arrives. By this time, Pitafio is gravely ill and near death. Villa personally visits the idiot when he learns of the mistake which has been made. Not knowing what to do for the dying man, he makes a meaningless promise, that he will confer on him the rank of captain when he regains his health. The dying idiot makes an equally hopeless counter proposal, that General Villa shall overthrow the officer who has made the tragic error. The real drama in this story of Villa lies in the tragic misfortune of Pitafio. There is a complete absence of the legendary prowess or the personal valor of Villa. Only the town idiot is under the spell of the campesino general's personal magnetism. The commander in chief of the Northern division of the army of the Revolution is actually a secondary figure in the story. His legend of greatness suffers in this equivocal juxtaposition of legendary hero and town fool.

In "El tonto de Pueblo Viejo" too, Rubin presents a hero and a fool, with the latter emerging as the true hero. In what the author calls the civil war of the Renovadores, a notorious bandit and revolutionary hero, Chicampiano, sells the services of his band in exchange for an official pardon. In addition to engaging the enemy, the roving band of outlaws continues to ravage and plunder all the little towns that dot the countryside. Chicampiano and his band of sixty men ride

into the undefended town of Pueblo Viejo and demand food at the town's only hotel. Doña Elodia, the hostess, has hidden her three daughters securely from the captain and his six lieutenants. An approaching band of federal soldiers hurries their departure; but, before they can leave, Chicampiano sees the girls. Albino, suitor of the oldest daughter, tries to protect his fiancée from the bandit leader, and one of the lieutenants strikes him a jarring blow on the head. Chicampiano then fires into his body and the band disappears with their prey. Even after receiving a pardon for his many crimes, Chicampiano continues to live up to his reputation as the most feared man of the sector. After several years, he returns to Pueblo Viejo. All three daughters have come back, but only the oldest remains with the mother. Albino is alive, but both his body and his mind have been incurably affected by the earlier incident. When he sees how the presence of Chicampiano brings fear to the woman he has once loved, he lies in wait in the darkness and drives a knife into the heart of the feared bandit. He then falls faint to the ground. The final posture of the fallen bandit and of his assailant underscores the irony with which Rubín tells the story of Chicampiano: " ... y los primeros en descubrir la tragedia, hallaron tendidos en el suelo, casi juntos, al valiente y al idiota."[22] Chicampiano is presented as the

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[22]Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, op. cit., p. 91.

typical revolutionary chieftain whose banditry gained temporary respectability under the flag of the Revolution. He is typical of the hundreds of self-styled captains whose bands plagued Mexico's countryside for nearly two decades. He is the very symbol of violence. The heroism of this type of bandit consisted in preying upon defenseless towns and people. Still all the bars rang with ballads celebrating their brave deeds. It is just such a bandit, Cuatrodedos, for whom the Revolution was only the beginning of a life of violence, who brought sorrow to a settlement of Huichol Indians in La bruma lo vuelve azul.[23] Rubín decries this concept of valor and opposes the courage of a simple, peace loving town idiot to the infamous deeds of the bandit.

The Revolution as a positive force in Mexico is almost entirely absent from Rubín's writings. As one of his characters in Donde mi sombra se espanta remarks: "Fue nomás pura ilusión, como la Revolución misma."[24] A notable exception to this negative view of the Revolution occurs in La sombra del techincuagüe, where the author explains to the reader the presence of both female prisoners and male in adjoining cells:

> No obstante, nuestra Revolución ha levantado en medio de sus turbonadas de ciega violencia, una que otra idea comprensiva que, insensiblemente, trasciende y se va infiltrando en el orden cívico, donde ofrece un sorprendence contraste con aquellos seculares que siguen

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[23] La bruma lo vuelve azul, op. cit., p. 14.

[24] Ramón Rubín, Donde mi sombra se espanta (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1964), p. 100.

> prevaleciendo y que ningún impulso ni evolución ha podido desarraigar de su empecinado estancamiento. Antes pasó un caudillo tremolando por bandera una ley que nulificaba las infames deudas heredadas. Luego vino otro que se propónia restituir sus heredades a los indios. Más tarde un tercero que ofrecía repartir la tierra a quienes la trabajaban.... A la sazón, estaba como alcaide en la cárcel de Ahuacatlan un hombre que resumía su fama de progresista en la pretensión de que los presos necesitaban cohabitar de vez en cuando con mujeres tanto como les era preciso comer y beber, y que debía permitírseles.[25]

These were sporadic developments, introduced by violent men and sustained by violent action. The fourth was the result of the liberal views of a prison official whose motives were open to question.

The underdog, for whom the Revolution was presumably fought, is a subject common to both novel and short story on that theme. Rubín provides a brief story that is revolutionary in theme, though of imprecise data and geographical setting, in that it reflects the antipathy of a landed peasant toward two members of the controlling class of hacendados, a class which has survived all the agrarian reform legislation of the Revolution. The author has identified the conflict between these two social classes as the primary cause of the war. In "La venganza de Cándido," the peasant has received a modest parcel of land as the result of the land distribution program of the Revolution. He is now a ranchero. He has also benefited from a rural education program, for he has some rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing. On the way to town on his burro, Cándido reads the list of supplies which he has

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[25] La sombra del techincuague, op. cit., p. 185.

written and with obvious pride takes out his pencil to make additions: "Hunas ilachaz para la Chueca, zeis cafespirinaz; unos calsones de drilito para mi tío Zevastián; hocho cilos de zal jordá; hunas pildoritas para la toz,...."[26] He is surprised by the swift approach of two horses and their riders. It is the son of the local hacendado, the young don Pancho, and his new bride Esperanza. The lavish dress and mounts of the couple contrast with the rude picture of Cándido and his burro Ruperto:

> El marido, un mozo robusto, un tanto gordo y de bigote fanfarrón, vestía de charro. Ella era una figurita delicada y hermosa, que montabe mal a caballo y que había venido de la ciudad para cararse con aquel hombre.[27]

Cándido experiences a profound moral crisis as the couple draws nearer, a crisis that has its origin in their traditional relationship of hacendado and peon. He decides not to speak first and risk the possibility that the pair may not hear him and consequently not return his salute. Rubín says of him that "Cándido...era un mozo adusto, mal encarado y nada servil...."[28] Of the young hacendados he says that they were " ...demasiado impuestos a las reverencias y salmodias de la peonada...."[29] The passing is silent. The young don Pancho is quick to recognize and react to what he considers an insult. As distance separates the two parties, he returns the slight with disparaging

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[26] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, op. cit., p. 109.

[27] Ibid., pp. 110-11. [28] Ibid., p. 111.

[29] Ibid.

remarks about both burro and master. At nightfall, a rainstorm mounts in intensity. Farther down the road, Cándido discovers that the couple have met with an accident that has cost the lives of the master and the horses. The woman is injured and cries for assistance. Her rescue is a dramatic ordeal in which Cándido fights his natural animosity for her class and a strong temptation to exploit the helpless condition of the beautiful woman. His humanitarian gesture costs him his burro, a sacrifice which his innate goodness leads him to make willingly. Several months pass, and Cándido goes again to buy supplies. Messengers approach to tell him that the woman wants to see him. He replies hostilely, ¿Quién me busca?" He is told that she had a child the preceding Sunday and wants to see him. Though he realizes that she may desire to reward him, he refuses to respond to her order. Rubín says of his attitude: "Le fastidiaba el servilismo, y estaba, francamente apprepentido y hasta avergonzado del afán por socorrerla que lo llevó hasta el increíble crímen de matar a palos a su fiel Ruperto."[30] A small boy then tells him that the mother wants to give the child the name of the man who rescued both her and the unborn infant. The response of Cándido to what he considers an unbelievable decision of the woman reveals this instinctive distrust and rancor of the peon toward the hacendado:

> --¿El nombre de quién? -- preguntó aturdido.
>
> --Pos el suyo, pues.... La señora Esperancita quería que ustē juera el padrino.

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[30] Ibid., p. 118.

--¿Le va a poner mi nombre al hijo de ella?

--Pos, sí, pues; ¡no le digo!

Cándido reflexionó unos instantes. A sus labios asomó una sonrisilla irónica. Y le dijo al chiquillo:

--Tá güeno, pues. Anda y dile que me llamo Ruperto.

Y cuando se alejó el muchacho, él soltó una carcajada brutal y le gritó al comerciante que lo había oído todo, boquiabierto, desde las puertas de su changarro.

--¡Pa que otra vez se rían de mi burro![31]

The principal underdog of the Revolution was the Indian. The restoration of communal lands to the Indian and his redemption from the cruel peonage system was one of the most explosive issues confronting the nation at the outbreak of the Revolution. During the Díaz regime under authority of the Lerdo Law, the Indian was dispossessed of his land, so that not ten per cent of the Indian communities had any land whatever.[32] When the Indians objected, as the Maya and the Yaqui tribes did, the army and the national police force put down the rebellion, and thousands of prisoners were sold to buyers on distant haciendas. None of the Plans or Constitutions conceived by the leaders of the Revolution was able to bring to fruition the idealistic proposal of Emiliano Zapata to return to the Indian his ancestral lands. The downtrodden Indian, for whom the war presumably was being fought, was only the fodder that fed the holocaust of passion and violence.

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[31] Ibid., pp. 118-19.

[32] Lesley Byrd Simpson, Many Mexicos (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), p. 263.

In "El yaqui," Rubín has synthesized the plight of the Indian in the aftermath of the Revolution. The Yaqui tribe is chosen, because for nearly a century the Yaquis had been exploited by both Liberals and Conservatives in political conflicts which had little or no meaning for the Indians. During the period of the Reform, a unit of Yaquis distinguished themselves in the Conservative cause. The Yaquis had been among the most resistant to the seizure by Porfirio Díaz of their communal lands. During the early years of the Revolution, the Yaquis played an important role in the North. In Obregón's final battle with Villa at Celaya, the Yaquis were again called into service. With their help Obregón brought Villa's military career to a dramatic close. Strode gives an account of their utilization in this battle:

> Obregón decided to settle the contention with Villa once and forever if possible. He marched his army as far as Celaya. There he set up his defenses. Having made an intense study of modern methods of warfare, he utilized miles of barbed wire and had trenches dug as was being done in the great war raging in Europe. In the front trenches he stationed the straight-shooting Yaqui Indians with their fearless wives and steady-nerved offspring beside them to reload the rifles. Of all the Indians in Mexico the little, well-knit Yaquis from Sonora have ever been the most terrific fighters. They liked the brave and simpático Obregón, who knew he could depend on them to the last death.[33]

In an abortive uprising in 1929, the Yaquis once again were impressed into military service. At the siege of Mazatlán, the famous Yaqui troops found themselves in unaccustomed retreat. Juan Balomea, the Yaqui of this narrative, lost a

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[33]Hudson Strode, Timeless Mexico (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1944), 250.

brother in the attack and was himself left behind by the retreating soldiers. He was nursed back to health through the charity of some Mexicans of that region. They provided him work and even extended to him their friendship, in spite of their badly concealed curiosity over his pure Indian features and traits. When the Yaqui looked for a woman among them, he chose the daughter of his Mexican employer. He was rudely rebuffed by the family and driven away from the ranch. Their true attitude toward him became clear: "Entoces /sic/ si pudo descubrir como debajo de todas aquellas melifluas atenciones estaba el yori, eternamente incapaz de comprenderle."[34] He turned northward to rejoin his tribe, but he was doubtful that they would now receive him after he had lived among the despised white. En route, he avoided begging by working at various base tasks. Finally, he was employed as the lone operator of an illegal mezcal still in a remote rural zone. The enforced solitude reconciled him in part to life, but it did not diminish in the least the hostility he felt toward the white man. One night he was startled from his sleep by his employer, who had brought a mestizo girl -- the daughter of his former employer who had been denied to him -- to that secluded area in order to force his attentions on her. The Yaqui withdrew a brief distance from the hut while the mestizo seduced the helpless girl. In the ensuing moments, a petroleum lamp tipped over, spilling its flaming contents and spreading fire throughout the still. In seconds, the building

[34]Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, op. cit., p. 214.

was an exploding inferno. The Yaqui quieted a momentary impulse to go to the rescue of the trapped pair. He sat impassively as a human figure emerged from the hut ablaze and stumbled hopelessly along the path to the nearby sea. Fresh memories of his humiliation by the whites and of the atrocities which his tribe suffered at their hands at the siege of Mazatlán recalled to his lips the tragic litany which his mother had taught him from childhood:

> El yori te quitó tus tierras; el yori te robó tus ganados; el yori violó tus mujeres; el yori asesinó a tu padre.[35]

The Revolution had changed nothing for the Indian. Not only his lands, but his fundamental human dignity continued to be denied him by the white man.

Among the psychological motives mentioned by Leal[36] as common to the short story of the Revolution, two are outstanding in Rubín's writings: cruelty and cowardice. In three of these stories, cruelty is outstanding. In "Pitafio el Villista" Güero Baudelio, the general who overthrew the Carranza garrison and then brutally severed the ear of the town idiot, recalls the sadistic Güero Margarito of Los de abajo. With keen delight, Villa's officer deliberately dulled a borrowed knife on one of his spurs in the presence of Pitafio, while the wild eyed idiot tried to guess the meaning of his action. He then approached his confused captive and grasped one of his ears:

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[35] Ibid., p. 221.

[36] Leal and Valadés, op. cit., p. 107.

> Al sentir que el cuchillo mellado le desgarraba la carne y penetraba en el tejido cartilaginoso del órgano condenado a la amputacion bajo la presion firme e inclemente de la mano del General, La Maquinita se puso a dar unos alaridos tan terribles, que no hubieran permitido oír ni las tímidas advertencias con que algunos vecinos trataban de interceder en favor del infeliz. El Güero Baudelio, ayudado por dos de los suyos que sujetaban a su víctima, seguía aserando la oreja con una espantosa sangre fría y sin importarle los quejidos del idiota. Hasta que cedio el último tendón y se quedó con aquel pedazo de carne entre los dedos. Miró un instante el órgano mutilado y lleno de sangre y lo arrojó al suelo, donde se contrajo y se estremeció y no tardaron en devorarlo unos perros.[37]

Martín Luis Guzmán's "Fiesta de las balas,"[38] though supremely cruel, adds something to the stature of the bandit-general, because of the superb marksmanship both of Villa and of his lieutenant. Other accounts of Villa's savagery also enhance his reputation because of the magical effect which his presence had upon enemies and allies alike. This senseless brutality, however, which Villa himself acknowledged to be a tragic error, casts a shadow upon the legend of Villa, not only because the officer had mutilated a Villa supporter, but because Pitafio was incapable of offering any resistance. After Villa's defeat at Celaya, the famed commander of the Northern division lost much of his popularity. The story of "Pitafio el villista" appears to represent events of Villa's later years, when Carranza was firmly in control of the government, because the author refers to Carranza's troops as "los del Gobierno." During this period, Villa and his loyal followers made many punitive expeditions into towns which were alleged

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[37] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano, op. cit., p. 157.

[38] Guzmán, El águila y la serpiente, op. cit.

to have aided his enemies and there committed barbarous deeds. Strode relates two such incidents,

> In some towns he paused long enough to burn out the eyes of persons alleged to have aided General Pershing, and once he permitted his bored officers the diversion of tearing harmless Chinese shopkeepers asunder by roping them between four horses and then whipping the horses off in four different directions.[39]

This senseless display of cruelty by Villa's forces does much toward debunking the Villa legend.

Cruelty was not the exclusive property of the celebrated heroes. "El colgado" demonstrates as the trademark of the Revolution, from the lowly peasant and upward. Don Baldomero, the godfather of the narrator, had been one of Porfirio Diáz' executioners. Rubín calls him a " ...perseguidor implacable de insumisos."[40] He had roamed the plains and hanged at will persons whom he judged guilty of any crime, either political or civil. On the date of the narrator's birth, two events brought joy to the heart of his father: two cattle thieves had been caught and, " ...estaban ahorcados y meciendose con la brisa de la tarde,"[41] and a son had been born to him. The inevitable happened. With Díaz overthrown, a roving band of revolutionaries took their personal vengeance on Diáz' former hangman. Rubín describes the impression which this cruelty had on the godson:

> Su corpachón largo y desmadejado, de alteño genuino, colgaba escurrido y lacio hasta casi rozar con los pies

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[39]Strode, op. cit., p. 252.

[40]El hombre que ponía huevos, op. cit., p. 31.

[41]Ibid., p. 30.

> las flores de la cincollagas que alfombraban el suelo. Parecía haber crecido con la muerte como si lo hubieran jalado de las piernas. Tenía la lengua gruesa, ennegrecida y de fuera y los ojos brotandole de las órbitas... Sólo aquellas guías horizontales de su bigote se conservaban en equilibrio, como estas astas de novillo cerrero que siempre son lo último en disgregarse de la calaca.
>
> Mis tiernos catorce años se estremecieron con la contemplación macabra de un muerto por el que en vida había sentido cariño y admiración.[42]

Some of the cruelest years of the Revolution were those of the Cristero revolt. After winning a battle with a small group of federal soldiers, a rebel leader planned to execute the officer in charge insuch a cruel manner that he was thwarted by one of his men. It had been his plan to force the proud young soldier to sit on a sharp stake untilthe point should extrude through his mouth. So repulsive was this intended cruelty, even to the fanatical Cristeros, that one of them on the pretext of his escape mercifully shot the captive.[43]

There are no examples of manliness or courageous action in these stories about the Revolution. En "El colgado," the child narrator at first idolizes his father, of whom he says:

> Fue mi padre un alteño de la mejor cepa. Trabajador incansable en los cuatro ranchos que heredase, alto y desgarbado en su figura, solemne de juicio, huraño de carácter y parco en la conversación, mostrábase tan fiel a la amistad como fácil a la violencia cuando alguien hería sus sentimientos.[44]

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[42] El hombre que ponía huevos, op. cit., pp. 33-4.

[43] Ibid.,"Despues de la tracatera."

[44] Ibid., "El colgado, " p. 29.

When a band of revolutionaries hang the bosom friend of his father, the boy witnesses a tragic metamorphosis in his hero. The godfather, who had been hanged cruelly, in the hour of his death, "Parecía haber crecido con la muerte...."[45] The father, when asked by the leader of the revolutionary band who had hanged his friend if he knew the victim, replied only, "De vista."[46] With this shocking denial of a lifelong friendship, the father shrank in the eyes of the boy:

> Toda mi contenida exaltación se volvió en su contra el escucharle. Lo miré con amargura y reproche, resistiéndome a admitir que él, tan íntegro, negara así al amigo y compadre fulminado por la desgracia. En aquel momento me parecía que se estuviera desplomando de su pedestal el elevado concepto que siempre albergué sobre su dignidad y su hombría. Y atribuyéndole una nueva y despreciable condición de cobarde nato, me sentí defraudado y presa del desaliento, y en lo hondo de la más profunda desventura.[47]

The father insisted again that he was only a passing acquaintance of the hanged man. The boy refused his father's command to go home, crying out that he wanted to stay by his godfather. With the choice now of either acknowledging the dead man or denying the son, the father abandoned the scene and turned homeward alone. The cowardly behavior of the father in denying his son is the ultimate cruelty of the Revolution and an example of the moral bankruptcy of the nation in the throes of civil conflict.

Another example of cowardly behavior is found in the retreat of Estrada's forces from the army of Obregón. In "La

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[45] Ibid., p. 33. [46] Ibid., p. 35.

[47] Ibid.

mula de las talegas,"[48] panic stricken officers and soldiers alike abandon their units, their uniforms, and even their wounded and engage their own comrades in mortal combat for the possession of a mule, their only means of safe retreat. It had been the cowardly treason of a highly placed officer that led to the capitulation of Estrada, who had enjoyed the tactical advantage in the battle.

The Mexican Revolution which had its beginning with the downfall of Porfirio Díaz was not a single event; rather, it was a series of historical events and the name given the process designed to wipe out the accumulated evils of the past. Though the initial military phase of the Revolution ended with the assassination of Carranza, the twenties were marked by the realignment of the Conservative forces: the army, the large landholders, and the Church. It was the Church which led a counter revolution in that decade.

The Constitution of 1857, together with the Lerdo and the Juarez laws, had broken the economic power of the Church, established secular education, and established federal authority in matters of worship and religious discipline. A period of what Simpson calls the religious wars ensued, and Pope Pius IX raised his voice in condemnation of "...the said decrees and everything else that the civil authority has done in scorn of ecclesiastical authority and of this Holy See...."[49]

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[48] Cuarto libro de cuentos mestizos, op. cit.

[49] Simpson, op. cit., pp. 241, 245.

The coming of Porfirio Díaz to power marked the awakening of the Church from a long nightmare. The Reform legislation was discreetly ignored in exchange for the support of the clergy, which Díaz regarded as indispensable. The Church became the greatest beneficiary of the Díaz regime and its principal support.

The Constitution of 1917 reaffirmed the anticlerical provisions of the one of 1857, but it was several years before the constitution even emerged from the blueprint stage. Neither Carranza, Adolfo de la Huerta, nor Obregón had dared enact legislation which would put into practice the provisions of the constitution of the Revolution. When Plutarcho Calles became president, he decided to ask the congress for the necessary laws to reduce the economic and political power of the Church. In his first year in office, Calles wrote out a statement for the press which outlined his attitude toward the Church. He declared himself an enemy of the priestly class which, he said, considered itself in the light of privilege and not of evangelical service; tried to keep the people submerged in ignorance; and allied itself with the landholders to exploit the peasants. The Archbishop of Mexico declared publicly that the Church could not accept the religious provisions of the Constitution, and the Pope himself sent words of encouragement to the Church in Mexico. Calles moved swiftly to deport foreign-born priests, close convents, restrict religious exercises in public, confiscate Church property, and secularize

all education. On July 31, 1926, the Church retaliated by refusing to hold any religious services. Passive resistance gave way to open rebellion when the Liga Defensora de la Libertad Religiosa was formed. The clergy proclaimed a holy crusade and even women were mobilized in one of the bloodiest wars in the history of Mexico. With the cry of "Viva Cristo Rey," from which came the name of "Cristeros," priest-led tumults burned government buildings, murdered teachers, and blew up trains. The government was equally severe in its reprisals. Several army generals went so far as to tear down images of saints and to ride their horses defiantly up to the very altars in order to prove that God did not care. A five state region in western Mexico, centering in Jalisco, was the scene of the rebellion which lasted until 1929.

The Cristero rebellion inspired both novels and short stories which may be classified as part of the literature of the Revolution. There appears to be no study which considers the short stories inspired by this counter revolution apart from the main body of stories on the general theme of the Revolution.

"Después de la tracatera" first appeared in 1939, within a decade of the events which inspired it. Its geographical setting is the town of San Julián in the Los Altos region of Jalisco, the center of intense religious fanaticism. A small complement of federal troops entered the town, which was noted for its sympathy with the Cristeros. The home-based

Cristeros had left town the previous evening to keep their homes from being shelled. As the federal troops approached, the remaining population of old men, women, and children were expecting violent reprisals, for both sides were extremely cruel in their treatment of prisoners. The federal soldiers, however, were under orders to be generous with the people and to gain their sympathies. All behaved accordingly except the commanding officer, who attempted to molest the daughter of the Cristero leader in whose house they were billeted. The girl was saved through the intervention of one of his lieutenants. When the commander received orders to engage the Cristeros in another sector, he left a handful of men to guard the town. Scarcely was the principal body of soldiers out of sight, when the Cristeros descended on the town. They defeated the token guard and the officer surrendered to the Cristero leader, asking merciful treatment for his men.

The Cristero leader learned that the federal officers had stayed at his house, and he decided not only to kill the lieutenant, but to humiliate him and to inflict upon him a most cruel death. He was to be impaled on a stake. The rebel soldiers were accustomed to shooting their prisoners, but they were alarmed at the unusual cruelty of their leader. Still none dared intervene. On the way to the execution site, the federal officer tried to escape, hoping to be shot. He was lassoed and returned. In another attempt to thwart plans to impale him, he jumped under the mount of the Cristero

leader and tried to get his pistol. A junior officer shot and wounded him fatally. When the commander saw that the prisoner was dying, he became furious. A quarrel between the two officers was resolved by a third who said: "¡Quién sabe si era ya cosa de Dios Nuestro Señor que muriera ansina!"[50]

Rubín's treatment of both the Federals and the Cristeros reveals the author's ideological neutrality. While the federal soldiers were civil in their treatment of the fanatical Cristero families, their commanding officer arrogantly took charge of the house of the absent Cristero chief and would have taken liberties with one of his daughters had not his lieutenant restrained him. Rubín describes him as a typical product of the Revolution:

> El coronel, prieto, bajito, de ojuelos verdosos y vivaces, las observaba con una maliciosa sonrisilla de tejón entre sus labios orlados de grueso y áspero bigote indígena. No era necesaria una perspicacia muy aventajada para adivinar en él, con sólo verle, a uno de esos rudos militares que extrajo la Revolucion de las mesnadas de gañanes y vaqueros que se incorporan a ella.[51]

The leader of the rebel Cristeros too was abusive and extremely cruel. His decision to impale the prisoner almost provoked a rebellion among his men. Rubín has shown that both sides were guilty of barbaric and inhuman treatment and that there were men on both sides who were unworthy to represent any cause. Still, the fanaticism and superstition of the Cristeros

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[50] El hombre que ponia huevos, op. cit., p. 104.

[51] Ibid., p. 94.

is more striking than the relatively moderate manner in which the government soldiers prosecuted their mission.

Manuel Pedro González has written a chapter on the Cristero novel, in which he compares it to other novels with the Revolution as their setting. This novel is different from other novels of the same theme, as González points out, in that the woman is frequently the principal character and the theme of love appears.[52] The important role which women played in the revolt explains this fact. Cristero novelists and their works as mentioned by Gonzalez are not numerous.[53] Ramírez and Robles represent the counter revolution and defend the Cristero cause. Guadalupe de Anda and Robles Castillo are impartial and denounce the atrocities of both sides. Goytortúa Santos mentions only the Cristeros in his novel, but by their actions he allows them to betray their implacable ferocity and intolerance.

To this list of Cristero novels must be added Ramón Rubín's La sombra del techincuagüe. This novel has as its setting the years of that rebellion and the sector of western Mexico in which the bitterest fighting took place. It is, however, essentially concerned with the amorous adventures

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[52]González, op. cit., "La novela cristera," pp. 296-311.

[53]David G. Ramirez (Hector, 1930); Fernando Robles (La virgen de los cristeros, 1934); El amor es asi, 1935; El santo que asesiono, 1936); José Guadalupe de Anda (Los cristeros, 1937; Los bragados, 1942; Juan del riel, 1943); Aurelio Robles Castillo (¡Ay, Jalisco...no te rajes!, 1938); and Jesús Goytortúa (Pensativa, 1945). Ibid., pp. 298-310.

of Gabriel Arana and the widow Chabela, so that the historical theme is subordinated to the romantic narrative. In the preface to the novel, Rubín alerts the reader to the fact that the novel may be read in four different ways. The odd numbered chapters can be read in sequence, disregarding the even, and a traditional plot-centered novel will be the result. The even numbered chapters can be read in the same manner, illustrating what the author calls a novel of "conflicto insinuado"; that is, a narration of seemingly disconnected events with a unifying theme which the reader will discover. The chapters can be read through in uninterrupted sequence as an anecdotal novel, rich in detail. Finally, the separate chapters can be read independently as short stories. The odd numbered chapters alone provide the story of Gabrial Arana and his illicit relationships with Chabela, resulting in imprisonment for both. The even numbered chapters are primarily concerned with Carolina, the wife of Arana, and with the religious question. Chapters six, eight, and ten specifically narrate details of the Cristero rebellion. Chapter ten, "Las batallas de la cruz," is a short story in which the positions of both the federal government and the Church in regard to the Cristero rebellion come under the author's careful scrutiny.[54]

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[54]Though chapter three belongs to the story of Gabriel and Chabela, the setting of the chapter is a clandestine meeting of upper-class families during the revolt for the purpose of hearing mass. This chapter, therefore, should be read in order to complete the Cristero division.

The first chapter of this Cristero division of the novel begins during the period of the Reform. Don Amiel, the father of Carolina, had settled on a tract of land at Copales, land which the government had expropriated from the Church under the provisions of the Constitution of 1857. He was faced by economic disaster, however, because the Church threatened excommunication for anyone who should purchase his products. In the 1870's, when there appeared to be some prospect of relief, the Ceboruco volcano erupted, after four hundred years of lying dormant. This phenomenon had the appearance of an act of God and of divine judgement upon the families which had settled on Church lands. Volcanic ash, lava and poisonous gases threatened the existence of both vegetation and animal life. Especially the women were fearful of the displeasure of God and, unaided by the men, they made daily pilgrimages on foot to Ahuacatlán to help build a new temple in order to expiate their crimes against the Church. Don Amiel was soon able to cultivate again the ranch at Copales and to recover from the economic ruin which had threatened him. The author comments on this recovery in relation to activity of the women: "Tal vez gracias a las influencias metafísicas que la madre lograse con su participación en esta albañilesca hazaña...."[55] Still, the family was continually frustrated in its battle with adverse fortune.

Carolina was born on the day that Ceboruca erupted. As a small child, she went with her mother daily to Ahuacatlán

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[55] La sombra del techincuagüe, op. cit., p. 34.

to work on the rebuilding of the temple. In explaining the psychological impact that this experience had on the child, the author says, "...la criatura pudo sentirse contagiada del impetuoso e incompresible llanto con que la señora y sus cofrades celebraron, cierto día, el primer repique de campanas en la iglesia recién abierta al culto."[56] The anxiety of the family over its economic difficulties and this "impetuoso e incompresible llanto" of the mother to which Carolina was exposed during her childhood combined to produce in her the mentality of a martyr. The focus of the last twenty pages of the chapter is this maturing psychological complex in Carolina and its effect both on the man she was to marry and on their child Gabrielito.

At the turn of the century, Gabriel Arana and Carolina were married. Even before their courtship had ended, Carolina's plaintive and melancholy behavior had begun to irritate him. After their marriage, she lamented her inferior position and the fact that she had brought nothing to the union but debts. The word "money" brought from her violent reactions, which the author describes thus: "Y en el acto sobrevenía la eclosión del llanto, haciéndola revolcarse presa de indescriptible tortura moral sobre la cama y hasta en el suelo."[57] After the husband learned how to avoid these outbursts, she inverted their roles, claiming for herself a position of superiority. She had discovered an obscure marquis

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., p. 38.

in her ancestry, and she now reproached her husband bitterly both for the common origins of his family and for the fact that his inherited wealth assumed no merit on his part.

Carolina's lachrymose conduct found further support in her apparent barrenness. It was six years before the birth of a son removed this pretext. Because she then feared losing this only child, her affection for him grew into an uncontrollable passion. The boy's response was equally extreme and abnormal. For her zealous and unrelenting care of him, Carolina became to her son both saint and martyr, a role which she willingly assumed. All the difficulties and daily frustrations which she experienced in rearing the child she blamed on the father. The hostility of the child toward his father and the reverence with which he regarded his mother developed in him what the author calls an Oedipus complex. The father's efforts to rectify the situation were in vain. Finally, he left home to join the Revolution which was daily gaining momentum.

After a brief period of service, Gabriel returned home. Carolina reproached him for abandoning the family in search of adventure, once again strengthening her image of martyr in the eyes of her son and of the community. Gabriel endured her continued extreme behavior for another few years and then in a final act of rebellion turned his interests to the newly widowed Chabela. When Carolina discovered her husband's amorous attraction toward Chabela, she publicly announced that the only reason she did not leave her husband and

even commit suicide was that she feared God and refused to abandon her son to the care of a libertine father. Gabriel's infidelity brought to her a new paroxysm of pleasure.

During the mid twenties at the outbreak of the Cristero revolt, the only religious services in Ahuacatlán were conducted by a fugitive priest in the house of Don Crispín, who extended invitations to the upper class families of the community. At one of these clandestine meetings, Gabriel thought to surprise and seduce Chabela in one of the unlighted corridors. Ironically, it was he who was the victim of the darkness, for his willing partner was a middle aged and extremely pious maiden friend of his wife. As Gabriel's involvement with Chabela became public knowledge, a man whom the author describes as an implacable ironist, Chueco Pompa, set out to ridicule the pair by arranging some religious farces containing sarcasm and insinuations openly directed at them. Carolina again was publicly enraged and this time announced her intention to commit suicide. The pharmacist gave her a purgative instead of the poison which she had ordered, at the request of Chueco Pompa. The son Gabrielito then forced his mother's tormentor at gun point to drink the mixture himself. Fearing ridicule more than death, he spat the medicine into the face of the enraged boy, who killed him instantly.

Through the first half of the book, Rubín has presented the psychological formation of Carolina as a case study in hypocrisy and religious fanaticism, with insinuations

of an abnormal relationship between mother and son, a relationship which he describes as, "...una situación que, además de profundamente necia y cursi, era aberrativa y dañina."[58] Chapter six, "El derecho de ser mala," gives in less detail the family background of Chabela, with an explanation, by comparison almost a justification, of her psychological development as an evil woman. Chabela's unwed mother became the mistress of Juan Penas, a quarrelsome drunkard. Both child and mother were in daily peril of being cruelly beaten. As the girl matured, she was forced to flee daily from her stepfather's fervent caresses. Chabela developed a bitter resentment for him. She began to look for opportunity to kill him with a rude implement which she concealed in her dress, but was unsuccessful. The father's continued cruel treatment of the mother and his more vigorous pursuit of the girl changed her resentment and repulsion into an obsessive hatred.

Juan Pena's death freed Chabela from this oppressive worry. However, the mother continued her grossly immoral life and soon her example had destroyed all of Chabel'a remaining illusions of virtue and moral responsibility. Rubín summarizes briefly both her character and the destiny which she projected for herself:

> Además, se trataba de una mocita aturdida, muy afecta al borinche y al baile, y con unas bastardas ilusiones de mujer fatal en la cabeza. Soñaba en lujos y en viajes, en hazañas de gran cocota y con intrigas de hombres... Y había pensado en la ciudad como el mejor escenario para representar tan elevados papeles.[59]

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[58] Ibid., p. 45.

[59] Ibid., p. 135.

She rejected opportunities to marry or to become mistress to any man in her home community. Her ardent desire was a romantic flight to the capital city with a lover, where she would embark upon a career of adventure and intrigue. Chabela was completely lacking in romantic sentiment and abhorred the men who desired her as a woman. She had gone to Ahuacatlán with Silverio, a well paid ranch foreman, because he represented her best opportunity to realize her dream. After a brief marriage, she killed him with the implement she had hoped to use on her step-father. Gabriel, the employer of the dead husband, then offered her his protection. Their brief and scandalous affair resulted in Gabrielito's killing Chueco Pompa, the implacable ironist, in defense of his mother. Gabriel took Chabela to one of his distant ranches for her safety. There she discovered that he was on the brink of economic ruin and his advances and promises of fidelity became repulsive to her.

In chapter eight, both Gabrielito and Chabela are in prison. He, for killing Chueco Pompa; and she, because one of her lovers had discovered the animal goad with which she was going to kill him and had denounced her to the authorities. She gains admittance to his cell and, after submitting to him, warns him that she is tired of paying alone, threatening to falsely implicate his father in her crime. A notorious woman killer, El Topo, the third important prisoner, had failed in his attempts to seduce Chabela and was bitterly envious of Gabrielito's success.

In this prison setting, Rubín takes the opportunity to comment on the lack of justice during the perilous years of the Revolution:

> Catorce delincuentes había en aquella ocasión dentro de la cárcel pueblerina. La mayor parte eran infelices acusados de alguna ratería sin importancia, y que se pudrían allí olvidados de la justicia. Ordinariamente, estos purgaban condenas más feroces que los asesinos encerrados con ellos; pues, siendo menos importantes, los de afuera dejaban muy pronto de ocuparse de sus asuntos.[60]

In the preceding chapter he had remarked that both judges and officials were reluctant to prosecute criminals who might later return as political or revolutionary leaders and seek vengeance.[61] In chapter nine, as Gabriel confesses to killing an unknown assailant in self-defense, his dialogue with the judge, who had been his friend, provides further insight into the uncertainty of justice during a time of political instability. Upon being told that he is to be detained for further investigation, Gabriel remarks: "A'i que la justicia diga." The judge's reply disconcerts him: "No debía atenderse demasiado a ella..., " and Gabriel asks: "¡¿Es juez y no cree en la justicia!?" To which the judge replies bitterly: "En veces, ni en la divina... ¡Cuántimenos en la humana!"[62]

In chapter ten, "Las batallas de la cruz," the Cristero revolt becomes the focus of the novel instead of just the background for a romantic narrative. There is also a

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[60] Ibid., p. 183.

[61] Ibid., p. 144.

[62] Ibid., pp. 235-36.

resolution of the two plots which have been related in alternating chapters. Lieutenant Colonel Rodiles Pulido was sent by the government to protect the strongly Catholic town of Ahuacatlán from roving bands of Cristeros. He was an outspoken anticlerical officer and delighted in ringing the church bells to announce the arrival of his troops. He then forced the people into the town square to hear his political harangue. The attitude of this officer is markedly different from that displayed by the federal officers and troops in "Después de la tracatera." It is probable that this final chapter of the novel is an account of the post-Cristero rebellion years, possibly 1931 or later. Even after the government and the Church had settled their differences officially in 1929, the governors of the states and the provincial political leaders retained their prejudices and continued to prosecute Calles' anticlerical laws vigorously. During the early thirites, there was a bitter persecution of the Church, especially in the West, with no desire for confiliation. Rodiles' speech is an excellent example of the demagoguery employed by these violently anticlerical forces as they denounced what he called the "...hez hedioda y crapulosa del malvado clericalismo...."[63]

> ¡Compatriotas! ¡Mexicanos!: traigo el mando de este escuadrón y órdenes del Supremo Gobierno para protegerlos a ustedes contra la vandálica amenaza de la tenebrosa hidra del oscurantismo religioso y la pérfida reacción clerical; contra esa babeante bestia ensotanada que ahoy, como ayer y como antier y como toda la vida, traiciona

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[63] Ibid., p. 242.

> repulsivamente a nuestro pueblo y a nuestra patria y, afilando sus colmillos de hiena nefasta, se lanza a disputarnos las gloriosas conquistas de la Revolución con gavillas de fanáticos retrógrados e idólatras sin cacumen, que roban, asesinan y se desviven por ver a nuestra amada patria agonizando otra vez en las ensangrantadas manos de otra nueva medieval Inquisición....[64]

The adobe cross upon which the officer was standing while delivering his speech began to weaken under the unaccustomed weight. One of its arms broke and Rodiles plummeted to the ground in disgrace. The crowd was gripped with superstitious terror, believing that they had witnessed an act of Divine displeasure. Rodiles mounted the cross again and continued his speech. The other arm broke. Rubín pauses to give the legend of the cross and its meaning to the town in order to underscore the superstitious character of the people. The officer noted the effect on the people of the successive incidents and resolved to restore the adobe cross and to continue to use it as a platform for his speeches. He was caught in the ironic position of fulfilling two contradictory objectives: "...la lucha por desarraigar de la conciencia cívica los seculares prejuicios religiosos que castraban, a su entender, la evolución del pueblo hacia una vida más digna y de mayor progreso...," and "...el afán de reconstruir sólidamente la derruída cruz de la Alameda para limpiar de la mancha del incidente original a su resentida dignidad y exuberante amor propio."[65] The remainder of the chapter is

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[64] Ibid., p. 241.

[65] Ibid., p. 248.

concerned with the assaults of the Cristeros on their beloved cross and the heroic defense by the federal troops of the symbol which they had come to destroy. Mysterious hands repeatedly tore down the cross at night, which the federal soldiers had restored by day. A squadron undertook a round the clock vigil. A band of Cristeros descended on the town, inflicted serious losses on the federal soldiers, and set the prisoners free. But they failed to destroy the cross. So proud was Rodiles of his heroic defense of the cross, that he sent a melodramatic letter to his headquarters with a picture of himself wounded in the battle. His superiors could not understand the meaning of his action and ordered his recall.

The ex-sacristan who commanded the Cristeros enlisted Gabrielito and two other prisoners to lead a renewed attack. Gabriel, the father, was among them. The prisoner El Topo escaped from the rebels and returned to the federal army with their plans for attack. He asked for a front line position at the point where Gabrielito was to appear in order to avenge his humiliation in the prison before Chabela. As Gabrielito approached the railroad center where he was to fight, his father intercepted him, tied him safely and assumed his battle position. El Topo fired into the head of the man he thought to be Gabrielito while breathing a prayer that he might not miss. Chabela, who had followed Gabrielito, answered his cry and untied him. She experienced a strange affection for him as she told him that she was carrying his child. He was so

obsessed with his mission that he hardly heard her. When they saw Gabriel lying dead and El Topo gloating over his presumed success, they approached and joined the crowd of observers. Using the same instrument with which Chabela had killed two men already, Gabrielito murdered the man who had slain his father. In the fracas, El Topo's bullet struck Chabela. Her tender dying whispers were lost to Gabrielito who withdrew to a boxcar and took up his position in the battle. The Cristeros defeated the federal troops and pulled down the cross, though at great cost in both lives and property.

The final scene is one of cruelty and senseless destruction over what the author regards as a transitory symbol. There is no real victory for either side. The absurdity and the irony of the moment are painfully evident. The government action has served only to consolidate the religiosity of the Cristeros, and the Cristeros have succeeded only in inverting to shame and disgrace their sacred cause. Rubín reveals the falseness of their religious piety and attempts to show that it is based on ignorance and superstition. This false piety under stress expresses itself in ways that are antithetical to the spirit of true Christianity.

In none of the Cristeros is there any evidence of sincere religious sentiment. The ex-sacristan leader of the rebels is indistinguishable from a typical revolutionary bandit. He is cruel and unprincipled. After raiding the town, he stops

long enough to kill his prisoners before making preparations to renew the fight. Chabela only follows into the battle the man whose child she is carrying. Gabrielito, who has already murdered one man, chooses to join the Christeros because of a blind, misguided zeal. The only man he kills in the encounter is his personal enemy, El Topo, and he shows no charity at all for the dying woman who has saved his life. The father's decision to join the Cristeros, the author says, is not due to any religious conviction either:

> ...Y no tanto porque el tema y la substancia del partidarismo beligerente que vibraba en ella respondiesen a sus particulares devociones, como porque se antojaba consolador para un derrotado espiritual de su calaña encontrar una causa idealizada cualquier tras de cuya euforia combativa se hundiese el oprobio de sus reiterados fracasos.[66]

All of them carry into battle their personal motivations and frustrations.

Rodiles Pulido represents the extreme liberal and anti-clerical attitude of political and military leaders in western Mexico during the rebellion. It was their intent to completely eradicate the religious beliefs and traditions of the people in order to achieve what Pulido called, "...la evolución del pueblo hacia una vida más digna y de mayor progreso."[67] Their position in the conflict was quite as untenable as that of the Cristeros.

The conclusion of the novel reveals that the religious question in Mexico remains unsolved. The clergy emerges from

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[66] Ibid., p. 265.

[67] Ibid., p. 248.

the bitter fight with wounds that are less than fatal and with only its adobe crosses to rebuild. Though its economic and political powers have been curbed temporarily, the Church remains a force to be reckoned with. The upper class women, represented by Carolina, are shown to be the principal support of the Church. Without their active participation, meaningful resistance to the decrees of the government would not have materialized. Rubín mercilessly exposes the mock heroism and the immoral conduct of this class and displays a much more sympathetic attitude toward Gabriel and Chabela whom society has branded as unfit and criminal. The author abhors all violence, and especially does he condemn this violent priest-led rebellion. The novel is clearly an assault on the clergy as one of the traditional privileged classes of Mexico which has survived the Revolution, using superstition, ignorance, and raw violence to protect its position of privilege.

Rubín's fiction on the theme of the Revolution is fragmentary. Of the three privileged classes: the hacendado, the military, and the clergy, only the last comes under close scrutiny. He points out the fact that the Church has survived another major threat to its privileges and its power. The conflict between hacendado and peasant is not outstanding in these pages, though the author has identified this as the primary cause of the Revolution. In "La venganza de Cándido," he indicates that some land was parceled out to lower class families, but that agrarian reform failed to abolish the traditional

classes of *hacendado* and peasant which existed before hostilities began. There is further reflection on this problem in *La loca*, as the author describes one of the characters, don Pancras, and the family of *hacendados* from which he came:

> Procedía de una familia de hacendados. Pero de estos hacendados norteños de extraña raíz liberal que, cuando vino la Revolución, organizaron una gavilla con sus propios espoliques incorporándose a ella con un grado de generales que los mismos les ortorgasen. Así lograban preservar sus intereses y seguían siendo en sus pueblos los caciques. Aungue tuvieron que hacer concesiones a algunos de sus peones convirtiéndoles en pobres medieros, tan desamparados y explotados como lo estuveron antes, pero acaso bien pagados con el halago del honor de poder tratar de *tú* al que otrora fuese *senor amo*.[68]

The military as a privileged class is not the subject of any of these narratives. The author does, however, relate the story of one of the last great military uprisings in "La mula de las talegas," with the outcome that the revolt was suppressed.

Rubín's view of the Revolution is extremely pessimistic. He expresses the view that the disposition toward senseless violence is the defect in the psychology of the Mexican that brought on the conflict:

> L'único defeuto de la gente de por aquí es que se matan por la menor cosa. Si es uno malo, lo matan por malo; si es rigular, por rigular; y si güeno, pos por gueno.... Eso jué lo que nos trujo la mentada Revolución.[69]

This viewpoint had been expressed by Azuela in *Los de abajo*: "...la psicologia de nuestra raza, condensada en dos palabras: robar, matar!"[70] This pessimism is further expressed in the view that the underdogs, especially the Indian and the *campesino*,

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[68]Ramón Rubín, *La loca* (Guadalajara: By the author, 1950), p. 106.

[69]*La canoa perdida*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[70]Azuela, *Los de abajo*, *op. cit.*

were only pawns in the conflict and that they failed to receive substantial benefits from the Revolution. In "El yaqui," the indigenous man of Mexico is shown to be still a vagabond and the object of contined cruelties.

At mid-century, Rubín, in assessing the effect of the Revolution on the campesino, sees the Revolution under the control of the capitalistic class:

> La Revolución rusa debió ser de un origen demasiado científico y calculado que la deshumanizó. Por contraste, la nuestra túvolo excusivamente emotivo y sentimental. Y ahora estaba convirtiéndose en una tierna colombina menopáusica, cuyos sentimientos cursilones principiaban a dejarse impresionar por los arrullos pertinaces del gotoso pierrot espolonudo que durante tantos años de su lozana juventud la cortejara en vano: el capitalismo.[71]

Only a narrow segment of the working class, he says, has been benefited by trade unionism. The peasant farmer, the fisherman, and the mariner earn very meager wages compared to those of the electricians and the railroaders:

> Los electristas y los ferrocarrileros de Ocotlán eran, como en todo el país, los niños mimados de la Revolución. Algo así como el traje dominguero conque aquella avenjentada matrona se ataviaba cuando tenía que lucir esplendente y dichosa en los desfiles del primero de mayo y del veinte de noviembre. Y no se la debía culpar a ella de que, al paso de los años, no sintiera ya el mismo afecto maternal hacia los campesinos, los marineros y los pescadores.... Madre prolífica, no le alcanzó el tiempo para adiestrar a todos y cada uno de sus retoños en la usanza de los zapatos nuevos que repartiera con encomiable prodigalidad. Y asaltáronla las flaquezas y los achaques de la madurez mucho antes de que pudiese considerarlos bien preparados.[72]

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[71] La canoa perdida, op. cit., p. 73.

[72] Ibid., pp. 73-4.

He continues the metaphor of "Revolución madre" and takes up the cry of Mexicans during the days of Porfirio Díaz, that "Mexico /was/ mother of foreigners and the stepmother to Mexicans."[73]

> Ansiosa y tan sólo de mantener su prestigio de guapa y saludable ante el tozudo pretendiente, y sin tiempo para adecentar a toda su numerosa prole, preferia tomar de la mano a los más atildaditos, pavoneándose orgullosa de ellos para hacérselos aceptar al asiduo, y negar a los lerdos y a los retrasados que reventaran sus pantaloncitos de seda al pretender encajárselos. De suerte que éstos se quedaron gimiendo su desamparo, en tanto que los vástagos precoces que supieran aprovechar las ventajas de sus enseñanzas se disputaban con los plañideros y seráficos magnates, desdeñados ayer y estimulados ahora, el privilegio de merecer todo el amparo de sus maternales enaguas.
>
> Probablemente, esto sea transitorio; y esa frágil y ya madura Revolución que va naufragando en el piélago de todas las ambiciones, acabe creando nuevos poderosos o cediéndoles a los de abolengo la tutela de hasta los más presentables de sus vastagos para que los hundan en la miseria general.[74]

These fragmentary accounts of the Revolution in western Mexico provide some engaging scenes of rural life during the twenties. They are much more important, however, for the deep pessimism and disillusionment which they reflect -- characteristics which these works share with other fiction of the post-Revolution period. The author is obviously concerned about the failure of the Revolution to bring about constructive changes in the social structure of the nation. The persistence of the Indian problem, the continued rivalry between peasant and hacendado, the revival of the capitalistic classes of the

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[73] Strode, op. cit., p. 213.

[74] La canoa perdida, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

Díaz regime, and the stedfast position of the Church in national politics are all presented by the author as evidences of a continued, historical decline in Mexican civilization.

CHAPTER VII

RUBIN'S EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON MODERN MEXICO

Almost all of Ramón Rubín's writings treat some aspect of an anti-Western civilization theme. There is both a logical and an historical progression of these major themes in Rubín's writings, from the Indian, to the Revolution of 1910, to what he describes as the decline of technologically centered life in the Western world, particularly in the twentieth century. For nearly four hundred and fifty years Mexico has had a part in that style of life which we call Western civilization. Not until the accession of Porfioio Díaz to the presidency, however, was Mexico brought into the modern economic world. It is important to understand the principal social, economic, and political developments since that time in order to appreciate fully Rubín's assessment of Mexico's position in the world today and his rejection of certain aspects Western civilization, especially the impact of technology on the modern Mexico.

Foreign interventions and a long succession of reforms and pronouncements came to a halt upon the assumption of power by Díaz on May 5, 1877. There had been about forty different

administrations since Mexico achieved her independence. For the most part, each had come into power by violence and had given way only to superior military might. The Constitution of 1857 and the laws of Juarez had been beaten down, and Mexico found itself with a dictator, who, as Simpson remarks, was the most efficient despot ever seen in the Western Hemisphere.[1] Díaz surrounded himself with a brilliant young group of professionals to whom has been applied the epithet *los cientificos*. Under the influence of Positivism,[2] this group attempted to apply rational analysis to Mexico's problems. They held that the future of Mexico depended on the rebuilding of her economic base. Transportation, domestic manufactures, mining, agriculture, and a stable currency -- all hallmarks of a thriving capitalistic economy -- were their principal concerns. To achieve these goals, Mexico needed foreign capital, for a long period of political turbulence had drained the national treasury. To progress, they also realized that Mexico must have peace, which to them implied that a dictatorial or strongly centralized form of government was necessary. Díaz's iron control over the lawmakers and the Supreme Court and his success in conciliating both the army and the Church with bread and favors made possible this centralization of power. His private army, the *bravi*, and a national police force, the

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[1]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

[2]For a discussion of Positivism in Mexico, read Leopolodo Zea's *El positivismo en México* (Mexico, 1942).

rurales, kept his political enemies routed and protected foreign economic interests from striking workmen and noisy and troublesome opponents.

The economic boom which Mexico experienced under the program of the los científicos brought national revenues to an all-time high. North American miners revived the sleeping mining industry; and silver, gold, copper, lead, and zinc poured into markets in the United States. With the aid of both European and United States capital, native agricultural products such as coffee, sugar, bananas, and sisal hemp also found waiting markets abroad. The oil and textile industries grew, railroad mileage showed a corresponding increase, and the modern harbor of Vera Cruz was constructed. Foreign obligations were satisfied and the budget was balanced and reserves created. Mexico found respect in foreign capitals, negotiated her differences with the United States, and became a respected partner in the Pan American Union.

The regime of Díaz was considered abroad to be a time of peace and plenty, but this peace and material abundance was reserved for the privileged. The capitalistic classes -- the creole aristocracy, the Church, and the foreigner -- were the real beneficiaries. To the foreigner especially the government offered sweeping concessions and official protection, for the new order was made possible only by the influx of technical knowledge and capital from abroad. Under Díaz, Mexico became essentially a colony of foreign capitalism. By 1910, investments

of United States-owned firms reached a billion dollars, more than the capital stock owned by all the Mexicans themselves.[3]

With all the undeniable economic and cultural advancements which it achieves, Diaz' plan for progress cost Mexico dearly. The feudal estate was revived, with a large segment of the Indian population reverting to serfdom. By 1910, a total of 96.9% of the rural heads of families owned no real property and 80% of the population was illiterate.[4] The masses were shorn of their liberty and their poverty was greater than when Díaz and his advisors came into power.

The forgotten masses toppled their oppressive masters. The Revolution of 1910 brought to an end the reign of progress under Positivism in Mexico. The early governments of the Revolution attempted agrarian reform and the curtailing of foreign investments, but with little success. Álvaro Obregón was among the first to bring tangible benefits to the masses. Under his Secretary of Education, José Vasconcelos, great support was given to mass education. Plutarcho Calles continued his Revolutionary reforms. Under him, organized labor gained a strong voice in government, agrarian reforms were accelerated, and real progress was made in irrigation, land-use, and construction projects. Near the end of his administration, however, the landowner-clergy-foreigner complex of Díaz' day

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[3]Strode, op. cit., p. 212.

[4]"Mexico," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XV, p. 393.

began to reappear. Labor racketeers, provincial bosses, and generals were forming a new capitalist class. The problems of foreign oil interests and land holdings were also prominent during this period.

General Lázaro Cárdenas began his term with a plan to counteract the effects of the Great Depression and to institute more effective programs of reform. This plan included a renewed agrarian program, the protection of the rights of labor, efforts to step up the education program, and a determination to achieve true economic independence for the nation. He built irrigation projects, dams, and thousands of schools. He organized peasant land use into larger and more efficient communal holdings. He worked hard for the small farmer and the Indian. Through the efforts of Cárdenas, the benefits of the Revolution were brought to the people, the underdogs, for whom it was initially fought.

Beginning with the presidency of Ávila Camacho in 1940, Mexico has entered a new era which Cline has called the Institutional Revolution. Since that time the Government has been centered largely on the middle rather than on the lower classes. There has been a shift away from the underdogs and the Indian for whom Cárdenas worked so tirelessly. A reappraisal of the economic and technical phases of the Cárdenas program brought about a slower tempo of social change and land distribution. Industrialization and increased production began to be emphasized. Increased wages, an abundance of consumer goods, and spiraling

statistics in nearly every branch of the economy all seemed to point to the fact that Mexico was beginning to take its place alongside the other highly industrialized nations of the Western world.[5] Though national income has risen sharply since 1940, according to Adams in 1960 more than 60% of the population were still poorly fed, clothed, and housed; and though increasing sums are being spent on education, 45% of Mexican children of school age were not attending school in that same year.[6] Modern industrialized Mexico has almost entirely abandoned the Indian.

The emphasis of the Institutional Revolution on industrialization and economic expansion meant that foreign capital was once again welcome, and there began an increasing influence of the United States in Mexican life. This new relationship is described by Adams:

> Never before in the long history of U. S. - Mexican relations has there been such a varied and intense interaction between the two countries. The close cooperation during World War II, the rapid tempo of U. S. investments, the remarkable influx of U. S. tourists into Mexico and of Mexican visitors to the United States, the annual migration of several hundred thousand Mexican agricultural workers to the United States, the exchange of students, technicians, and professors, and the increasing number of Mexicans who are becoming U. S. citizens, have made for a new type of relationship between the two countries.[7]

Since World War II in particular, Europe's share of the Mexican market has decreased sharply. According to Cline, for

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[5]Cline, op. cit., p. 34.

[6]Adams, op. cit., p. 343.

[7]Ibid., p. 286.

some time the United States has been the market for about three-fourths of Mexican exports and in return has furnished nearly four-fifths of its imports.[8]

Whether as a direct result of the influence of the United States on Mexico or whether as a concomitant of industrialization, or both, there have been significant changes in the cultural patterns of Mexico. There is strong reason to believe that the United States has exported to Mexico not only its technical knowledge and capital, but also distinctly North American ways of living. Adams has observed that the growth of a Mexican middle class that models itself after its northern counterpart is primarily responsible for these changes.[9] The cultural impact of the United States on Mexican life is most evident in the large cities. A Mexican anthropologist has analyzed the influence of the Unites States in Mexican cities as revealed by the newspapers of that country:

> About 50 per cent of the total number of pages in the newspaper indicate the dependence of both the newspaper and the readers on U. S. civilization for both information and direction of public opinion, concepts of life, family conduct, health, child-training, recreation, transportation, travel, writing, forms of graphic expression, individual and national economy, domestic, office and factory equipment, and finally, the direction of interest in other people's business.[10]

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[8]Cline, op. cit., p. 293.

[9]Adams, op. cit., p. 294.

[10]Julio de la Fuente, "La civilización 'pocha' de Mexico," Cambios Socio-Culturales en México: Acta Antropólogica, (Mexico, December, 1948), as quoted by Adams, op. cit., pp. 296-97.

The mighty wave of Americanisms, mostly related to improved standards of living, has also been taken to the rural areas by modern systems of transportation and communication. An annual influx of more than 500,000 tourists from this country penetrate even the remote villages and market places.[11] American style hotels and restaurants and all the goods and services necessary to support tourism are in evidence throughout the Republic. Almost that many braceros, coming principally from northern Mexico, have taken back with them new ideas, new techniques and the money to bring about profound changes in their traditional patterns of living.

The semi-colonial economic status of Mexico in relation to the United States has been of great concern to Mexican businessmen, especially small businessmen, as a threat to the integrity of their nation.[12] Intellectuals have expressed their concern over the negation of Mexican values, throughout her entire history, but especially during the post-Revolution period of transition.[13] Not a few contemporary novelists have been preoccupied with what Cline has called the "fluidity of values" in twentieth century Mexico.[14] Among them are Luis

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[11]Adams, op. cit., p. 295.

[12]Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Transformación, Las inversiones extranjeras directas an México (Mexico, 1955), as cited by Adams, op. cit., p. 303.

[13]Leopoldo Zea, La Cultura y el hombre de nuestros días (Mexico, 1959).

[14]Cline, op. cit., p. 127.

Spota in his Casi el paraíso and Carlos Fuentes in La región más transparente. Stuart Chase refers to Mexico's ". . . literate citizens, vibrating from east to west, from south to north, [who] suffer from acute inferiority complexes."[15]

Ramón Rubín's first published works reveal the author's preoccupation with the effect on the rural Mexican of his country's experiment with progress through industrialization, especially in post-Revolution times. It is evident in these rural scenes that the benefits of technology have not seeped down to the masses. On the contrary, the Indian and the campesino, as Rubín presents them, continue to live near the subsistence level, receive little or no education, and are confronted with disease, a high death rate, and general poverty. It is on the poverty of these rural dwellers and on their ignorance concerning the technology-centered life of the Western world that the author dwells.

In "Un robo fatal,"[16] the journey of an Indian couple into civilization ends in disaster. A brother of the man had convinced him that he should get work in a textile mill and enjoy the "grandezas sin cuento" of modern life. By Indian standards, the couple had not been poor. The author is careful to note that their wedding ceremony and festivities had been almost lavish. Their misery began only when they passed

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[15]Chase, op. cit., pp. 252-253.

[16]Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

the limits of their own world and moved into a life cycle which centered in technology and was motivated by money. After the couple was coldly rebuffed at the mill, the author speaks of their "grandiosa miseria." With neither money nor any means to earn a livelihood, they attempted to establish a temporary domicile along the highway. They claimed a stray donkey, built a primitive wooden plow, and gathered materials for a hut. When the man climbed a highline pole to take the wire for a fence, both he and his wife were victimized by a way of life which had been hostile to them from the outset of their journey. Local authorities were scandalized by the attempt of the now dead Indian couple to steal materials from the power line, calling them "dos ladrones terribles." An onlooking assistant voiced the author's intent, when he identified the two thieves instead as "la Ignorancia y la Miseria."

In the same collection, the author tells the story of a mother and her only son who attempted to leave their simple existence behind and raise themselves to what they had been led to believe was a superior, mechanistic way of life. The son found work at an iron and zinc mine, where he was killed under tragic circumstances. The author summarizes the plight of the bereaved mother: "Los plácidos proyectos de unos años de ventura se los llevó el aire, porque eran ilusiones de pobre y éstas nunca enráizan bien en el árido huerto de la sociedad humana."[17] This rural pair is symbolic of the peasant masses

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[17] "Los magueyes de Xolox," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

whose labor supports Mexico's industrial economy, and to whom, according to the author, national prosperity has brought tragedy.

Nearly all of Rubín's fiction has its setting in rural Mexico and exceptions to general poverty are rare. Sóstenes Bastidas[18] is a mestizo who lived in another of those remote places which the author describes as "un lugarejo de campesinos pobres." As he viewed the body of his oldest son, he recounted the loss of four of his seven children, all of whom had died of malnutrition and for the lack of medicine and proper medical care. A brief period of prosperity only heightens Bastidas' subsequent destitute condition and the tragic loss of his children.

In these rural settings for his stories, Rubín depicts not a condition of progress and prosperity, but one of extreme poverty. Ixpalino is described as a typical town in the author's native state of Sinaloa:

> Su edificación y ritmo de vida son tan miserables como los de cualquier otro pueblo de la parte central del Estado. Los vecinos viven, casi exclusivamente, del labrantío de unas milpas que hay en la ribera y se arruinan cada vez que se prolongan demasiado las secas, o, por llover con exceso, se desborda el río e inunda los maizales.[19]

Pueblo Viejo too is relatively untouched by the surge of economic activity in evidence in the larger cities:

> El aspecto de Pueblo Viejo no desdice en nada su nombre. El camino que une las principales ciudades de

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[18]"El tesoro de don Sóstenes," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

[19]"Los músicos de Ixpalino," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

> la costa lo olvidó muchas leguas allá...con sus pobres callejas empedradas, su humilde y mustia plazoleta hundida al fondo de un repecho donde se yergue la iglesia, sus tejados patinosos y la polilla secular de sus comercios, que huelen a queso rancio y a vaqueta mal curtida.[20]

Bajio is one of the innumerable settlements that dot Mexico's landscape. Here Mexico's poor exist in what the author describes as an "ínfimo y ruinoso conjunto de chozas de abodes."[21] The Indian community of Pahuerachic is equally miserable: "La componen una serie de chozas miserables y sucias, hechas las unas de abodes y las otras de enramada, que se refugian en un repliegue de los cerros, no muy lejos de San José Baquiachic."[22]

Education for the rural Mexican has been the boast of successive administrations since the twenties, but Rubín's description of a school house midway between Mazatlán and San Ignacio, Sinaloa, reveals a condition not reflected in official government reports:

> Al fondo de un corral con cerca de estacas, alambre y cardones, y al que dan sombra y color unos platanares de Hojas temblorasas, se yerque una casucha magra, de tejado viejo y paredes desconchadas que pudorosamente cubre el espléndido follaje de una bugambilia.
>
> De su interior, que es la escuela del pueblito, sale esta mañana con la cadencia monorrítmica de un reloj de pared, la voz de los párvulos que cantan la tabla de sumar. Un pizarrón, una pequeña mesa, una silla, dos mapas, cuatro bancos y un puntero amueblan el local. Sobre esos bancos permanecen sentados los vientiocho elumnos, sucios, mocosos, medio encuerados, con una libreta y dos libros tan astrosos que parecen haber dado servicio a varias generaciones, y un lapicero mal punteado....[23]

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[20]"El tonto de Pueblo Viejo," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

[21]"La madre de Angelito," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

[22]"Amores de un tarahumara," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

[23]"Por las dos leyes," Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

No longer does the school teacher have the enthusiasm of the hundreds of zealots who boldly attacked ignorance during the era of Cárdenas and Vasconcelos:

> Sentada ante la mesa los vigila Teresita, la maestra, una joven que a pesar de sus veinte años se siente ya agobiada por la monotonía de la escuela.[24]

Vast sums of money are allocated annually for education, but efforts in the rural areas have been woefully inadequate, according to the author.

Not only does Rubín show the poor masses as largely untouched by Mexico's modern economic growth, but he attempts to demonstrate in the Indian and in the campesino a lack of capacity for participating in the capitalistic system and for benefiting by the progress which industry and the free flow of money have brought to that country. As Ramos says of the Indian, "Su 'egipticismo' lo hace incompatible con una civilización cuya ley es devenir."[25] This idea was first illustrated by Rubin in "El tesoro de don Sóstenes."[26] Sóstenes Bastidas found a cache of gold, which had been hidden by bandits. His brief experience with money had a dreamlike quality, for, though he spent a paltry sum on household and personal items, he showed himself incapable of envisioning what money could do to elevate him from his poverty. He squandered several hundred dollars in gold on an elegant mount and trappings, liquor,

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[24] Ibid.

[25] El Perfil del hombre y la cultura en México (4th ed.; Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1963) p. 46.

[26] Cuentos del medio rural mexicano.

and a pistol, as well as on gifts to his friends. His main concern was to let all the world know "quien es Sóstenes Bastidas." Rubín's satire on capitalism contained in "El negocio de don Prodigos"[27] is his most eloquent expression about the campesino's lack of comprehension of the money system and free enterprise. When the commission on hoof and mouth disease had slaughtered the poor herds of these "ignorantes y débiles campesinos," they were left with only money to take the place of the animals. The concept of money and its purchasing power was entirely alien to them, and they were unable to rebuild their lives without their animals. The author explains this phenomenon:

> Cuando un campesino mexicano, que ha nacido y vivido pobre, se encuentra súbitamente con dinero, e imposibilitado de gastarlo en comprarse uno o varios animales...¿en qué lo invierte?
>
> No lo empleará en acrecentar sus siembras; ya que siendo estas un albur cuyo éxito depende de factores tan arbitrarios como el calor del sol y la intensidad de las lluvias, jamás arriesga en ellas cosa mejor que su mísero modo de vivir de todo el año y un poco de trabajo. Tampoco se halla tan acostumbrado a su jacal, que no echa nada mejor en falta. Ni lo gastará en vestir; puesto que ello no le está a su irrendenta condición de pobre. Y menos aún ha de atesorar el dinero; pues este es un hábito de gentes mezquinas, que nunca le ha permitido llegar a comprender su natural desordenado e imprevisor.
>
> No, nada de eso. Lo que hace con el dinero es delapidarlo.
>
> ¿En qúe?
>
> No en pasearse, por cierto, pues no tiene alma de turista y hasta le cohiben los 'fuereños'. Ni tampoco

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[27] Cuentos mestizos.

> en mujeres, porque ese extraño orgullo que le hierve dentro se sentiría afrentado, si tuviese que pagar por ellas. Hay solo tres cosas en que lo puede dilapidar: el vino, los juegos de azar y la compra de una pistola, que constituyen sus más implacables debilidades.[28]

Este rifle sanitario, which is an elaboration of this plot, tells the story of a single family which fell into economic ruin and moral degradation because of their inability to comprehend a society dominated by money.[29]

Not only is the campesino in Rubín's fiction unable to comprehend the meaning of progress and money; he is often victimized by them. In "Las cuatro cruces," civilization and progress are thrust upon the family of a charcoal maker and the outcome is catastrophic. Lauro's ten hard years of cutting timber in the wilds of Sinaloa have not brought any change in the living conditions of his family. The land remains unimproved, the herd of goats and the donkeys have not augmented in the least, the family dog still keeps a lonely vigil, and the opening to the hut remains without a door. Rubín says of the motive of Lauro for moving into that solitary region that "...al establecerse allí, toda su ambición fué el deseo de amparar en la acogedora soledad del páramo, la vergüenza insobluble de su ciclópea miseria. Y jamás de remediarla."[30] The social concept that hard work and frugality are the guarantees of wealth, the author remarks, has proven untrue. The

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[28] Ibid., pp. 103-4. [29] Rubin, op. cit.

[30] Tercer libro de cuentos mestizos, p. 53.

only wealth that the family possesses is four children, all happy and in good health.

The second division of the story is introduced with a commentary on progress by the narrator: "Por el mundo se mueve y se transforma y ese ímpetu ciego que impulsa a la humanidad sobre los carriles del progreso, no comprende ni respeta soledades ni vergüenzas."[31] A road under construction threatens the family's solitude. Four elegant riders approach the hut. After accepting a meagre but gracious hospitality, one of them asks: "¿Cómo es posible que vivan aquí, tan apartado?" To which Lauro replies tersely and with dignity, "Soy carbonero." The men announce that a canal is to pass nearby and with it will come an abundance of water that will transform the barren landscape into a verdant garden. They promise the astonished family "hasta luz y excusado inglés." The promise of water excites the imagination of the charcoal maker. The first inroad which progress makes into this primitive existence is when hope replaces what the narrator calls "la conformidad y el fatalismo que les sirvieron de soporte en la lucha contra la inclemencia."[32] The family now has a future and hope:

> Ahora existe una justificación para arriesgar, pues ha nacido la esperanza. Ya tienen un futuro. Ya pueden concebir y recrearse con una perspectiva generosa. Sufren aún; ¡pero ha de alumbrar un día![33]

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 57.

[33] Ibid., p. 58.

Many months pass by and the familiar drouth kills the tender sprouts of maize which Lauro has planted in hopes of water. But, remarks the narrator, "La esperanza es dura, y sostuvo el ánimo."[34] When at last the canal begins to bring water, hope appears to be justified. Of his flock of eleven goats, Lauro takes six to celebrate the advent of water. His emotion is described as "una mística alegría."

In the third division of the story, Rubín describes Lauro's unfortunate experience with progress: "Y ha llegado el infortunio, que parece ser el fiel reverso de la escasa moneda de la esperanza."[35] The land bordering the canal had taken on a strikingly different aspect. The field of maize and the family garden had brought the promised harvest, but another harvest followed. With the canal came pools of water which bred mosquitos. With the new prosperity came malaria. The family's rustic remedies proved of little value. Three children and finally the wife succumbed to the fever: "¡Que buen plantio de burdas cruces sembro el canal que trajo el agua!"[36] Fate returned to replace their short lived hope. The timber land which once had supported his family had become an uninhabitable swamp and Lauro and his oldest son were forced to abandon it.

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[34]Note this battle between resignation and hope which is the spiritual struggle which Lauro experiences as progress invades his solitude.

[35]Tercer libro de cuentos mestizos, p. 61.

[36]Ibid., p. 63.

Whenever Rubín pairs the indigenous people of Mexico with representatives of a technological society, he exalts the criteria of the primitive man and denounces what he terms the immoral methods and motives of civilized society. In "Los vampiros rabiosos,"[37] Rubín refers to the backward society of Cora Indians, who, he says, produce nothing to benefit the prosperity or the progress of the nation. The narrator assumes the role of a Mexican merchant through whom some North Americans communicate with the Coras. They are members of a Commission for the eradication of hoof and mouth disease. To accomplish their goal of destroying the herd of the Cora elder Maximiano, they spread infectious bacteria among the cattle with an airplane. The symptoms are so similar to those produced by the bite of the venerated vampire bat, that the Indians at first believe that their tribal gods are angry. The merchant's plan to gain twenty thousand pesos in a shady bargain with the Yankees fails, and he seeks vengeance by telling the Indians that he actually witnessed this seeding of bacteria, when he only suspects that it may have happened. The Commission then attempts to land with some Mexican soldiers to apply the law of the sanitary rifle to the cattle under suspicion, and the infuriated Indians rebel. The merchant is accused of having incited the Indians and of being responsible for the bloody riot and tells this story to the Mexican judge. The outcome is that the Yankees succeed in imposing their

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[37] El hombre que ponía huevos.

scheme on the Coras. The only prosperous man among the Indians, Don Maximiano, has his four hundred cows slaughtered and is forced to return to the primitive communal life of the Coras, from which North American ideas had elevated him. The airplane degenerates to the level of the primitive bat as a source of infection and superstition among the Indians and the senseless slaughter of cattle by the Yankees for ostensibly sanitary purposes is compared unfavorably with the religiously motivated sacrifice of cattle of the Coras in their pagan rites.

This complete destruction of the herd of Maximiano in the name of progress, Rubín says, illustrates a principle of capitalistic society, the exploitation by the strong of the weak:

> ...los únicos que aprovechan su laboriosidad y viven con desahogo a costa de ella son los mestizos y blancos que trafican con sus productos en la ciudad, en tanto que los cultivadores indígenas continúan tan míseros, palúdicos y mal alimentados como cuando no trabajan o lo hacían en comunidad y de acuerdo con sus normas primitivas.[38]

The axiom of what Rubín terms the capitalistic-Christian society, "Ayúdate, que yo te ayudaré,"[39] becomes justification for the strong as they overcome the weak. He attempts to show that progress and capitalism have been a failure among the indigenous people of Mexico to whom money as a measure of worth is relatively meaningless. He exposes and roundly condemns the expansionism of capitalism. It is his conclusion that in spite of their ignorance and superstition, the Coras

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[38] Ibid., pp. 154-55. [39] Ibid., p. 155.

and Maximiano had a concept of life that was far superior to that of the North Americans: "Faltos ya de argumentos, los gringos tuvieron que retirarse a deliberar...porque aquel viejo salvaje parecía tener un concepto, más cabal y sensato que el suyo, de la vida."[40]

In addition to the social aspects of the exploitation of Mexico by the forces of progress, in particular the United States, Rubín attacks the principles that underlie capitalistic society. Among these principles is the private ownership of property. In the epigraph with which he introduces the story "La jicotera," the author says: "Ciertos derechos consagrados tienen tan podridas las raíces como esos viejos árboles de los que no se entiende cómo hayan podido florecer."[41] In this story, there is a curious mixing of characters, both human and animal, in which the animals take on human traits. The jicotes are called the legitimate owners of the honey, for they have produced it by their toil. Cacho, a small boy, is attempting to outwit the insects and to steal their honey. His dog, Moro, Rubín says, is "...un perro comprensivo, casi humano," who is an unwilling accomplice in the theft. Cacho's rival in the enterprise is another small boy, Nicolás. It is a coyote which succeeds in outwitting the jicotes, but he is deprived of his booty by the superior force of the boys. While

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[40] Ibid., p. 158.

[41] Cuarto libro de cuentos mestizos, p. 115.

these two dispute possession of the honey, a woodcutter comes and takes it for himself, refusing even to share it with the boys. The narrator makes clear in the closing paragraphs that he is assailing the notion of private property as it is understood and practiced in the Western world. Cacho protests the loss of the honey, crying:

> ¡Ese panal es mío!
>
> Y allá lejos, desde el lado opuesto de la cumbre del cerro, tambien el otro ladrón, el coyote, interviene con su desconsuelo en la disputa, invocando para sí esa misma inútil propiedad que, bien lo sabe, constituye un principio sagrado e intocable de nuestra cristiana civilización. Parece que se oyera en los colgados de su lúgubre aullido:
>
> ¡¡Es miiiiiooooooo!!
>
> Los únicos que nada dicen ya son los jicotes, pues los pocos que quedaron andan perdidos en la noche, y si alguno de ellos osara invocar también ese magnífico derecho, correría peligro hasta su propia vida.[42]

The narrator concludes the story with the observation that the principle of private property is immoral because it is based on the ability of the strong to forcibly claim the property in dispute.

Closely related to the principle of private property is that of free enterprise. In "La competencia,"[43] an ice cream vendor kills another man in defense of his right to sell his products. While he is shouting advertisements and providing background music from a small radio in his cart, another Mexican, disappointed in an affair with an Anglo-Saxon woman,

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[42] Ibid., p. 132.

[43] El hombre que ponía huevos.

tries to attract the attention of the woman with his singing and with the music of a hired band. The vendor, annoyed at the interference, turns up the volume of his radio. The enraged singer destroys the radio with a pistol shot and the vendor mortally wounds him with his knife. The narrator presents this as civilized man exercising his right of free enterprise. Of this civilized man and his system he concludes: "Es un fanático de la libre empresa, y sabe que en la habilidad para competir ventajosamente radica una de las más eminentes virtudes del hombre de nuestra civilización."[44]

The fundamental difference between the indigenous cultures of Mexico and modern Mexican society as revealed in the works of Ramón Rubín is the emphasis of the former on the common good of the social organism as opposed to the importance attached to the individual in the latter. Group security for the Indian means that the rights and the will of the individual are always subordinate tothe determination of the group. So fundamental is this principle that a departure from it by either the community or an individual means certain and complete spiritual disintegration for the offending party. Man, even the mestizo, the author insists, is primarily a social creature. In his analysis of Gabriel Arana's motives for joining the Revolution, Rubín says:

> El hombre, entonces lo presentía, es, como la abeja y como la hormiga, un pobre animal social, y no una fiera solitaria esclava de sus primarios instintos. Y

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[44] Ibid., p. 133.

> cuando encuentra una causa, no importa su naturaleza ni su justicia con tal de que pueda idealizarse para evadir los páramos del egoismo, siente en ella el estímulo de una entusiasta responsabilidad social que le embriaga más y mejor que la ingestión del vino de todos los alambiques del mundo.[45]

Rubín attributes many of the evils of Western man to the fact that his values are individual- rather than group-centered. Inherent in an individual-centered economy, as he sees it, is greed, exploitation of one's fellow man, and violence. The ambition to possession of material wealth and to power in capitalistic Western civilization, he insists, is the path to self-destruction and is essentially irreligious and immoral: "La civilización tiene sus imperativos; y contra ellos, los razonamientos morales no valen una bicoca."[46]

La canoa perdida is a novel about Lake Chapala, Mexico's largest inland body of water, and the Lerma river basin. It was published at a time when federal dam and irrigation projects threatened the dessication of the lake and the extinction of numerous fishing villages on its perimeter. The author led a movement in Jalisco for the preservation of the lake. He argued that the projects underway would not only dry up the lake and so effect a critical shortage of water in the Guadalajara metropolitan area, but would also uproot hundreds of families dependent on it for their livelihood. What he considered an ill-advised plan in the name of progress was defeated, or at least temporarily halted.

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[45] La sombra del techincuagüe, pp. 265-66.

[46] La canoa perdida, p. 398.

Of equal importance with the description of the region and the author's impassioned defense of the lake is his aggressive refutation of the principles of what he terms "nuestra decantada civilización," with which he identified the threat to Chapala. Of particular importance is what he identifies as the emphasis in Western society on the individual and on the principles of private property and competition under the free enterprise system. A co-protagonist of the novel, together with the lake, is a mestizo boy Ramiro Fortuna. His itinerary along the shores of the lake in search of a lost boat is a pretext for the author to give detailed descriptions of the lake. It is also the occasion for him to relate the experiences of the boy as he attempts to emerge from his primitive existence into civilization through the possession of a boat and finds himself alone in the world. The gradual recession and threatened disappearance of the lake is paralleled by the descent of Ramiro into the valley of capitalistic society. The lake and the boy have common enemies: greed and its companion, violence.

Ramiro Fortuna was a homeless boy who worked for an old mestizo, Matías Doblado. With only primitive fishing and hunting methods and equipment, competition for even a mere subsistence was daily growing more bitter. As the boy grew, his ambitions grew. He wanted to marry a girl from a prosperous family, and her parents did not consider him a good prospective son-in-law. Ramiro had heard of the concept of the

"sacred home" and of the fundamental mission of civilized man to form a family, but he felt that society had made it nearly impossible for him to meet its requirements. It appeared that the poor could not hope to have an honorable home, and his desire to achieve this was ironically the beginning of his downfall:

> Acaso no hubiera sabido explicar Ramiro por qué nuestra organización social le atribuye méritos tan elevados a una función biológica simple, y que, al fin y al cabo, llenan instintivamente todos los animales, hasta las propias ratas....
>
> Sólo que, cuando un hombre decide meterse en esos berenjenales, lo primero que está obligado a calcular es la capacidad de su peculio para procurarle alimentación a la mujer elegida y a los hijos que ésta ha de regalarle. Y si, como en el caso particular de nuestro amigo, el interesado no devenga un salario que lo faculte para llenar tales menesteres, le valdría mucho más mostrarse prudente, meditando bien las cosas.[47]

Money was the first principle of society, and the acquisition of money was man's first duty, necessitating even the abandonment of morality:

> Una ambición que no reconoce ni repara en escrúpulos de conciencia impulsa al hombre de los tiempos modernos en la desatentada persecución de los méritos fundamentales de nuestro mundo: la opulencia y la fastuosidad propiciadas por el dinero.[48]

Though Matías Doblado considered Ramiro's plan to be hopeless, he decided to assist him: "No procedió a castrarlo despojándolo de su ambición, de esa ambición avasallante que parece ser la fuerza motriz que impulsa los engranes del progreso dentro de nuestra idílica civilización cristiana."[49] Thirty years of hard labor had been insufficient for Doblado to buy

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[47] Ibid., pp. 37-8.

[48] Ibid., pp. 26-7.

[49] Ibid., p. 42.

even a bed and a respectable change of clothing. The capitalistic axiom that work is the road to wealth had proven false: "Aquellos que vivieron atenidos a un trabajo personal esforzado y honesto, a duras penas llegaron a conseguir un acomodo precario, y que no siguieron sumergidos en la miseria misma de su punto de partida."[50]

Doblado secured for the boy a plot of land along the lake and fishing rights, but Ramiro knew that he would have to acquire a small fortune somewhere and purchase a boat, if he was to exercise these rights profitably. His brother was employed by the hydroelectric company, and, while he attended his sick child in Guadalajara, he arranged for Ramiro to take his place. He was to receive two hundred fifty pesos for three weeks' work, more than Matías Doblado had been able to save in thirty years. During this brief period of time, Ramiro learned many lessons about civilization. He learned that ambition and greed are the surest roads to success: "Lo imponía la ley bestial de la lucha por la vida en un mundo en donde la ambición y la codicia venían siendo los mejores caminos hacia el exito."[51] The exploitation of the weak, he learned, is a time-honored institution: "Este estira y afloja, esta despiadada ley de expoliar al semejante hasta donde su candidez y sus ultimos recursos nos lo permiten, es, después de todo, una de las instituciones más eminentes de nuestra sabia organización social;"[52] and that the system of free enterprise is both

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[50] Ibid., p. 43. [51] Ibid., p. 88. [52] Ibid., p. 241.

cruel and immoral: "Los exégetas de nuestra civilización han resuelto que consiste en eso el don más eminente de cuantos la sustentan: la libre competencia. Y quien osara desantenderlo, se verá sojuzgado y hundido en el escarnio y la ignominia."[53]

Ramiro was finally able to buy a boat. He decided to return to Las Tortugas and live near Matías Doblado. Though the boy was to become his competitor, Doblado appeared willing to help him. On the morning following the agreement, Ramiro's boat was missing. The old man offered the use of his boat so that the boy might look for the lost one. Ramiro hadtaken another long stride into the domain of civilization and he was to learn even more cruel lessons. With the disappearance of his boat, he learned the meaning of ownership of property:

> Un hombre que no defiende lo que le pertenece, no podría subsistir en un mundo como el nuestro, en el que toda posesión despierta celos y envidias. Uno queda obligado a pelear, cuando es legítimamente suya, hasta una mísera canica; pues, precisamente, nació predestinado a disputarles a sus semejantes el pan de cada día lo mismo que lo hace la más irracional de las fieras; y de no mantener erguido su propósito de obedecer a ese designio, correría el riesgo de ser justamente catalogado de inútil o de baboso, y, sobre todo, de morirse de hambre.[54]

Ramiro spent more than a month looking for his boat. Everywhere he was met with apathy, hostility, and even violence. His prayers and his last few coins which he entrusted to a Christ gained him nothing. Then Ramiro learned the bitterest of his lessons: it had been his guardian and employer

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[53] Ibid., p. 346.

[54] Ibid., pp. 345-46.

who had taken his boat and sunk it, because he feared the effect of the boy's competition on his own business. The friend who had apprised him of Doblado's action explained to him the reasons and gave him further warning and counsel:

> A lo que tanteo, porque le saca a tu competencia en la cacería con guajes, tarugo. Asino mesmamente, es la lucha por la vida. Tú, con tu canoyita, ya eras uno más entre los que andamos rompiéndonos la madre en la brega diaria pa' llevarnos la mejor porción de las gordas. Y, onde la incuentras, tendrás qu'ir afilandote las uñas, porque onde quiera que des un paso, allí te ha d'estar ispiando, venenosa y aprevenida como una sierpe, la maldecida envidia. Recuerda, nomás que ya eres rico, y que pa' lo de adelante no le has de confiar a naiden, ni a mí mesmo, porque ya no cuentas con amigos que te tengan ley y que de corazón te quieran. L'único que te queda son tus centavitos. Y son muy malos compañeros pa' fin de andar sin pendientes por la vida.[55]

Rubín describes the boy's reaction to the news of his former friend's betrayal:

> Ramiro no hubiera podido decirse: 'Mi afecto por Matías Doblado llena los mejores recuerdos de mi vida, y bien vale una conoa.' Resultábale mucho más razonable la otra enseñanza, la que golpeaba con rencorosa vehemencia a las puertas de su corazón e iba organizando los recursos de su implacable amor propio, armándolos con el recelo, la doblez y la insidia. La que gritaba escandalizada e histérica: '¡Quería abusar de mi buena fe! ¡Maldito sea!'[56]

Matías Doblado had fulfilled the promise of his surname, just as Ramiro Fortuna at first had set out to do. Ramiro had now become a civilized man, by the author's definition. Rubín expresses the process of his transformation:

> Estaba surgiendo en él un ejemplar más de ese feroz hombre nuevo, que enfanga con su ambición, su egoísmo y su mezquindad, los cenagosos ámbitos morales de nuestra época.

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[55] Ibid., p. 397. [56] Ibid., pp. 398-99.

> Y al empuñar otra vez la caña de los remos para proseguir con redoblado afán en la tozuda búsqueda, experimentó la sensación alarmante de que aquellas sus manos efusivas y abiertas, se estuvieran transformando en algo así como gruesas garras de tigre, feroces por lo bien armadas de punzantes y afiladas uñas.[57]

There is a marked contrast between the candid manner in which Ramiro had inquired about his boat in a month long journey about the lake and the cunning with which he renewed his search. He had been told that some fishermen on Presidio island had found the boat and were obviously not going to report the find. Rubín describes Ramiro's attitude as he approached the fishermen: "Y tortuoso y falaz, afilando las uñas de tigre de aquella malicia que el día anterior le recomendase Encarnación como imprescindible...."[58] With the help of a young girl in the camp, Ramiro regained possession of his boat. Alone on the lake, he came to the full realization of what the boat had cost him -- he was truly alone in a hostile world:

> Parado sobre el panel de la canoa, Ramiro se encontraba más solo que nunca en mitad de un mundo acechante y hostil. Y todas sus otras consideraciones y sentimientos iban perdiendo dimensión a medida que se agigantabe, paulatina y sensiblemente, el fetiche monstruoso de los intereses creados.[59]

Once again in possession of his boat, Ramiro set out to see the girl whom he had first wanted to marry; but his rival and the girl were already making arrangements for their wedding. In order to save face, he returned to the island

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[57] Ibid., p. 399.

[58] Ibid., p. 414.

[59] Ibid., p. 439.

and eloped with Amanda, the girl who had helped him reclaim his boat. His hopes for an honorable marriage were gone. Even though he now had both a woman and a boat, his problems had only begun. He had effectively entered a new world, one controlled by self-interest:

> Por más que todo pareciera solucionada ya, Ramiro sólo estaba en los comienzos de su eterna lucha contra los infortunios y las contrariedades.
>
> Y entonces, sobrecargado a lo largo de todas sus trayectorias por un doble lastre: la preservación de sus flamantes títulos de propietario, que no había de darle ya punto de reposo ni en la noche ni en el día, y la voluntaria responsabilidad que se echó a cuestas al traerse con él a la muchacha.[60]

La loca is the work of Rubín in which he gives the most complete and the clearest expression to the problems confronting Western civilization and the impact of technology on Mexico, from his point of view.[61] In this novel costumbrismo is of relatively little importance. The superficial love plot involving the creole narrator and a young mestiza is also overshadowed by the author's ethical concerns, as Navarro Sánchez has pointed out.[62] The novel is a study in what may be termed "mysticism in an age of madness." The author briefly identifies the ideas of Darwin, Spencer, and Comte as basic to twentieth-century civilization. He expresses the opinion that technical knowledge has fallen completely under the power of

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[60] Ibid., p. 456.

[61] Ramón Rubín, La loca (Guadalajara: by the author), 1950.

[62] Adalberto Navarro Sánchez and Ramón Rubín, "Una novela y tres cartes," Et Caetera, I, No. 3 (July - September, 1950), pp. 173-178.

money and that the machine, materialism, the money-spirit, and, finally, the technique of war threaten the world.

It is clear that from the early part of this century Mexican attitudes have been in instinctive conflict with the overseas spirit. According to Ramos, however, the first philosophical arguments against European or Western civilization, confirming Mexican attitudes, is found in Oswald Spengler's work The Decline of the West,[63] which came to the New World in translation during the twenties.[64] Though the direct influence of Spengler's book on the writings of Rubín may not be established conclusively, Rubín's preoccupation with the problems of Western civilization, his conclusions regarding the decadence of the culture, and his identification of the money-spirit, the ambition to power, and the inevitability of war as technical knowledge is impressed into the service of political and economic power, all coincide closely with Spengler's analyses and prognostications.

Oswald Spengler sets forth a philosophy of history in which he compares cultures to organisms with a predictable life cycle. He says of Western culture:

> The future of the West is not a limitless tending upwards and onwards for all time towards our present ideals, but a single phenomenon of history, strictly limited and defined as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries

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[63]Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, translated by Charles Francis Atkinson (2 vol.; New York: A. Knopf, 1947).

[64]Ramos, op. cit., p. 96. Ramos says that this work appeared in English in 1926 (Vol. I) and 1928 (Vol. II).

> and can be viewed and, in essentials, calculated from available precedents.[65]

The present culture, according to Spengler, had its birth around 1000 A. D. in the Northern Plain of Europe between the Elbe and the Tagus. He traces the development of the culture through what he calls "...the organic and the symbolic meaning of its political, artistic, intellectual and social expression forms."[66] The epoch corresponding to manhood and old age for the West began in 1800, with the supremacy of the machine. This last stage of Western culture Spengler calls "civilization," which he defines:

> Civilization is the inevitable destiny of the Culture.... Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion....[67]

He attempts to establish an analogy between the decline of Classical culture and the decline of the present age. He states that "The transition from Culture to Civilization was accomplished for the Classical work in the 4th /century/...."[68] Rome, then, is the nearest precedent for the present decline of our culture: "Rome, with its rigorous realism -- uninspired, barbaric, disciplined, practical, Protestant, Prussian -- will always give us, working as we must by analogies, the key to understanding our own future...."[69]

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[65]Spengler, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 39.

[66]Ibid., p. 26.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid., p. 32.

[69]Ibid., p. 26.

Spengler has observed that a hall mark of a politic of Civilization today, in contrast to a politic of Culture yesterday is money. Besides the money-spirit, he identifies imperialism or Caesariam as the marks of this final form of the culture. He states that the destiny of the West is now irrevocably set in this phenomenal form.[70] The present culture, or civilization he believes to be now closing with a finale of materialism and with a completely formed mechanistic conception of the world. The technique of war is the inevitable next step: "Similarly, in every Culture, the technique of war hesitatingly followed the advance of craftsmanship, until at the beginning of the Civilization it suddenly takes the lead."[71] But, he continues, money, which he says is the destroyer of democracy and organizes the democratic processes in the interests of those who possess it, will provoke a bloody violence, when the politics of money become intolerable.[72] The producing economy, the peasantry, and the soil-rooted tradition of the race, are engaged in a desperate conflict with the spirit of money:

> The machine with its human retinue, the real queen of this century, is in danger of succumbing to a stronger power. But with this, money, too, is at the end of its success, and the last conflict is at hand in which the Civilization receives its conclusive form -- the conflict between money and blood.[73]

Drawing on the analogies which history provides, he sees the outcome of this conflict as a foregone conclusion:

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[70] Ibid., pp. 34-7.

[71] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 420.

[72] Ibid., p. 485.

[73] Ibid., p. 506.

> If we call these money-powers 'Capitalism,' then we may designate as Socialism the will to call into life a mighty politico-economic order that transcends all class interests, a system of lofty thoughtfulness and duty-sense that keeps the whole in fine condition for the decisive battle of its history, and this battle is also the battle of money and law....[74]

The epigraph with which Rubín introduces the novel reveals his primary preoccupation in writing it: "¡Cuán árida é inútil resulta la Bondad en un mundo donde se premian la ambición y el egoísmo."[75] The narrator does not actively concern himself with conditions of poverty and ignorance, nor with the lower classes which have suffered under the vaunted successes and the progress of capitalistic society. He addresses the problems of ambition and self-interest which characterize the age. He opposes to these a reasoned mysticism, or an ethic of disinterested service to mankind.

The unnamed narrator is an entomologist commissioned jointly by the Rockefeller foundation and by the Sanitary department of his country to classify mosquitos in a swampy region and to study the best way to exterminate them. Tragedy strikes the town of Santa Inés del Río while he is there, when a rising river takes the lives of an entire family excepting the eighteen-year-old daughter. The girl, Teresa Montaño, feels a keen sense of guilt over the death of her parents and her brother. She considers suicide, but is advised by the narrator, who has become her friend, that this would be foolish. He confides in her that his life too has become

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[74] Ibid., p. 507. [75] La loca.

empty: "Mi vida se había desenvuelto hasta entonces en medio de un devenir triste y vacío, sin que por eso asomara jamás a mi imaginación la grotesca idea de acabar con ella."[76] As he attempts to identify and to explain the emptiness and the lack of meaning in his life, the narrator makes a searching analysis of the Church and of moral conceptions fostered by religious bodies in this century. In his home, only his mother had represented traditional religious beliefs. His father, a self-confessed agnostic, had professed a morality without religion, declaring that, "...el egoísmo y la mezquindad que de cuando en cuando nos aflora, es algo artificial, postizo, que nos dío la evolución de la moral y la cultura."[77] As a result of his father's predominant influence in the home, the narrator says that his own moral convictions were developed apart from religious teaching and were therefore free from what he termed religious varnish. He assails the morbid curiosity of onlookers at the scene of the tragedy which struck Teresa's family, and the customs of the Church at death he regarded as pagan and barbaric. He accused the Church of prolonging the agonies of the survivor and of turning death into a merry festival.[78] The narrator then rejects both suicide and any idea of Christian self-renunciation and tells Teresa that she can pay the debt that she feels she owes by showing herself living and generous with all who may need her.

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[76] Ibid., p. 50. [77] Ibid., p. 36.

[78] Ibid., Ch. IV, "La fiesta del dolor."

Teresa's reaction to this advice is shocking not only to the community in which she lives, but to the narrator as well. She gives herself with complete abandon to anyone who either needs or desires her. Her behavior is in violent conflict with the moral percepts and the social code of the people in Sante Inés. The narrator tries to protect Teresa from evil-intentioned men who exploit her weakened and confused mental state. He labels her psychological upheaval as a kind of mysticism, though he at first believed her to be mad. The belief that he may have contributed to her state of mind and to her unusual behavior causes him to devote himself fully to her care. This attitude of the narrator toward Teresa Rubín describes as "...el sentido místico en que se pierde su vida."[79]

The narrator decides to live in the swamp where he is conducting his scientific investigations in order to teach the poor people of Laguna Verde how to establish a good life. Teresa insists on accompanying him in spite of the problems which are posed by their living together, unmarried. They establish a center which they call the "Fundación Para El Ejercicio de Un Bien Sin Esperanzas." All preconceived notions of society about what is right and good are ignored except the one principle of service to suffering humanity. Instead of being just a specialist in malaria-bearing mosquitos, the narrator takes on a new role of humanitarian-scientist, selflessly giving his life and his service to

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[79]Navarro Sanchez and Rubín, op. cit., p. 174.

alleviate suffering among the people of the swamp region.

Teresa's mysticism has tragic consequences both for herself and for all whose life she touches because, the author says, her attitude was purely emotional.[80] Still, her efforts are not dismissed as useless. She contracts malaria and, in this weakened condition, does not survive the birth of a child which is fathered by a young doctor. In spite of the fact that the townspeople consider her an evil woman, the humble people of Laguna Verde revere her as a saint. After her death, an offer arrives from Mexico for the entomologist to become the director of a center in which investigations in two allied areas are to be conducted. Besides the study of malaria-bearing mosquitoes and methods of exterminating them, there is to be a wing of the center reserved for bacteriological warfare. It is this second activity which is to provide the funds for the entire center. The narrator will not accept the directorate, because his humanitarian endeavors would be financed by a war enterprise. He turns down the appointment and prepares to move elsewhere in hopes of continuing his humanitarian work.

In addition to the analysis of Teresa's social mysticism, the narrator identifies what he calls true madness. He is totally disillusioned with his generation, calling them, "...moral y mentalmente, la mas escuálida de cuantas nacieron."[81] All who are not committed to the ideal of

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[80] Ibid.

[81] La loca, p. 187.

service of mankind he identifies as mad. He says that up to the latter part of the nineteenth century, truly intelligent men were able to make their influence felt.[82] The present century, however, he feels has succumbed entirely to the machine and advanced technical knowledge. The ideal of disinterested service, he says, is totally lost:

> No se siente gran estímulo en dirección a ese propósito, ya que en América ignoramos la mística. Y, cuando por azar se topa uno con ella, se la mofa y menosprecia, atribuyéndola a ciertos desarreglos de la pitituaria, como yo lo hice con Teresa.[83]

Scientists fall under his indictment of making profit their supreme objective instead of the pursuit of knowledge and service: "Lo que les importa no son rasgos humanitarios de su trabajo, sino el provecho económico que han de reportarles sus descubrimientos."[84] He accuses the Church too of the motive of self-interest behind its charitable deeds, saying: "Una bondad interesada, no es bondad, sino chantaje."[85] Even those who look for rewards in the afterlife, he says, are primarily interested in their own welfare. All of Western civilization, with what he considers only superficial religious percepts and under the complete power of money, he declares to be immoral and irreligious. Those who do not seek their own interests are considered as madmen, but, he says, the world could ill afford to be without them:

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[82]This period coincides with the rise of Díaz and "los científicos."

[83]*La loca*., p. 290.

[84]*Ibid*., p. 291.

[85]*Ibid*., p. 96.

> Todo aquel que ha demostrado poseer alguna genialidad provechosa, ha sido reputado de loco por las mayorías. Pero, sin estas locas, la humanidad permanecería, aún en un grado de evolución de las especies no superior al que ocupa el gorrino. Aquellos que no ostentan un destello genial que alcance entre los mediocres el mérito de una supuesta locura, nunca han hecho nada por el desenvolvimiento de la civilización y el progreso.[86]

The money-spirit, Rubín declares, is at the helm of society; and it is the power to acquire money that determines individual merit:

> La humanidad actual es un desastre.... Horroriza ver que hombres que por sus mejores sentimientos o más justas ideas valen algo, se humillan y arrastran ante la supuesta grandeza de unos idiotas cuyo único mérito es el de haberse enriquecido porque en toda su vida no han hecho otra cosa que procurarlo a cualquier costo. Parece que se admira a los inmorales y se desprecia a los justos. Los que nuestra civilización ha seleccionado para colocarlos en la cima del mérito y del poder, suelen ser los mas perversos y los más tontos.[87]

Greed and the ambition to power which prevail in the present age he sees as the products of individualism:

> Era lo que había hecho de la humanidad ese individualismo que gobierna al mundo. Arrastrados por él, perdemos de vista la premisa original en todas las doctrinas morales: la evidencia de que el hombre es, antes que todo, un ser social.[88]

Economic individualism, or the system of free enterprise, is the system from which he traces the inhuman exploitation of one's fellowman:

> El individualismo sólo nos ofrece esa competencia feroz y repugnante por elevarnos más alto que los demás como método consecuente de todo aquel que busca méritos cívicos. Siendo ello francamente anti-social, resulta, a la vez, anti-humano.

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[86] Ibid., p. 271.

[87] Ibid., p. 313.

[88] Ibid., p. 187.

> Al cabo de una despiada selección, quienes se entronizan a merced del individualismo económico para expoliarnos con el poder concluyente del dinero, son tambien los antisociales; los más inmorales. En una desenfrenada competencia como la que origina la libre empresa, los ideales más egoístas, bastardos y mezquinos y los procedimientos más despojados de todo escrúpulo cívico llevan la ventaja.[89]

Economic exploitation, Rubín states, is leading inevitably to war: "Y el hombre no percibe otro fin que el de pelear entre sí hasta acabar con su propia especie."[90] With technical knowledge fully in the service of money, the scientist finds that war is a more profitable business than a campaign against the ravages of malaria; thus, human suffering is turned to profit:

> Y resulta mucho más remunerativa la invención de una infernal bomba nuclear, que la de un virus contra una epidemia o un recurso profiláctico eficaz contra la malaria.... Cualquier subterfugio, cualquier sofisma bastará para justificar la aberración moral que implica esta preferencia y para que el sabio investigador duerma tranquilo y seguro de que es un eminente defensor de la civilización cristiana.[91]

It is because he refuses to support any enterprise that contributes to war and the misery of mankind that the narrator does not accept the directorate in the medical and bacteriological center at Laguna Verde. As Spengler had observed, Rubín too identifies the city as the spawning place of the money-spirit and the technique of war:

> Es cierto que en las ciudades tiene uno ante sus ojos el paisaje alucinante de una humanidad que ha perdido el sentido de la mística y que manotea en el fango

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[89] Ibid., pp. 187-88.

[90] Ibid., p. 188.

[91] Ibid., p. 291.

> de todos los errores sin saber cómo salir de ellos. Allí llega más vivamente el hálito macabro de esas ignominiosas guerras modernas, carentes de fundamento y propósito....[92]

The entomologist had fled the city in search of what he called the "...más racional o, por lo menos, más humilde primitivismo del campo."[93] Now, after a brief attempt to bring an end to human suffering at Laguna Verde, he is force to go elsewhere to establish his "Fundación Para El Ejercicio de Un Bien Sin Esperanzas."

The only hope which the narrator holds out for mankind is that one day a new society may develop in which the social, not the individual condition of man may be recognized. Spengler described the closing of this age as a conflict between blood and money after a long triumph of world-city economy, from which Socialism will emerge victorious over Capitalism.[94] Though Rubín does not describe a final battle between Socialism and Capitalism, he does envision the possibility of this new society for which the narrator himself is fighting by his own devotion to suffering humanity:

> Y pienso que luchando por una nueve sociedad, más equitativa, más justa y más consecuente con la condición social y no individual del hombre, es posible que un día, pensando en la vida, no en la muerte, podamos suprimir de la denominación de nuestra Fundación Para El Ejercicio Del Bien ese desalentador complemento final que reza Sin Esperanzas.[95]

Growing out of this anti-technological theme is another idea which is prevalent in the modern novel, even in those

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[92] Ibid., p. 314. [93] Ibid.

[94] Spengler, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 506.

[95] La loca, p. 384.

novels in which social realism is not an important element -- the absurdity of life and the loneliness of man in the modern world. Rubín denies the fundamental principles underlying the present world culture, including the belief in the reality of the Christian God; and he declares himself in rebellion against man's inevitable destiny:

> Cómo es posible que tantos entre nosotros puedan seguir pensando que detrás del implacable brazo ejecutor de esa irrazonada sentencia vacía de todo acervo emocional, haya una consciencia omnisapiente y animada por un espíritu de sublime bondad? Es que acaso somos los hombres más considerados y piadosos que la divinidad que administra nuestro destino? Y si la consideramos tan despiadada, por qúe debemos aceptarla con resignación y adorarla de rodillas en vez de tratar de sublevarnos a ella?
>
> Me tranquiliza pensar que yo estoy en el mejor camino de esa rebeldía, porque no otra cosa son la investigación profiláctica y la ciencia médica en su lucha contra el dolor y la muerte.[96]

Man, he declares, is the creature and the plaything of chance: "En lo personal, yo no conozco ese problema. Sé que el hombre es un producto y un juguete del azar y que la muerte no contiene ningún enigma."[97] But while he professes that with the agony of death man becomes "...sólo un bulto hediondo y tan sensitivo como puede serlo una piedra...,"[98] he contemplates death with horror, because it means the loss of all the true worth that man has accumulated in this life:

> Pero sí la pérdida irreparable y definitiva de todo ese profundo y extenso acervo de bienes morales, de sentimientos amables y de entrañables afectos que hemos ido acumulando a nuestro paso por la vida.[99]

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[96] Ibid., pp. 296-97.
[97] Ibid., p. 297.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., pp. 297-98.

Though the narrator, whom Navarro-Sánchez has identified as the author himself,[100] resolves to try to bring relief to suffering humanity, he, and especially Teresa Montaño, finds that whenever he tries to do so, he succeeds only in bringing misfortune:

> Lo grave de todo esto, por lo que ello indica en cuanto a la absurda disposición de nuestra organización social o a la desdichada bejeza de la condición moral del hombre, es que esta muchacha, que decidío dedicar su vida a hacer el bien, sólo consiguió afligir con ello a cuantos la rodeábamos.[101]

Still, even in a world which he finds to be egotistical and immoral and under the imminent threat of war and self-destruction, he is determined to fight for the new society by putting his own technical knowledge at the service of humanity.

Ramón Rubín sees Western civilization, which he identifies as capitalistic and Christian, as a total failure in Mexico. He points to conditions of poverty, ignorance, and misery among the masses and contrasts these with the wealth and comfort of the controlling classes. Successes within the capitalistic system, he insists, necessitate the overthrow of the less fortunate and the weak in society. Therefore, a system which thrives on human misery is immoral and is doomed to destruction. The global wars of this century and especially the display of atomic and nuclear power seem to him to presage the mortal crisis which may bring the age to a close. While

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[100] Navarro-Sánchez and Rubín, op. cit.

[101] La loca, p. 377.

Rubín's analysis of modern Mexico under the domination of the machine and capitalism is at best fragmentary and is oriented primarily toward a solution of Mexico's current problems, the attitude which his writings reflect toward a culture which has its inspiration in Western capitals is an important aspect of contemporary Mexican reality.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In a recent interview with Emmanuel Carballo, Ramón Rubín expressed his conception of literature and the creed which has guided him through his activity as a novelist and short story writer:

> Creo que siento cariño por el ser humano y por la naturaleza y que tengo que hablar de ellos, al igual que una fuerza interior desconocida nos mueve a hablar sobre la mujer que amamos.... Si en ocasiones se encuentra en mis escritos una enseñanza, la considero accidental. Los epígrafes que he usado en los cuentos a modo de moraleja los pienso y coloco después, cuando la historia está concluida. Se trata de la enseñanza que contiene, sin proponérmelo, cada uno de los pasajes dramáticos de la vivencia que he decidido reflejar.[1]

The two salient characteristics of Rubín's writings, as they are implied in this expression of his literary creed, are costumbrismo and social realism, both constants of Mexican fiction since Lizardi. Almost all of Rubín's novels and short stories are set either in Mexico or in its territorial waters. Only Tiempos fáciles and Burbujas en el mar, works growing out of his youthful experiences, include settings and events outside his native land. Though his expressed concern and interest is humanity in general, and some of his reflections on

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[1]Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, op. cit., pp. 55-6.

Mexico are clearly universal in scope and intent, Rubín is primarily a Mexican writer, and both his themes and his settings reflect the contemporary Mexican scene. Of the costumbrismo and the social realism in Rubín's works, Carballo remarks:

> Conocedor del campo y la ciudad, de los distintos grupos étnicos, sus obras se caracterizan por el apego a la naturaleza, al carácter de sus personajes a las condiciones sociales y económicas de las distintas regiones del país....[2]

In an unsigned article in Creación, presumably by the editor, Rubin addressed the importance of costumbrismo in contemporary Mexican prose:

> Un costumbrismo bien llevado parace ser la mejor esperanza que tenemos para abrirnos paso entre el público español y suramericano. Pero sin caer tampoco en el folklore para turistas ni plagarle en tal forma de localismosque se imponge la adición de un vocabulario más extenso que la propia obra.[3]

As a costumbrista writer, Rubín has provided a wealth of cultural detail about the different ethnic groups in modern Mexico. Though of Spanish ancestry, he attaches more importance to the indigenous than to the Spanish contributions to Mexico's cultural heritage. His works are broadly representative of the Indian population in Mexico as well as authentic and penetrating in realistic detail. Of special importance in his works, however, are the Indians of western and northwestern

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[2] Ibid., pp. 54-5.

[3] Ramón Rubín, "Riesgos y posibilidades de la novela mexicana," Creación, No. 2, (July, 1953), pp. 31-2.

Mexico. The primary focus of his writings about the Indian is not the folkloric creature of Mexico's legendary past, but the Indian of today.

In the prologue to the second volume of his short stories, Rubín identifies the life, psychology, racial characteristics, and the customs of the mestizo -- as the ascendant ethnic group in modern Mexico -- to be the subject of a segment of his writings which he has termed the mestizo novels and short stories. From the Revolution of 1910 to the present time, he says, the influence of the mestizo in national life has been predominant;[4] and the contemporary Mexican is a phenomenon which cannot be explained satisfactorily by the fusion of Indian and Spanish blood and cultures:

> En vano será que sociólogos obsesos o serviles pretendan hallar en el mexicano actual el parentesco con las sangres que se fundieron para darle origen. Lo cierto es que hay más similitud entre un indio nativo y un chino, que entre el mismo indio aborigen y el mestizo de nuestros días; y más coincidencias del español con el turco, el griego o el polaco, que entre ese mismo español y el mexicano contemporáneo.[5]

The mestizo in Rubín's works is distinct from the other racial elements of Mexico in his physical appearance, his character, his psychology, his peculiar defects, and in his customs. Donde mi sombre se espanta is a novel about nineteenth-century rural mestizo customs, and La canoa perdida is a documentary on the customs of the mestizo communities which historically

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[4]Andres Molina Enriquez was among the first twentieth-century writers to advance the idea that the mestizo was not only the dominant element in Mexico's population, but also the repository of her greatness. Los grandes problemas nacionales (Mexico: A Carranza e hijos, 1909).

[5]Cuentos mestizos, p. 7.

have been dependent on Lake Chapala for their livelihood.[6] Any account of modern Mexico, Rubín declares, must be about the mestizo, and he has written eleven volumes of fiction which reflect the life and the customs of that racial group.

Along with the Indian and the mestizo, Rubín has written about the creole,[7] Yankees, Orientals, Spaniards, and other Europeans, completing the picture of Mexico's population. A composite of these writings reveals the ethnic diversity of modern Mexico with all the implications of this diversity for social progress or the lack of it.[8]

Nearly all of Rubín's writings have their settings in rural Mexico.[9] His first short stories were published under

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[6]Winston A. Reynolds said of La canoa perdida as a costumbrista novel about the mestizo: "Mr. Rubín has done humanity a considerable service in preserving information of great historical and sociological value.... It is an entertaining narration...surrounded by an immense amount of valuable documentary information, and it gives us an interesting psychological insight into the Mexican Mextizo's enigmatic personality and his dramatic life.... "A Critical Orientation of the Novel and Rubín's La canoa perdida," Et Caetera, Nos. 5 - 6 (January - June, 1951), pp. 83-4.

[7]La loca is his only creole novel. "El sombrero" from El tercer libro de cuentos mestizos is about the peaceable philosophy of the Chinese. Episodes throughout his works include the other racial groups mentioned.

[8]John S. Brushwood and José Rojas y Garcidueñas have identified racial diversity as an important element in Rubin's writings: "El propósito que el autor persigue en sus obras literarias es el de asimilarlas a documentos para el conocimiento y estudio de problemas raciales." op. cit., p. 118.

[9]"Mala ocurrencia," Cuentos mestizos; and "El duelo," El hombre que ponía huevos, both satires on the human defects of Mexico's rising middle class, are notable exceptions.

the title Cuentos del medio rural mexicano. Even when the series was renamed "Cuentos mestizos," with the orientation and emphasis being racial rather than geographical -- at least in the title -- the rural Mexican and rural settings continued to predominate. In the creole novel the narrator-author shows his predilection for the country and for the campesino: "Y en gran parte, fue ello lo que me indujo a huir de la ciudad en busca del más racional, o, por lo menos, más humilde primitivismo del campo."[10] This vast panarama of rural Mexico which Rubín's works represent is an important aspect of his costumbrismo.

Three of Rubín's works reveal his knowledge of and love for the sea and the inland water system of Mexico: Burbujas en el mar, El seno de la esperanza, and La canoa perdida. The first work is a collection of stories based on the author's youthful experiences on international waters in the years leading up to the Spanish Civil War; El seno de la esperanza is a maritime adventure novel which focuses on the shrimp industry off the western coast of Mexico; and La canoa perdida is an epic about the primitive fishermen in villages that encircle Mexico's largest lake, Chapala. Rubín's early youth was spent in Asturias in the coastal village of Llanes, and it was there that the love for the sea and his insight into the life and the psychology of the mariner had their birth.

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[10] La loca, p. 314.

It is in the observation of concrete reality that Rubín excels.[11] His entire production of novels and short stories constitutes a serious and an engaging analysis of the many-sided personality of modern Mexico. His technique is that of the nineteenth-century Spanish realists. By his own confession, his masters are José María de Pereda and the mysterious master of irony, B. Traven:

> De joven me impresionaron José María de Pereda y B. Traven. Me habría gustado, en ese entonces, asociarlos para crear una novela de ambiente mexicano tan minuciosa en tipos y costumbres como las de Pereda y tan llena de comprensión humana como las de ese autor tan suavemente irónico que es Traven.[12]

From Pereda he learned to create convincing character types and to bring them to life in a realistic natural environment. Like Pereda too, he reveals an affinity for rural settings and for the sea. From Traven he gained sympathetic insights into the misadventures and the plight of the Indian and of the rural Mexican in a society under the domination of technology.

Rubín's realistic technique, however, is not only convincing, it is often cumbersome. At times he is excessively technical, and, as Winston Reynolds remarked about his style in La canoa perdida, "...it does not entirely escape the accusation that its style borders on the textbook type of

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[11]González remarks about Rubín's realistic technique and his attempts in the realm of pure imagination in La loca and Burbujas en el mar: "...se mueve con más libertad y acierto cuando intenta recrear la realidad concreta por el observada...," op. cit., p. 387.

[12]Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, p. 55.

writing."[13] Carballo concludes that Rubín confuses artistic truth with human truth and scientific documentation with novelistic techniques. Selections from La canoa perdida on the methods and the equipment employed by lake fishermen are so technical that necessarily their appeal must be limited to the sociologist or to those few people who are intimately acquanted with the primitive fisherfolk who continue to live on the shores of that lake. In La loca, the narrator is an entomologist and his experiments and observations concerning malaria-bearing mosquitoes are recorded in great detail, so that much of the material is intelligible only to the specialist. An even greater number of pages is devoted to the dramatization of the guilt complex of the heroine and the inferiority complex of the narrator. González says concerning this excessive technical content of La loca: "El autor se adentra aquí en los vericuetos de la psiquiatría, de la entomología y de la psicología, pero el empeño es más tenaz que convincente."[14] The same may be said concerning the descriptions of the shrimp fishing industry in El seno de la esperanza, which necessitated a special glossary of technical terms and Mexicanisms.[15] The entire first half of La bruma lo vuelve

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[13]Reynolds, op. cit., p. 81.

[14]González, op. cit., p. 386.

[15]Of the author's nineteen volumes of fiction, twelve contain a special glossary of terms. El seno de la esperanza has an abbreviated glossary, because, as Rubín remarked to the writer, the publisher required the list to be shortened. Personal interview.

azul might be incorporated whole into the body of anthropological lore on the Huichol Indian, and his other novels about the Mexican Indian are rich in descriptive detail. Carballo observes concerning Rubín's use of technical material and of his method that,

> Rubín llega al papel en blanco respaldado por voluminosas libretas de apuntes geográficos, históricos, antropológicos, económicos, sociales y humanos...que darán vida a la anécdota y acerca del lenguaje en que expresarán sus conflictos.[16]

It is his thorough acquaintance, however, with the customs and the traditions of his countrymen that enables Rubín to interpret faithfully and convincingly their human condition. The entire body of his writings is a document on the human passions and conflicts of the twentieth-century Mexican. These writings are deeply rooted in the social and economic realities of Mexico and record the great moments of modern Mexican history. In particular, he documents the emergence of Mexico from the era during which its aboriginal cultures predominated into the period when Western influences have gained the ascendancy. From his writings about the Indian, the Revolution of 1910, and technology in modern Mexico, it is obvious that Rubín believes that modern man bears within him the will to descend to primitivism and savagery, and that Mexico and society at large have descended into an abyss which he identifies as Western civilization.

There is scarcely a story or a novel by Rubin that

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[16]Carballo, "Ramón Rubín, un caso aparte," op. cit.

does not convey a strong thesis. Especially in the novels the author's attempt to analyze or to explain the causality of events takes the form of commentary or moralizing, as Reynolds observes of La canoa perdida:

> Actually, the didactic purpose of the book, in attempting to describe in minute detail Lake Chapala and its riberenos, is so evident that, were it not for the thin plot that moves throughout, it might easily be mistaken for a textbook.[17]

Rubín's own expressed attitude toward his didacticism is that he only paints a scene or creates a convincing ambiente and the moral or the ethic is inherent in them: "Se trata de la enseñanza que contiene, sin proponérmelo.[18] The intent and the result are not always the same. He has been more successful with the short stories, because of their brevity, and, faithful to the limitations of the genre, he does not engage in analyses of the conditions described in them. In response to a question of the writer regarding his sympathetic regard for the Indian, Rubín replied: "Refleja mi hostilidad contra la civilización."[19] But this attitude is obvious and is reinforced by the narrator's commentary and, as in the case of El callado dolor de los tzotziles, through the epigraphs by which the reader is introduced to the novel: "La Civilización es como los abismos: resulta fácil resbalar por ella; pero el que intenta salir una vez que alcanzó el fondo pierde

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[17]Reynolds, op. cit., p. 81.

[18]Carballo, El cuento mexicano del siglo xx, pp. 55-6.

[19]Personal interview with the author.

lamentablemente el tiempo." Unmistakeably in every novel, and in a few of the short stories, the author is the principal character and his own personal reactions to events that transpire are of far greater importance and more conspicuous than the motives and the reactions of his characters. Beth Noble finds both plot and character development in La bruma lo vuelve azul to be subordinated to thesis and superficially and unrealistically developed.[20] Rubín himself disclaims any attempt at character development, declaring that the ambiente is of supreme importance in his works:

> Algunos dicen que no los estudio muy profundamente. No pienso en los personajes hasta terminar la novela. Mi personaje es el ambiente y los hombres y las mujeres que figuran en los libros son parte del ambiente.[21]

The author's conception of ambiente embraces both human beings and their natural environment, and his acquaintance with the human condition and with nature is of ultimate importance in his works.

Rubín's writings in their entirety fall under the classification of costumbrismo. His themes and his subject matter are all intensely national in character. His presentation of the Mexican Indian, his stories and novels about the mestizo and the creole, and the complete picture of Mexican reality are effective and authentic because of the author's acknowledged

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[20] Beth Noble, "Review of La bruma lo vuelve azul, Books Abroad, Vol. XXX, No. 1, (1956), p. 76.

[21] Personal interview with the author, op. cit.

intimate acquaintance with the modern Mexican scene. Few authors are so well equipped as he to present contemporary Mexican reality in depth. His works are also, as Sommers has observed, a part of a movement to incorporate into the national novel the universal, postwar emphasis on human anguish, the failures of society, and the waning of the heretofore unquestionable idea of inevitable progress.[22]

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[22]Joseph Sommers, "El Ciclo de Chiapas: Nueva Corriente Literaria," Cuadernos Americanos, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (March - April, 1964), pp. 246-61.

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