

AGUSTIN YANEZ
INTERPRETER OF THE MODERN MEXICAN NOVEL

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Augustín Múñez
Interpreter of the Modern Mexican Novel

by
Linda M. Van Conant

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	i
CHAPTER I	
I. LAMBEZ'S LIFE AND PLACE IN LITERATURE	1
II. FICTIONAL WORKS	16
A. EARLY WORKS	19
B. MAJOR WORKS	43
1. <u>FLOR DE CUERPO ALPIEDROS</u>	43
2. <u>ARCHIPIELAGO DE UJERES</u>	49
3. <u>AL FILO DEL AGUA</u>	74
C. RECENT WORKS	97
III. NONFICTIONAL WORKS	114
IV. THEMES	129
CONCLUSION	152
BIBLIOGRAPHY	156
APPENDIX	162

INTRODUCTION

Mexico today is cosmopolitan. It is influenced in all fields by the culture of Europe and the United States. Presently taking place there is a movement involving all aspects of the Mexican culture; a movement which is attempting to raise the cultural life of Mexico to the level seen in other more developed countries.

The Revolution of 1910 brought about reforms which raised the lives of Mexico's inhabitants to a decent level. Now a new phase is occurring. In the 1930's, no longer satisfied with a mere comfortable existence, enlightened men began to strive for something greater. In every field progress was made toward a future in which Mexico would rank as one of the great nations of the Western Hemisphere. This new way of life is reflected in literature as well as in other cultural fields. New currents exist in writing, criticism and ideas. We shall mention here developments in the novel as it is in that field that the subject of this paper, Agustín Yáñez, makes his contribution.

The modern novel is the result of an evolution, not a revolution, in literature. Gradually the "superregionalismo" of the early Mexican novel has changed to "neorrealismo", characterized by an equilibrium between man and the landscape. The novel of the Revolution, typified by description and lack of character analysis, has gradually changed to the psychological, transcendental, existential novel with an emphasis on the artistic approach.

As the good points of the super-regionalist school, social consciousness and a modernist style, were lost through exaggeration, a reaction arose. This reaction placed more influence on the human being than on the landscape. It was psychological and dealt with the problems of the person faced with conflict in the culture threatened by foreign influence, both past and present, a world of such rapid change and such great diversity that the attempt to comprehend it caused crises both psychological and sociological.

In general, the novelist of this period does not just picture the surface, but the undercurrents and confusions of the human mind. Under the influence

of the Existentialists, Kafka, Joyce, and Unamuno, the Mexican novel since the 1930's has continued to move forward in the analysis of the relationship of the individual with society.

Agustín Yáñez is the best known and most important Mexican novelist of those who began writing around 1930, although there are representatives in other Latin American countries. His work is typical of the works of the period. In Al filo del agua, his first and best novel, one finds the best example. Although its setting is Mexico at the time of the Revolution, it differs from the works of the writers of the Revolutionary period. Alegría compares the others to muralists, giving an overall superficial picture of the entire country.¹ Yáñez, by the presentation of detail after detail in the lives of the separate characters of his novels, delves deeply into the soul of one small provincial town. He finds it to be obscure, superstitious, overpious, primitive, "enlutada" and condemned. He creates a portrait rather than a mural, a portrait in depth of a town.

¹Fernando Alegría, Breve historia de la novela hispanoamericana (México, 1959), p. 240.

His style is not that of a mere chronicler of events. Rather, he attempts, through technique and style to present the atmosphere which pervades the setting of his work. This evocation of atmosphere was an important aim of his early works and has remained so in the more recent ones. In order to present this atmosphere he makes use of many techniques typical of the novels of the existentialist writers of Europe and the United States. The use of "stream of consciousness," counterpoint, interior and exterior monologue and other techniques of this type attest to his preoccupation with novelistic methods as does his position as professor of literary theory at the national university. He does not, however, allow technique to pass beyond the role of servant in his creation of the portraits of various regions of Mexico.

Since Yáñez began writing, the Mexican novel has continued to develop. Its writers have become more experimental in technique, more existentialistic in philosophy, and more universal in theme. They follow in the steps of Kafka, Joyce, dos Passos and others. Authors such as Juan Rulfo, José Revueltas, and Carlos Fuentes typify the most modern in Mexican writing.

In their works there may be seen further developments of trends begun by Agustín Yáñez and others authors of his period.

Juan Rulfo is the author who follows most closely in Yáñez's footsteps. He treats the theme of death which is a favorite of Yáñez's. He carries it a step further, however. We find in his novel, Pedro Páramo, that the characters are already dead. He presents the idea of a timeless afterlife in which it is possible to twist reality and change the sequence of events.

José Revueltas' work has a strong Mexican foundation. His characters act in a Mexican setting and according to Mexican tradition. Although, like Agustín Yáñez and Juan Rulfo, in seeking for the answers to the apparent failure of the pseudo-civilized life he suggests a return to certain fundamental values that pertain to the essence of the rural Mexican past, he does conform to the modern trend as his two best-known novels, El luto humano and Los días terrenales, are based on an existentialist concept of life. His works have a strong social content and show some mastery of many contemporary literary techniques.

Carlos Fuentes, whose first novel appeared in 1958, is an author whose work shows great promise. Again we see the further use of techniques which were seen in the works of Yáñez. He experiments with counterpoint as do Huxley and dos Passos, interior monologue and free association of ideas as used by Joyce, contemporary mythology in the style of Kafka and Faulkner, and brutal incisions in the "realidad ambiente," in the best existential tradition.²

The beginnings of many of these aspects seen in the authors who have begun writing more recently are also seen to a lesser degree in the works of Yáñez and will be discussed later in this paper.

All fields of Mexican art, Painting, sculpture, and music as well as literature, deconstrate this striving toward that which is new. Despite this modern outlook, the art of Mexico has its roots in the past.

²Alegría, Breve historia, p. 245.

The Indian tradition is seen everywhere. Literature in particular, though still influenced by European examples and experimenting with modern techniques, makes use of Mexican tradition. Whether that tradition is old-world or Indian, it is part of the past which makes Mexican literature authentically Mexican. The superstition which appears so frequently in literature, the typically Mexican church rituals, the social relationships between the European and the Indian, the combined philosophies of the Indian and the European all join together in providing a base on which the literary work is built, a unique background for the modern Mexican novel.

The purpose of this paper shall be an attempt to place Agustín Yáñez in this picture of a modern, yet traditional Mexico. A brief chapter on his life, an analysis of his fictional and nonfictional works and a discussion of the themes which are most prevalent in his works will be presented. In doing so it shall be proved that he is without a doubt in the forefront in the field of the Mexican novel.

CHAPTER I

YÁÑEZ'S
LIFE AND PLACE IN
LITERATURE

Agustín Yáñez has said, "En general tuve una niñez sana y tranquila. Solo en rasgos aislados son autobiográficos mis libros." Nevertheless, one sees in his works the effects of his early life and the places where he has lived. Certainly some of the events narrated in his short stories he must derive from personal experience. The games which appear in Flor de juegos antiguos must be based on memories of his childhood as must the experiences related in many of his early short stories.

He was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco in 1914. After that he made his home in Tepic and at present resides in Mexico City. His parents were el señor Eladio Yáñez and la señora Santos Delgadillo.³ The name Delgadillo is frequently seen in his early works. In Archipiélago de mujeres, by some considered his first novel, the protagonist is named Mónico Delgadillo.

³Personal correspondence.

Guadalajara, his childhood home, is the setting of many of his early fictional works. Tepic is frequently mentioned also, as are various small towns in that general area of Mexico.

Yáñez was graduated as a lawyer from the Escuela de Jurisprudencia in Guadalajara in 1929. Many of the students in his fictional works attend college in that city, including Luis Gonzaga Pérez and Gabriel in Al filo del agua.

He has held various positions in the fields of education and government, having been a teacher in many schools and a director of several others. He has twice been his country's envoy to UNESCO, in 1947 and 1960. His principal offices in government were that of governor of the state of Jalisco (1953-1959) and his present position as Secretario de Educación Pública. Other governmental positions which have been his have been related to education. From 1932 to 1934 he was director of the Office of Radio of the Secretaría de Educación Pública. In the Secretaría de Educación Pública he was also a professor of preparatory and secondary teaching from 1936 to 1952.

As governor of Jalisco he made many contributions to the fields of education and culture. New, well-equipped buildings were constructed for the educational institutions of the state: Normal, Polytechnic and Odontological, Econornical and nursing schools, as well as for the State Public Library, the Casa de Cultura Jalisciense, and the Museum of Occidental Archeology of Mexico. A large number of school buildings were constructed and 31,347 vehicles were provided for the educational system. Financial aid to schools and universities was improved.

A great deal of construction and support of museum, theaters, symphonies and other cultural institutions also was carried out.

He has held and still holds important editorial positions on several publications, among which are: director of the magazines Bandera de Provincias, Guadalajara (1929-30); Occidente, México (1944-45); Filosofía y Letras, organ of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras of the National University, (1946-47). He has been a member of the governing body of the magazine Historia Mexicana (1951), of Cuadernos Americanos (1959-present) and of the publishing firm "Fondo de Cultura Económica" (1962-present).

Besides other editorial accomplishments too numerous to mention here he has written various prologues, selections and annotations, especially for the "Biblioteca del Estudiante universitario," on whose directive committee he has taken part since it began publishing.

It has been said that Múñoz's purpose in writing is to give a picture of all phases of Mexican life. He himself has stated, "Efectivamente me ha propuesto retratar las diversas fases de la vida mexicana."⁴ In the field of nonfiction he has written biographies, essays and critical studies about those writers who he feels have contributed a great deal to the development of the Mexican nationality. These works consist of a revival of the classics of Mexican literature. His biography of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas entitled, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas el conquistador conquistado presents Múñoz's view of this man who came as a conqueror and managed to become adapted to the life in this new world. He becomes one of the first examples of the combining of the European and indigenous cultures in the life of one man.

⁴Personal correspondence.

In the preliminary study which he wrote to Litcs indígenas, a study of the "alma indígena", he points out the high level of the art, language and religion of the Indians of Mexico at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards which made possible the combining of the two cultures.

In Justo Sierra⁵ he finds a great educator, the mentor of Mexican education and one of the greatest contributors to Mexican culture.

His preliminary study to Lizardi's El pensador mexicano expresses Yáñez's admiration of this man as an author. He deploras the critics who have not looked deeply enough to see the merit of Lizardi's essentially Mexican work.

All of these works illustrate Yáñez's belief not only in Mexico's future in the field of art, but in its great past which has served as a foundation for its present and future. He is taking part in a revival of that which is great in Mexico's past in order that Mexicans may realize that they have a tradition on which to build and that mere copying of that which is foreign should not be their aim.

⁵Agustín Yáñez, Don Justo Sierra, su vida, sus ideas y su obra (México, 1950).

His fictional works also attempt to deal with all phases of Mexican society. They treat the various strata of society as they appear in different regions of the country, in city and country, on the central plateau and on the hot and humid coast. In the early pages of one of his recent publications, a collection of short stories entitled Los sentidos al aire, we find an outline entitled "Punto de partida para un retrato de México" which divides his fictional works, published and unpublished, into four groups which he considers basic in the picture of Mexican life. The outline is as follows:

Las ciudades y los efectos

Flor de juegos azules
 Archipiélago de mujeres
 La ladrona dorada
 Los sentidos al aire

El país y la gente

La tierra próxima
 Las tierras flacas
 Cornelio Luna, comisario ejidal
 Al filo del agua
 La culta sociedad
 Ojerosa y pintada

La historia y los tipos

Las vueltas del tiempo
 Crónica de los días heroicos
 La fortuna de los Ibarra Diez
 Leonice Delgadillo y sus amigos
 La gloriosa

Los oficios y las ilusiones

La creación
La torre
El taller de Saurerán
Clasilia Cavaleto
Tlacantzinla

Other writers have also sought to give us a picture of Mexican life. It is in the difference in the methods and viewpoint of Yáñez that his contribution lies. A comparison with the period immediately preceding the one to which Yáñez belongs will help to clarify his contribution. The style of the Latin American novel of the first thirty years of the twentieth century has been called "super-regionalismo." It consisted to greater or lesser degree in the works of different authors of a conflict between man and nature in which there was a great deal of euphoria or description of "paisaje." It has been said that the "real man" was never reached. The uncontrolled forces of nature which in the works of such authors as José Eustasio Rivera and others seem to break out upon contact with man will become a part of the final integration of man and "paisaje" as elements of an artistic structure of the works which began to appear in the 1930's.⁶ The authors of the more recent period have changed not so much the content of their novels as the emphasis. They find in psychological and social

⁶Alegria, Breve historia, p. 172.

analysis a purer source of material than in a description of the brutal forces of nature, although such description still appears. Vázquez applies a new approach to social and psychological themes which sets him apart as a leader of the modern writers.

The treatment of the theme of the Revolution in the two periods again shows this difference in emphasis. The novels of the first part of the century in Mexico were understandably concerned in a large part with the Mexican Revolution of 1916. They were largely descriptive and did not look deeply into the characters. In speaking of the modern novel, Alegria has said: "La novela mexicana ha cerrado ya su ciclo histórico de la Revolución...."⁷ Nevertheless, as Alegria agrees, the Revolution does appear in some of the modern works. In the novels of Vázquez we see it particularly in Al filo del agua, in which he reaches the high point of his literary trajectory. It is, however, presented not through descriptions of battles or through the eyes of persons closely involved in it, but rather by means of its effect on a small community and its inhabitants who hardly knew it was occurring.

⁷Alegria, Breve historia, p. 237.

Despite this lack of awareness, the Revolution had major effects on the life of the village. Inhabitants returning from the north and sensationalist newspapers told stories and disseminated ideas never before encountered by the sequestered citizens.

Yáñez presents the atmosphere of a community as the sum of the personalities of which it is composed and the interaction among these personalities. Each of these people is a symbol made up of physical and spiritual essences, a part of an allegory which portrays some portion of Mexican life. He attempts to give not only a psychological but a sociological view. His later novels have employed this same technique with varying degrees of success.

Perhaps Yáñez's place in literature can best be defined by considering his own view of the literary production of his country as seen in his essays and critical writings. In El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana he tells us, "la literatura iberoamericana es mestiza, cuando es auténtica."⁸ This idea is seen in his prologue to ritos indígenas as well. He traces this "mestizaje" to

⁸Agustín Yáñez, El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana, Jornada 11 (Mexico, 1944), p. 14.

the present time saying: "Luego se verá que la expresión literaria de análoga realidad no se interrumpe en cuatrocientos años."⁹ He stresses the class consciousness of the people, "La literatura también refleja la tendencia social de menosprecio hacia las razas juzgadas inferiores. El europeo desdén al criollo; el criollo al mestizo; éste al indio; últimamente indios y negros reniegan de su sangre."¹⁰ Besides this "mestizaje" which Mañez believes one must always keep in mind in order to see South American literature from the correct point of view, he also gives a list of social problems which have been dealt with in Spanish American literature from the coming of the "conquistadores" to the present.

La lucha del hombre con la naturaleza y el frecuente dominio de la segunda; el feudalismo, el imperialismo, los métodos de producción, cambios y consumo, las costumbres originadas en tales fenómenos, el pauperismo y la corrupción moral consiguiente, los apetitos de lucro y dominio, de placer y despocho, los tipos de agiotistas y tahures, de avaros y desposeídos, de burqueses y aventureros, de acaudalados y misérrimos, de holgazanes y esclavos, constituyen repletos filones de la literatura iberoamericana, que destaca la fuerza colectiva permanente de la economía ligada al cúmulo de circunstancias que forman el típico panorama de la vida continental.¹¹

⁹Mañez, El contenido, p. 20.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹Ibid., p. 32.

From the Mexican perspective Májnez's nonfictional works as he attempts to not only give a complete picture of his country's development, but also seeks to take his place in the stream of Latin American writers from the time of the conquest to the present.

Of course, Májnez has read widely and has been influenced by the works of others. He states, "En muchos de mis escritos he señalado nominalmente los autores que han ejercido sobre mí mayor influencia."¹² Therefore, it seems that the best means of discovering those authors who have had an influence on Májnez's writing is to investigate those whom he mentions with special emphasis in his nonfictional works. He traces the literature of his country from the very earliest writers, Bernal Díaz de Castillo, Cortez, etc., through Lizardí to Justo Sierra, Salas and finally to himself as a continuer of the Mexican tradition.

¹²Personal correspondence.

we must assume that Máñez feels the greatest influence on his writing has been from those authors who he feels are typically Mexican. He has, of course, also read the impact of several writers in other countries. All this leads us that Joyce and Faulkner have been Máñez's immediate models, particularly in the case of the "stream of consciousness."¹³

Máñez is known as novelist, short story writer, biographer, historian and critic. As this paper, however, will deal primarily with his works as a writer of fiction, an attempt will be made to list here in chronological order only those works which fall into that category.

Máñez's fictional career may be divided into three periods, the early works, the major works, and those recent ones which have become more experimental.

The works of the early period were short stories. The first recorded story is Septiembre rojo, published in 1937. It has proved impossible to locate a copy of this work.

¹³Alegría, From Exile, p. 242.

In 1924 there appeared Vigilia de la Natividad. This was the rough draft of Luis Vongehr Pérez and appeared again in 1945 in Al filo del agua. In 1925 Una de esas vidas, perhaps the most beautiful of his early works, foretold the beauty of language which his later works would demonstrate. In 1927 there appeared four works which again explored various aspects of love: Esta es mala suerte, Lente nasal, El torcer quejido del alma, and Trata de la ar. In 1929 the uncoordinated Paralítico and Sangre de sol, which treated the tragedy of two brothers killed fighting on opposing sides in a battle, were published. Pasión y convalecencia, the last fictional work of this period, was published in 1930. In it Pérez again used the stream of consciousness "technique" and initiated the use of dreams, hallucinations and delirium in exploring the consciousness of his protagonist.

The early short stories mentioned above are most important as a practice field for the novels to come later during the period of Pérez's major contribution. In 1943, after five years when no fictional production is evident, there appeared the first of these, Archipiélago de mujeres.

Arbitrarismo de mujeres is sometimes classified as a novel, sometimes as a collection of short stories or short novels. Its technique involves the transposition of heroines of legend and literature to modern times and their relationship with the hero of the work, Fónico Delgadillo. In the course of the work there are found many of the themes and techniques seen in the early short stories. Pictorial language, psychological portrayal of characters, sometimes with the use of dreams and hallucinations, and the exploration of various phases of love are among those aspects evident in the early works which are seen again here.

In 1943 Don Juan va a tener un hijo, a chapter of Arbitrarismo de mujeres, was published separately as was Helibea, Isolda y Alda, en tierras calidas, a publication containing sections of that work, in 1946.

1945 saw the publication of two works, Flor de juncos antiguos and Al filo del agua. Flor de juncos antiguos consists of memories of childhood games and escapades. The atmosphere of Guadalajara from a child's point of view is especially well presented.

Al filo del agua is generally acknowledged as Lázaro's best novel. Although removed from the cycle of the novel of the Revolution in the sense that it does not deal with it as its main topic, the Revolution, nevertheless, is an important theme of the work and provides it with a climax. It provides an atmosphere of dread and expectation to the novel and the town with which it deals and is the underlying reason for the unrest, confusion and change of attitude which occur. The novel is a compelling work closely related to some of Faulkner's novels which find their source of atmosphere in the American War between the States.

Two more short stories appeared during this period, Gota serena and Hija esperanza. Both deal with childhood experiences and again demonstrate Lázaro's ability to evoke the world of a child.

Not until 1959 is there in evidence another fictional work. In that year there appeared La creación, a novel dealing principally with the various aspects of the artistic life of Mexico City. It carries to a further extreme the use of hallucination in the psychological analysis of the protagonist. Much use of mythological and classical allusion reminds one of Archipiélago de mujeres, but here they do not comprise so large a part of the book.

This technique which was the basis of El punto de vista in El mundo is here merely used in isolated instances where Miñez finds it appropriate to a particular situation.

In 1959 there appeared, in Cuadernos Americanos, Señor de verano en el Paraíso, a chapter of La creación and in 1960 there appeared in the same magazine, El ventado Amarillo, a chapter of his next novel, La tierra pródiga. La tierra pródiga makes use of the technique of counterpoint through the presentation of both a person's speech and his actual thoughts. This novel continues Miñez's plan to deal with all areas of Mexican life as it finds its setting in the wild, hot areas of the coast. In the same year there also appeared Gieroso y pintado, a novel which it has been impossible to acquire.

In 1962 Las tierras blancas presented the picture of the arid plains of Mexico. It emphasized the subservience of the ordinary man to one ruling family, and the deterioration of that family due to conflicts among its members. The subject of family deterioration again ranks as one of this favorite theme of William Faulkner's.

A short story, Las avispas, was published in 1961. Its major theme is the mental collapse of a headmaster of a school when he finds that because of an mistake on his part he has lost the respect of his pupils.

In 1964 there appeared two collections of short stories, Los sentidos al aire¹⁴ and Tres cuartos. They are composed of some of the best of Vázquez's works in this field. Los sentidos al aire is especially interesting as it is organized according to the months of the year, each story embodying the mood of the month it represents. This organization emphasizes Vázquez's sensitivity to mood and atmosphere and the importance which he places on them.

¹⁴The original publication dates of the following stories were found in Los sentidos al aire.

Niña Esperanza
 Las avispas
 Esta es mala suerte
 Laule pasenal
 El tercer encargo del alma
 Pasión y convalecencia
 Aserrín de muñecos
 Nota serena
 Sangre de sal
 Ruta de la gar
 Paralipton
 Vigilia de la latividad.

Agustín Yáñez is a very busy man, whose careful organization, has been able to accomplish a great deal. He has made important contributions to his country's welfare in the fields of education and government, but his greatest achievement has been in the field of literature. His works in the nonfictional field are of some interest, but it is as a writer of fiction that he has become best known. With great descriptive power and a command of modern technique, he is able to present the Mexico of today from a psychological standpoint. Through the eyes of individual characters and their reaction with their surroundings, particular locales and the social situation there existant are presented. Yáñez's works are on the edge of the existential novel seem to follow and, in fact, demonstrate some of the characteristics of that school.

"Agustín Yáñez is a true representative of the present-day Mexican writer, a member of the intellectual middle class, firmly adhered to the philosophic and metaphysical conjectures of postwar Europe. Joycean, Kafkaesque, and existentialist, without losing his vernacular roots nor an understanding of the complexity of the Revolution of 1910...."¹⁵

¹⁵Alcórán, Pre e Historia, p. 137.



CHAPTER II

FICTIONAL WORKS

A - Early Works

In general the fictional works of Agustín Yáñez may be classified in three groups: early works (1923-1942), major works (1943-1955) and recent works (1956-present).

His early works are short stories. They often deal with young people, usually children. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that Yáñez was only 38 years old when this period ended and the first work included in this group, Ceguera roja, was published at the age of 17. He wrote about what he had experienced. He did write short stories after this time, but his major effort shifted to the field of the novel. His early works are characterized especially by an excellent portrayal of atmosphere and psychological aspects of character and by an attempt to explore all the various aspects of love. Religious overtones are also common.

A recent publication, Los sentidos al aire,¹⁶ a collection of twelve of Lázaro's short stories from some of his earliest to a few which are of recent publication bears out this concept. An analysis of some of these stories in relation to these aspects; love, religion, as esoteric and psychological presentation, all so prevalent in all of Lázaro's works, will aid in an understanding of the .

Lázaro puts a great deal of emphasis on religion in all of his early works. This is due to a great extent to his desire to portray accurately Mexican life. Religion plays an important part in the life of Mexico. The church not only exercises a great deal of control over life, particularly in the small towns, but each person's philosophy of life and psychological makeup is colored by religious beliefs which he has absorbed since childhood.

Lázaro, Los sentidos (México, 1964). As it was impossible to locate copies of the original publications of many of the stories which will be discussed in this chapter, the version in Los sentidos al aire was consulted.

As the theme of religion and love play their part in the portrayal of atmosphere and psychological presentation of characters, so do various methods and techniques. The atmosphere of each of the stories and the psychological interpretation of its characters are necessarily intertwined. It is this interaction between the character and his environment as well as between individual characters which Máñez is portraying in these stories as well as in his later novels. Each of the early works is characterized by a conflict between the main character and his environment. This conflict is often complicated by the interference of other characters in the story.

Chronologically, the very earliest works do not make major use of the theme of young love. Although isolated instances do occur, they will not be treated here.

The first work where this theme has a prominent place is Echa es mala suerte.¹⁷ In this story, the hero, Leopoldo Parra, conducts his first "love affair."

¹⁷Máñez, Los sentidos, pp. 67-84

He is a shy boy, but anxious and determined to prove that he can enter the exploits of which his fellow students boast. Encouraged by his friend, Rubén Hermosillo,¹⁶ he writes a love note to a girl a few years older than he. She responds and a meeting is arranged and carried out. Then his problems begin. He must have long pants as his now short ones are not suitable for his position as the sweetheart of an "older woman." His parents begin to worry and to discuss his strange behavior.

Confident in his new status, he takes his friend, Rubén, to see the girl. On the way they are accosted by the cousins of the girl and ignominiously driven to the fountain outside of a church from which they emerge just as the worshippers are coming out. This experience does not permanently harm them for we discover in the last paragraph that both did well in later life.

¹⁶Hermosillo is Yáñez's mother's maiden name and its use here suggests that this story may be autobiographical.

Three other short stories dealing with love in its various aspects also appeared in this same year, 1927. The heroine of Laule Pascual¹⁹ is Iaquita Alvarez who is lost to prostitution because of excessive vanity, too strong a wish to enjoy life in the showy city which she has to live and a desire to know true love. The themes of love and religion become intertwined as she is redeemed at Easter by the realization that real love can be found in Christ rather than in any of the human beings in whom she has been disappointed.

The treatment of her redemption is well done as through a presentation of her stream of consciousness we view the change in her attitude from despair to the realization that she has found her salvation.

Ahor te esperaré desde muy temprano; ahora que anochece, conozco que no vendrás ya, ilusión de amor.²⁰

She compared herself to Mary Magdalene.

Hebra sea, pero he lavado tus pies con lágrimas y lágrimas, con mi coladera los enjuagué; te es imposible decirme como a mi hermana: "No me toques."²¹

¹⁹Máñez, Los sentidos, pp. 83-84.

²⁰Ibid., p. 87.

²¹Ibid., p. 86.



Her resurrection is celebrated by the ever-present symbolic bells.

Cantén las campanas, baile la luz, ríen las fuentes, deshójense las flores, derrítanse las albas, porque es el día grande entre todos los grandes. Ya se han ido las ra osas. Murio la muerte. Es la gloriosa, la espléndida mañana de la Resurrección. Hartémonos de pan. Embriaguémonos de vino. Pan y vino que bajaron del cielo. ¡Alegria! ¡Alegria!²²

Her salvation is definitely assured as when two young men come seeking her, they are told in the words spoken of Christ: "--La que buscáis no está... ¡resucitó!"²³

In another story written this same year, El tercer enemigo del alma, religion is not presented as the salvation of the young people who are lost to a life of excessive self-interest. Religion does appear as the young man of the couple, Luis Romo, is able to escape the temptations which are increasingly disturbing him.

Se dijo la parábola del pródi o converso, vinieron los propósitos muy sinceros y firmes, la confesión compungida y la suave, gloriosa tranquilidad de la comunión. Huye el enemigo.²⁴

²²Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 88.

²³Ibid., p. 90.

²⁴Ibid., p. 94.

Ironically, it is in church that he meets the girl who is to be his downfall, Concha Inés Alas. Because of lack of restraint, their relationship progresses to a point where they are so important to each other that he begins to miss classes, their behavior in public is talked about by the neighbors and finally he loses respect for her and moves further and further into the depths of degradation. She, having lost the respect of her mother, continues, as she grows older and gradually more insane, to await the return of her lover, refusing to believe the stories which she hears about him. Love without the accompaniment of religion is presented as fruitless.

Fruta de lagar²⁵ again displays a young woman who has an unhappy experience in love. The third daughter of a wealthy family, she is brought up unable to perform any useful task. She is mothered by her two older sisters and pampered by her parents. Upon the death of the father and the loss of the family's fortune, she and her two sisters are forced to go to work. As conditions gradually worsen, she loses confidence in herself. Her loss of self-esteem leads to a love affair with a former suitor and to an unwanted pregnancy. The lover advises an abortion.

²⁵Yáñez, Los sentidos, pp. 221-233.

At this point occurs the real conflict of the world. Religious beliefs and a growing love for her unborn child vie with fear for the opinion of the public in general and her family in particular. The eventual decision is clothed in the symbolism of the vineyard. Her words, "--¡Vivirá! A pesar de terrores y vergüenzas. A pesar del seductor. Es preciso que viva. ¡Vivirá!"²⁶ are followed by a portion in italics which contains an allegory of her fate.

En el lagar los mozos arrojan los últimos racimos; descansan un poco; se descalzan; suben a la rodilla el calzón manchado de mosto y entran a pisar alegremente, sin misericordia, las uvas en sazón y el fruto que no llegó a madurar.²⁷

The last question in this section refers to the future of the child who is the fruit of the winepress of the cruel world:

Muchachos y muchachas, coronados de pámpanos, enloquecidos, gritar himnos al Cño bicornes cuando ha corrido el mosto final de la vendimia: ¿será sangre de Cristo o embriaguez de pecado?²⁸

Thus the religious question appears again. Will this child be destined for good or evil in this hard world which he is entering under unhappy circumstances?

²⁶Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 237.

²⁷Ibid., p. 237.

²⁸Ibid., p. 238.

In the stories just discussed the love theme has been of major importance and in each the theme of religion has been linked to that of secular love. In Laudé Pascual religion brings about the redemption of a woman otherwise lost. In El tercer enemigo del alma a young man's religious belief proves too weak to conquer his lust. In Fruta de lagar it is the salvation of a child's life and the hope for his future.

A conflict between the main character and his environment also characterizes each of these early works.

In Esta es mala suerte Leopoldo Paera meets the challenge of his friends by choosing and courting a girlfriend and is not daunted by the shock of the unhappy ending to his love affair.

Laudé Pascual portrays Paquita Alvarez who meets the challenge of accepting redemption and does so.

Neither Luis Roto nor Concha Inés Alas in El tercer enemigo del alma is able to defeat the obstacle of his own lust and so each is defeated by life.

In Fruta de lagar the heroine, in her decision to save the life of her child, accepts, finally, the challenge of her environment.

The rest of the stories in Los sentidos al aire which fall into the period of Yáñez's early works also display a conflict between the character and his environment.

Asección de muñecos²⁹ presents Mauricio Galaviz, in the atmosphere of a once bustling, now dying, mining town. A self-educated man, he considers himself a scholar. Every mail brings him books, maps, charts, music, and other examples of the cultural world outside of his environment. He holds an important place in the community as notary, singer in the parish church and director of the choir. His world is shattered, however, when, upon the coming of a much-travelled, well-educated engineer, he displays his ignorance of the names of various well-known people and places of Europe by giving non-Castilian words a Castilian pronunciation. He is defeated by his environment. He becomes ill and even after his recovery never again takes his former place in society.

Vigilia de la Natividad³⁰ presents another young man, Gregorio Pérez, who had high hopes for his life.³¹ He is, at the beginning of the work, a clerk in a clothing store. He has been, however, educated to become a priest.

²⁹Yáñez, Los sentidos, pp. 161-182.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 257-280.

³¹Yáñez tells us at the end of the story: "Este es el primer esbozo del personaje Luis Gonzaga Pérez, que figura en Al filo del alma."



He gave up this ambition because of the excessive discipline which the life entailed. He had also failed as a poet and as a newspaper reporter through the inability to stand up under the criticism of others. It is still his belief, however, that he has great abilities. At the end of the story, there is hope as, in reading Thomas a Kempis, he comes across the words, "Procura hijo, hacer antes la voluntad de otro que la tuya. Escoge siempre tener menos que más. Busca siempre el lugar más bajo, y está sujeto a todos."³² In accepting these words and being content with his present life he conquers in the conflict with a world which has before seemed so hostile.

In Baralinton³³ we find a young man called simply J. who is agonizing over the preparation of examinations and a long-overdue thesis. Written in a "stream of consciousness" style, it involves his search for himself, a search which is culminated at the end of the work as we read, "Sócrates en el sol, desdentado, revelando a fuego todos los rincones del mundo e ilustrando igualmente al pobre que al rico, al embustero y al santo."³⁴ The young man has answered the challenge of Socrates to "Know thyself."

³²Yañez, Los sentidos, p. 280.

³³Ibid., pp. 239-256.

³⁴Ibid., p. 256.



Sangre de sol³⁵ really has no great challenge to be met. It deals with two brothers, pledged at their mother's death to protect each other. They join opposing guerrilla armies and are killed in a battle on a village street, dying in each others arms. The shortness of life and the inevitability of death seem to be the major themes which Yáñez wishes to present.

Pasión y convalecencia³⁶ presents a young man faced with the decision of remaining in his country home to which he has come to convalesce from an illness or returning to the city. The conflict within his mind is presented as a debate between city and country as each presents its side of the case. His final decision is to return to the city with its greater challenge and the companionship of people who share his interests rather than to remain at home with his mother, the only woman he really trusts, and living a life close to nature where his soul will have a chance to grow.

This conflict between city and country is a theme of which Yáñez makes use in his later works. It will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter dealing with the general themes in Yáñez's works.

³⁵Yáñez, Los sentidos, pp. 207-220.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 107-150.

The principal method which Yáñez uses in narrating these stories is the omniscient author who describes what he sees and transcribes the dialogue of the characters. Only in three of the stories does he use what are considered more modern techniques, direct and indirect interior monologue and soliloquy. The use of these techniques occurs in Baralinton, Laude Pascual and Pasión y convalecencia.

The three techniques are different from the ordinary presentation by the omniscient author in that they are presented in the first person. The soliloquy which supposes an audience is characterized by more order and a more logical presentation than are the other two methods. An example of Yáñez's use of this method is found in Pasión y convalecencia. It is introduced by the omniscient author.

Se enfoca - sin voz, sin color, sin olor -
la escena de algunas mañanas de la niñez y de la
juventud, transcurridas bajo el sereno patrocinio
de la aldea natal.³⁷

This introduction is followed by the protagonist's memories of his youth expressed in the first person.

³⁷Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 108.



Íbamos al campo, gozosos, entre el verde resplandor de trigos y carbarzos; pisábamos la estrada con la firmeza de nuestro optimismo; vadeábamos el río como ángeles o como pájaros, saltando sobre las piedras movedizas; desviábamos el camino real por senderos ocultos entre las sementeras; gritábamos de adolescencia; corriamos de inquietud; trepábamos los árboles por gula de frutas verdes; brincábamos las cercas con agilidad de cirqueros; y llegábamos a esta o a aquella poza delictable, sombreada por sabinos, circuido de rocas, tapizada con suaves arenas.³⁸

The paragraph continues with the description of the childhood outing. Although the sentences are long, they are understandable and easily followed. This is a quotation from the upper levels of the mind where the character has had a chance to look over his thoughts and edit them.

Indirect interior monologue is not characterized by this clarity of presentation. An example of Yáñez's use of it may be found in Baralinton.³⁹ It is "that type of interior monologue in which an omniscient author presents unspoken material as if it were directly from the consciousness of a character and, with commentary and description, guides the reader through it."⁴⁰

³⁸Yáñez Los sentidos, p. 109.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 237-256.

⁴⁰Robert Humphrey, Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952), p. 29.



The paragraphs in Baralinton in which this first person presentation occurs begin with the author's explanatory word, "Tesis," followed by the thought of the protagonist "El desonor....," apparently the title of his thesis. The author breaks in with description. "Protagonista rechazó esta meditación. Tomó otro libro. Una cita." The abrupt thought of J., "(Las citas...) ¡No!" is inserted here followed by more narration by the author. "Cerró los ojos. El dato numérico, bailón y árido. Estudiante en cúspide, Protagonista se sostuvo diez minutos sobre el trabajo. En el cuarto interior vino a resonar de nuevo la extraña sirena de un automóvil. No la había oído antes. Esa mañana, quince veces. Y más, prehistóricas. ¿Ronando a quién?" Again in parentheses occurs the protagonist's thought, "(Las sirenas...)" followed by the author's description "Se ató al libro. Pensó." followed by the character's thoughts, "Libros, libros, más libros." The author goes on "Pero hueco, el espacio resonó sin vida. Al fin nada." The thought of the protagonist, a quotation from Socrates is inserted, "Solo sé que no sé" followed again by the author's words, "Un viejo, reciente convencimiento. Ayudo ahora, en crisis."

"Eran las tres, la hora en que murió el Señor. Estiró, convulsos, los brazos. En cruz. Pidió morisquetos y lagrimas. La catarsis del sueño lo elevó."⁴¹

As can be seen from these paragraphs, Yáñez does not use a great deal of first person presentation even when he uses the modern technique of indirect interior monologue. He uses a great deal of third person explanation.

The basic difference between indirect and direct interior monologue is "that indirect monologue gives to the reader a sense of the author's continuous presence; whereas direct monologue either completely or greatly excludes it."⁴² In indirect interior monologue all or almost all narration is in the first person. An excellent example of direct monologue, one of the very few which occur in these early works of Yáñez, appears in Luís Pascal.⁴³ It is found as Paquita Alvarez is searching for a way to obtain real love and is written entirely in italics except for the first word. Because it is rather long, brief excerpts from it will serve to illustrate its contents.

⁴¹Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 240.

⁴²Woolrich, Stream of consciousness, p. 2.

⁴³Yáñez, Los sentidos, pp. 83-90.

¡adormecidos. Que ni los gallos canten, ni el corazón palpita. Que todo esté despierto, pero que todo simule dormir. Cerrados en la noche y entreabiertos a la choza de páramos. Levantémonos de cáñamo a las viñas, veamos si floreció la vid, si abrisieron sus pétalos, las rosas, si están ya en flor los granados. 44

To this point it is still relatively lucid and might be confused with soliloquy. As it continues, however, clarity is lost. Further along we read:

¿Visto, a la Esperanza mía? -Vi su gloria.
-Este es el día que hizo el Amor: reencuéstrame en él. Confesad al Amor, porque es bueno y su gloria infinita. 45

It continues in this vein until Faquillo Alvarez's consciousness discovers its salvation and we read:

Campaneros de las altas torres, doblad fuerzas y jubilo. ¡Aleluya! 46

44Vázquez, Los sentidos, p. 37.

45Ibid.

46Ibid., p. 37.

We find, then, that Máñez uses only infrequently in these early works these techniques of the "modern, stream of consciousness school." They appear in only three of his works, all published within a two year period. Two of them, Baralipiton and Pasión y convalecencia are patently experimental. Both were published in 1929, the year in which Máñez received his doctorate. Both, and especially Baralipiton, are characterized by a certain amount of confusion. Baralipiton deals with a young man about to become a doctor. It is entirely possible that Máñez was attempting in these two works to present his own state of mind at the time.

The style of these early works contains many aspects which are found in the novels that appeared later.

There is a beginning of the repetitista style with its repetition of colors and sounds in order to produce an effect. To the use of this style Máñez made many original contributions.

Examples of the repetition of colors may be found particularly in Baralipiton.

Proyecciones iniciales. Como ensueños. Verdes, azules, blancos, grises, verdes. Como sueños. Los verdes se ensañaban, sofocaban el gris; a intermitencias más claras. Los azules (azules ya no), verdes de otoñada. Proyección roja, rojos, rojos: asfixia, espiritual inclinación de carne y sangre: rojo-gris; el torpente del rojo-gris. Gris, violeta y otra vez verde.⁴⁷

The repetition of certain words and phrases in these early works is used as in later novels to portray the atmosphere of the particular story being presented. In Baralibton the repeated phrase Ésta, Ésa y Aquélla, referring to the various women in the protagonist's life, emphasizes the confusion and indecision in the mind. A technique which Gáñez has developed in a manner unique with him, such occurrences are not as common in the early works, but appear in those closest to those of his major period.

Portrayal of the "stream of consciousness" is also seen in these early works as it is in later ones. The technique of presenting the subconscious while a person is in a state of delirium is especially well carried out in Fasión y convalecencia. As the protagonist's temperature rises higher and higher, his mind becomes more confused.

⁴⁷Gáñez, Los sentidos, p. 241.

Yáñez presents these thoughts as they occur.

...Él, señor respetable, hace tonterías; Tú, devorata engulas la voz en traje de lóvino; Yo, azorado, desnudo, corro por la vía céntrica avenida, y vuelo, y vaticino la luna, y no encuentro discurso capaz de atraer al var...no: a las fachas claras donde abrigar el ardiente desnudez... Tú eres Él, Yo soy Tú, Y soy Yo. El águila devoradora que vino de Dios. Sol tengo: lo lei en San Juan; lo siento en la raza donde me ató el Dios del fuego.⁴⁶

The thoughts presented do not follow a logical pattern.

They are presented as they occur in the subconscious without the overriding influence of the upper levels of the consciousness. Yáñez was experimenting here with a technique of portraying the basic psychological makeup of the person by presenting his basic thoughts without the interference of the conscious thought which would hide these things not acceptable for communication to others.

The occurrence of the presentation of delirium and dreams in Pasión y consuecencia is to be expected. It was first published in 1936, not long before the period of Yáñez's major works which began in 1942. Most of the other early works show very little of this technique.

⁴⁶Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 100.

Another technique often seen in the later works is a presentation of the person's thoughts in italics in order to distinguish thoughts from spoken dialogue. This also serves to provide a counterweight between thought and action, a contrast between what really is and what seems to be. In the early works this contrast is not so important. Italics are used primarily to indicate a shift of subject. They may show where a prologue begins; they may indicate a long "stream of consciousness" passage. These passages often consist of a very long sentence, sometimes exceeding a page in length. A portion of a passage from Pasión y convalecencia will serve as an example. It consists of the protagonist's impressions of his mother at the time when he is recovering from his illness.

A la muñeca -crosta de una eternidad-, luchan cuatro manos: estas manos concenarias que curan sin consolar; y aquellas dos manos de largos dedos, voraces, sin otro que el austero y casto anillo nupcial, rociadas por el duro trabajo de la casa, pero caríclicas, olorosas a la ropa limpia que lavasen en agua de río con mucho jabón y tendieron a secar en los llanos, bajo la fiesta del sol; manos que saben de todos los quehaceres y practicaron todas las obras de misericordia: ésta, sobre las otras, de curar enfermos;...⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Vázquez, Los sentidos, p. 110.

Such a long sentence without the use of periods to cause the pause of thought in the mind of the reader is a typical "stream of consciousness" device. Another of Yáñez's experiments in the presentation of the psychological makeup of his protagonist, this long soliloquy presents the protagonist's feelings for his mother in this work, an important factor on the side of retaining in the country in the basic conflict between city and country.

Also typical of Yáñez's later works are mythological allusions. These too occur in the early works. Mythological mention is particularly common. In another hallucinatory episode in Pasión y convalecencia there are references to Hefestos, las Occáridas, Prometeo and Zeus.⁵⁰ Here they are related to the protagonist's burning thirst as his fever recedes. The gods of fire and of water symbolize his thirst and need to quench it. They serve to emphasize by repetition the main thoughts of the character's subconscious. Later in the same story the protagonist's return to health is symbolized by a reference to a story from mythology.

⁵⁰Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 118.

Polémaco - la juventud - rescató a Odiseo de los seres de Circe, en el lugar, y retornaron. Un retorno lento, cuanto aguda la pasión. Un retorno difícil.⁵¹

Again the mythological allusion serves to emphasize an already stated fact, the character's return from death. This repetition of something already known makes more evident those events or attitudes which the author considers most important.

In another example he brings together a list of women a combination of whom the protagonist says would make up the perfect woman. They Are "Venus y Diana, Leda y Minerva, Beatriz y Melibea..."⁵² These women occur again in later works, particularly in Archipiélago de mujeres and La creación.

These images can be used here and in the other works in which they appear because in each case the person who perceives them is an educated man, a man who would naturally have such concepts stored within his mind to be brought out by the subconscious.

In Baralinton, another of the more recent short stories, we find another example:

⁵¹Mañes, Los sentidos, n. 121.

⁵²Ibid., n. 136.

Lejos de la política que en nuestro meridiano es no
Hércules, Odiseo, ni siquiera Polígotes, sino
Quetzilcochtli seer y anastaco...⁵³

Mexican gods too have their place in the country's heritage and in the mind of its inhabitants.

Biblical allusions are less common than those of a mythological or classical nature. When they do occur they are usually used in connection with those of mythological origin, as in the already mentioned reference: "Prometeo: Zeus y San Juan tienen águilas de torva pico."⁵⁴ Yáñez views the Mexican culture as a combination of all the religions which have gone into its makeup. No one religion is treated in such allusions as the only true one.

In summary, it may be seen that in Yáñez's early works the themes and techniques used in his later works were beginning to appear. These early stories are well-written and have their place in a study of Yáñez's works, but it is his major works that the best examples of his literary production are found.

⁵³Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 246.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 118.

3 - LAVOR WORKS

Flor de Juegos Antiguos

As major works we shall treat three: Flor de juegos antiguos, Archipiélago de mujeres, and Al filo del agua. Flor de juegos antiguos is again, as is Archipiélago de mujeres, near to being a novel because of the presence of the same protagonist, a young boy, in all of the episodes. It lacks, however, any unifying plot or theme connecting all the various episodes which would tie them together into one unified work. It remains, therefore, a collection of short stories.

It is the second of the works published in commemoration of the fourth centennial of Guadalajara.⁵⁵ With this purpose, it of course emphasized the atmosphere of the town which it commemorates. The scenery of the city with the mystery of the "barrios," streets, schools, churches, and games relives in these pages through Vázquez's presentation of his memories of its smells, colors, sounds, and style of language.⁵⁶

⁵⁵The first was: Agustín Vázquez, "Figuras de Guadalajara" (Guadalajara, 1941).

⁵⁶Alegría, Breve historia, p. 237.

The stories are composed of memories of incidents and games of a childhood world in one of the poorer neighborhoods of the city where the children got together in the streets to play their games and where the costumes for the Christmas pageants were made of ragscale and not of silks, satins and velvets.

Two main aspects are evident throughout the work, the exceptionally well-done portrayal of the atmosphere of Guadalajara from a child's point of view and the psychological analysis of a sensitive young boy as he meets the problems of the world.

A short explanation at the beginning of the work states:

Estas páginas, transidas por el recuerdo de Guadalajara y maceradas en los perfumes, colores, ruidos y decires de la clara ciudad, fueron escritas lejos de ella, entre los años 1931-1939.

La Universidad de Guadalajara las publicó, por primera vez, en el cuarto centenario de haber sido fundada la capital de Nueva Galicia en el valle de Atemajac."⁵⁷

⁵⁷Máñez, Flor de jagores, p. 7.

Yáñez was born in Guadalajara and lived there until receiving his Doctor of Laws degree in 1927, from the Escuela de Jurisprudencia in that city at the age of 25. The date of first publication of the work does not tell us how long a time passed between leaving the city and the writing of the stories about it. As he tells us, they were composed between the years of 1931 and 1939. Still, a great deal of time had passed since he lived the childhood which he so convincingly portrays.

The portrayal of the atmosphere of Guadalajara is done by the use of description by the protagonist. This use of a main character as narrator is unusual for Yáñez who usually makes use of the technique of the omnipresent, omniscient author, not a character in the work.

An example will serve to illustrate this depiction of the atmosphere.

La calle sola, a media mañana, En las
iglesias del centro, lejos, todavía llaman las
campanas a misa.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Yáñez, Flor de juegos, p. 19.



This is not a busy city, thronging with people. It is a quiet, provincial place. Religion is, as in so many of the locations which Yáñez portrays, of great importance and the bells which call the people to mass regulate the lives of the city's inhabitants.

However, it is not the adult world which is of importance here, but the world of the child. The world of games and playmates in which the child meets one by one the experiences which will teach him to become a member of the world of adults.

Each episode of the work contains an example of the rhyme which is used in a particular game. This rhyme sets the mood for the episode and often symbolizes the experiences which occur. In the first story the rhyme which serves this function is:

Ángel de oro, arenita del marqués
que de Francia he venido
por un niño portugués.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Yáñez, Flor de juegos, p. 21.

The poem becomes involved in the story with the protagonist and a favorite aunt who has been rejected by her former lover, a French sailor. He longs to take the lover's place, but in the course of events finds that his aunt thinks of him as only a child. Thus occurs his first great disappointment in love with the accompanying desire to hurt the loved one as he desires to sing the little rhyme about the Frenchman to his aunt's face.

In another story he fights with a boy, one of his playmates, in order to protect a young girl, also a participant in one of their games. The protagonist becomes so involved in each of the games that they become real to him. In others because of too much interest in girls, whether it be in their beautiful clothing, because of a belief that he must come to their defense, or because he is acting out an adult relationship, he gets into trouble. He may be punished by parents, beaten by rival gangs, chastized by the relatives of the young lady who feel his attentions to be inappropriate, or spurned by the lady herself.

As in Archipiélago de mujeres, a major theme is the relationship of the protagonist with various girls. Here, however, there are usually his young playmates and his thoughts are the idealistic, dreamy thoughts of a boy who is just beginning to notice that girls exist. Each page involves some relationship between girls and boys, whether it be the selection of a girlfriend, or boyfriend, the defense of a threatened maiden, the worship from afar of an unattainable young lady, or a crush on an older woman.

Because the narration of the stories is seen through the eyes of the major character, who is an idealistic and impressionable child, the presentation is especially impressive. The thoughts which go through his mind as he undergoes experiences recall to the reader the time when he too was first encountering the problems of the world.

2 - Archipiélago de mujeres

Archipiélago de mujeres has been considered a collection of short novels tied together by a protagonist who supposedly dreams each of them or sees them as hallucinations. This theme or technique of the dream or hallucination will be treated later in more detail as it is a favorite of Yáñez's. In favor of those who argue for the theory that the work is composed of several short novels is the later separate publication of two parts of it, Melibea, Isolda y Alda en tierras cálidas and Don Juan va a tener un hijo. In favor of those who claim that it is a novel is the theme running through all the parts of a man going through all the stages of love from that of a schoolboy for a girl he never meets to that of a husband for his wife and unborn child.

An imaginative transplanting of amorous heroines of history, legend, and universal literature to the regional Mexican atmosphere, it is supposedly written by Nónico Delgadillo, a dying young man who writes to his friends:

He vuelto a sentirme adolescente, un adolescente más triste y más apasionado que como fui. Pronto me fatino y una especie de sueño cierra mis ojos, los libros todavía en las manos. La subconsciencia prosigue caprichosa lectura, sobre las elementos de la lectura real.⁶⁰

The heading to the Table of Contents of Archipiélago de mujeres suggests what the main purpose of the work will be.

Montaje y proyección de una sombra entre sombras.
Escalas de Adolescencia.⁶¹

By using the technique of montage, common in the film industry, he will project the person about whom Nónico Delgadillo is dreaming against the background of the stories which he has been reading. These stories, in which the setting is Mexico, but the characters are shadows from the past, Yáñez presents the adolescent in each step of his emotional development.

⁶⁰Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 3.

⁶¹Ibid., p. xvi.

By placing these stories in the realm of the sub-conscious he uses a favorite technique which enables him to give a more complete picture of the character's reaction to his experiences in love than would a mere relation of the events. By relating them to well-known literary works they achieve a universality which they might not otherwise obtain. As Alegría has said, all of us have been Rolands or Tristans, Aldas or Isoldes.

The first story is entitled "Alda, o la música." It begins with the words of Roland: "No conocí a mi primer amor. Debió ser una niña dulce y triste."⁶² This first love, whose name was Alda, was the sister of a school friend, Oliverio. Roldán fell in love with her from what her brother told him about her. He was to go to visit her family, but before he could do so, her father died. The letters which he wrote were not answered, his friend did not return to school, and he lost track of the family. During the next few months he became an international swimming champion. However, tired of that life, he left and the newspapers reported that he had been killed in the jungle. Remembering his love for Alda, he decided he should again attempt to visit the family of his friend.

⁶²Vázquez, Archipiélago, p. 5.

Although at first he couldn't find them, he eventually succeeded in doing so. However, he found that Alda, who had loved him also from what her brother had written about him, had died of a broken heart when she had heard of his supposed death.

At the end of the story the reader learns that the dream of Mónico Delgadillo is based on the romance of Roland and Alda.

The title of the story "Alda, o la música" suggests one important theme. Alda is equated throughout the story with beautiful music. The first time her name is mentioned it is in connection with music as her brother says, "Alda, mi hermana toca ese coral en el clavicordio de la casa."⁶³ The music was of particular sweetness and we are told, "...la ascensión de la melodía...me tomó como por los cabellos, me levantó hacia desconocidos aires y fué mostrándome alma región luciente, prados de biendanza. Una palabra leve: Alda, volaba paralela,..."⁶⁴ From this point on, music and Alda are united in his thoughts.

⁶³Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 7

⁶⁴Loc. cit.

He says:

Yo descubría a la música, y la música - dejando de ser para mí un ruido agradable - me convertía en Descubridor del Universo. Aquella fue la mañana de Pentecostés para mi adolescencia. Un nombre, un espíritu nacían en mí."⁶⁵

Alda remains throughout the work as impossible to capture as a piece of music. Dreaming of her later, Roland describes her as follows:

Alda, serena, resplandeciente, junto al clavicordio, entre venados y faisanes, impenetrable a mis golpes, a mis gritos, a mis llamadas tras del capelo que la guardaba, y donde las vibraciones del mar parecían sonidos arrancados al clavicordio;...⁶⁶

In the section of the story written entirely in italics the mind of the protagonist, lost in dreams, fights his way toward this Alda who played the clavichord through the long silent evenings full of stars. Her home was Yucatan and it is against the ancient monsters and gods of that area that he must fight his way to her.

⁶⁵Yañez, Archipiélago, p. 7.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 13.

—, y era inútil volver la cabeza para mirar el rostro de la niña, que danzaba o volaba, esquivándose con alegre ritmo;— «Alda esperare, dejare ver tus ojos...» — Luego que salga el sol... «y así transitábamos por campos de ruinas, bajo la luna, y entre pirámides: — «Las siete pirámides de la sacrala ciudad que fundió Zanná;...»⁶⁷

In this same dream Alda's death is foretold as she is thrown into the abyss as a sacrifice by the priests at Chichén Itzá. Such an augury of death will become more prominent in later works, particularly in *Al filo del agua*. Besides the equating of a young girl with music and the use of augury, it is interesting to explore the use of dreams and the question of what is reality in this story. Absolute reality must be Fónico Delgadillo who has been reading the story of Roland and Alda and has fallen asleep. In this state he dreams of the story of Roland and Alda transplanted to a Mexican setting. However, within this dream, Roland has a dream in which he is transplanted from his college environment to the mysterious land of Yucatan. This placing of dream within dream is an interesting technique. It allows Yáñez to move his protagonist about in space while he is still actually asleep. It also allows the telescoping of time as characters from the past are brought to a setting in the present.

⁶⁷Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 13.

By the use of augury in the dream he is also able to bring the future into the present. This treatment of time, space and reality will be discussed to a larger extent in the chapter about the themes which are found in all of Yáñez's works.

"Alda, o la música" has carried Mónico Delgadillo through the first stage of love, hero-worship. The second story of Archipiélago de mujeres, "Melibea, o la revelación," carries him through the second step of his love life. Now he is Calixto, lover of Melibea. They are the pair united by Celestina in the play, La Celestina. As a student on vacation from school, Calixto meets Melibea while searching for a lost pigeon. The sudden meeting takes him by surprise. A childhood companion, she has grown up in his absence. He is tongue-tied. On returning home he cannot eat and his mother says: "Tú has venido enfermo y no has querido decirlo. Ya me imaginaba que los estudios y el encierro te harían daño."⁶⁸ She thinks it is "un poco de anemia."⁶⁹

⁶⁸Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 35.

⁶⁹Loc. cit.

He begins to watch the home of Melibea from afar, even in the rain. He goes to church to look for her and is badly beaten by a group of boys when on leaving he takes offense at what they are saying about her. Finally he meets her at her window grill. On holding her hand, he suddenly feels that he has found the clear solution of all the enigmas of the world. He has found the tree of wisdom.

He has now met his love, but it is still an idealistic relationship. He has, however, matured a bit more. He is again, as before, lifted to great heights, this time not only of ecstasy, but of understanding, by his great love.

The beating which he receives reminds one of a similar incident in Esta es mala suerte an earlier short story where the protagonist and a friend are tossed in a fountain by the cousins of a girl in whom he has taken an interest.

The sudden realization that a child has grown up is similar to the situation in Al filo del agua when Gabriel suddenly discovers his love for María with whom he has been raised and whom he has thought of as a sister. The description of the meeting is well done.

Me aguijoneaba comprender cómo había venido a ese lugar, cómo estaba en el pueblo, quién era esta criatura sorprendente, más que niña, más que mujer, casi una mujer, ahora ruborizada en mi presencia; pero, segura de mí desconcierto, que se hizo aguda cuando la desconocida rompió el compás de silencio:

-¿No me conoces ya, Calixto?

-¿Tres...eres... Meliben?

-Sí.

-¿No sabía que hubieras, que hubieras venido.

-Anoche llegué.

-¿Cuántos años hace que no nos veíamos? Por lo menos tres.

-Desde que jugábamos a la salida de la Doctrina, en la plaza. Tú también has crecido.

Echese a correr en dirección a su casa." (C)

Here, as in Flor de jueros antiguos, Yáñez does an excellent job of portraying the emotions of young people. Here again the narration is in the first person which allows a more intimate look into the workings of the mind of the protagonist. In other works written with the techniques of the omniscient author the reader does not feel the rapport with the character which is felt when the narration is done in the first person with the main character as narrator.

Another theme seen in other works is the idea that he is on vacation from school and thus has a great deal of time on his hands. It is seen in Al filo del agua as well as in various other works. Students on vacation are presented by Yáñez as a major influence on the life of a community and as a great worry to the parents of young impressionable girls.

In the above paragraph Méñez summarizes what happens in all the stories of Archipiélago de mujeres, a combining of irreconcilable places, epochs and categories. Mónico Delgadillo has been reading the Libro de buen amor when upon falling asleep the story he has been reading combines with his feelings for the wife of his teacher and he dreams of making a visit to his teacher's home. He is told that the teacher, Prampolini, is dead. In parentheses we read:

(Lo juro: nunca me pasó en ella con pensamiento de amor. Pero - may en lo secreto - siempre le tuve lástima: era como una estatua viva, marchitándose, entre tantas estatuas inertes y viejos marotretos; ocurríasele que al maestro le merecía menos atención, menos cariño que los libros, las estatuas y el trabajo en mar' a - ... siempre estados en casa encerrada, - solo envejecedes, quedad a' una vez sola - salir, andar en la plaza con vuestra beldad loca - Entre aquestos parcos no vos prestará nada.)⁷³

Various characters, animate and inanimate, play their part in the furthering of the plot. An aunt of the teacher who reminds Mónico Delgadillo of la Celestina is mentioned. Such a character also appears in "Delitea o la revelación." Statues speak. A cousin of Dionisios tells Mónico Delgadillo that Doña Andrina is bored with her husband. Mónico Delgadillo, rather than answer, remembers

⁷³Méñez, Archipiélago, p. 65.

the general drunkenness of Olympus and thus the probable state of this god of the drunken revel, and remains silent. The coming of *Doña Endrina* is announced by an éleco of "los Sirenas." As she approaches he thinks of her as a "perpetua viuda en la flor de los años resignada..."⁷⁴

While making love to her he tells her that her husband has always been dead and her life with the old man immersed in his books only a shadow.

Suddenly the scene is interrupted by Dionisios in the part of stage-manager:

-Vamos jugando a la tragedia - grita Dionisios desde su rincón - : ahora que venga Prampolini...⁷⁵

Perséfone and *las Boiras* call for the protagonist's death at the hand of Prampolini while *Afrodita* calls for a continuation of the "comedia." Suddenly he is awakened by Prampolini and accused of being a "dormilón." His final words are:

Desde aquella tarde - fué de Santísimo otro día siguiente -, avergonzado como mismo, no he vuelto ni volveré a la casa del maestro."⁷⁶

⁷⁴Vázquez, Archipiélago, n. 66.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 68.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 71.

The title, "Doña Endrina o el deseo", signifies the next step in the adolescent's progression through the various stages of love. He has moved from the love at a distance for a girl he never met in "Alda o la música" to the idealistic relationship in "Telíbea o la revelación," to the desire for a woman in this story.

Various classical allusions are found throughout the work. Besides those already mentioned in the plot summary, various goddesses and women from mythology appear, Helen of Troy, Letis, Artemisa, Afrolita and Antígona are mentioned. All originally associated with love, they serve as symbols of the protagonist's relation with his teacher's wife.

The mood of the story is continued by the "mundo diálogo" of the Oceánides, Sirenas, Gracias and musas. A quotation will serve to illustrate their dialogue.

Las Oceánides:

Abrasaos en esa llama y respirad
ese perfume que embalsama la humanidad.⁷⁷

⁷⁷Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 69.

Another allusion is made to the Greek tragedy of Elipo and Clitemnestra when the protagonist fears the arrival of Crostes. By reference to this classic drama, Yáñez introduces the idea that Francolini is like a father to the protagonist and that his love for Clitemnestra is almost incestuous.

This story, more than any of the others, makes use of Greek mythology. Others are based on the legends of other countries. Each portrays a situation which existed in the past and can still exist in the present so that the events of the past can symbolize the happenings of the present.

The fourth story, "Desdémona o la belleza," deals with the protagonist when he is just fifteen years old. Still a student, he has become friends with a classmate, Julit Sulkes. Through her he came to know Desdémona, a neighbor. She is a beautiful young woman described in the words of Shakespeare as having a "vez de alama acrosa."⁷⁵

⁷⁵Yáñez, Arquitectura, p. 76.

Her husband whom she apparently loves does not seem to suit her. He is described as follows:

-El es un militar antinático, rudo, torco, de pocas palabras e estar, destemplado, aunque se esfuerce en modularlas. Inspira temor y no deleite. Ha de ser hombre de carácter violento... y éste es el mayor contraste entre Desdémona y Othelo. Ha de conocer un día que venga a casa. Es un primitivo.⁷⁹

The protagonist develops for Desdémona the "forver de caballero andante."⁸⁰ Wishing to protect her from all dangers including her husband whom he considers a brute, he at one point throws himself on his knees before her and professes his adoration. This scene is viewed by Iago, an aide to Othelo.

An unusual twist to the story is that Shakespeare appears in it. He is introduced as "Guillermo Shakespeare, un gran poeta inglés, hombre de teatro y de novela."⁸¹ The protagonist views him as the man who is most likely to attract Desdémona's attention away from her husband.

⁷⁹Vázquez, Archipiélago, p. 78.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 82.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 84.

Finally Iago tells the antagonist that Desdemona has turned Othello against them both. That night Othello kills Desdemona and himself and wounds Iago.

It is interesting that the work begins with what is really a summary of the plot.

La historia de la absurda pasión ha llegado a su fin, a su trágico fin: Othello mata a Desdemona.⁶²

The plot of Othello as written by Shakespeare is well known and it is not necessary that the reader be kept in suspense to see how it comes out. What is interesting is the changes which Iago makes in the story. Extra characters such as Juliet Sallies, S. Anagnorisis and the preta exist each have a place in the building of the plot toward its climax.

Also of interest is a scene between the preta exist and Desdemona as they converse at a party. A counterpoint is created between the words and the thoughts of the protagonist. The thoughts are presented in parentheses.

An example will illustrate this dialogue.

Si propensión a las quimeras inventó un diálogo interno paralelo al diálogo verbal: (ella se preguntaba: ¿está usted enajenado de mí?) -Nunca he sabido que sea estar enajenado, ni tampoco esperaba de saberlo nunca. (Mientras la leía una profecía estas palabras, ni yo centrado respondía a la pregunta anagnorisis; ¡no es arar, verdaderamente, es sufrimiento....!)⁶³

⁶²Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 75.

⁶³Ibid., p. 67.

The major theme of the work is the adolescent crush of its protagonist. The manifestations of this complex are presented in such a way as to provide a convincing portrayal of a boy of fifteen who thinks he is in love with a married woman. He calls his feeling "mi absurda pasión"⁸⁴ His suffering, however, is very real as he says "no es amor, verdaderamente, es sufrimiento."⁸⁵ In his imagination he has built a romance between himself and Desdémona, but when he professes his love Desdémona says: "-lunas podré despertar nobles afectos disintencionados afectos."⁸⁶ His dreams are crushed.

This story has carried the protagonist one step closer to true love.

In the next story, "Crisana o la locura," the protagonist encounters a woman who is mad. Her madness is introduced in the title of the work. In this case he will reject the woman. In all the other stories he is the rejected one.

⁸⁴Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 75.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 87.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 91.

The story takes place in a small town where he is a student. It is evening. Children are playing in the streets. A woman walks by. M^áñez describes her passing as follows:

el vaso libre a una dama, que acercó a levantar los ojos cuando los míos hallaban en ella el cíbel de los infantes y un mundo-⁶⁷

She seems at first just a part of the sensation created by the evening, but as time passes, he finds he cannot forget her. As he watches for her in his travels about town, they occasionally meet. He finds her a very changeable person, seeming a different individual at each encounter; woman and goddess, Nemesis and Ifigenia, Artemisa and Helena.

Through a coincidence he receives an invitation to come to visit her. His name is Aurelio de García. Because his initials are the same as those of Amadís de Gaula, he receives a letter intended for the latter from the mad Oriana.

⁶⁷M^áñez, Archipiélago, p. 120.

When the visit takes place he finds her even more mad than he had expected. She thinks herself Oriana and him Aradís de Paula. She inquires why he is not wearing a uniform.

Many aspects of the story are summarized in the final paragraph.

Me duele recordar mi cobardía y la belleza de aquella mujer que generosamente cifró en mí su liberación y el sentido de lo heroico. Aun más me duele que su nombre me asalte, despojando del tiempo sin espacio - arcano - en que vivía la hermosa. Se llamaba Teresa Ugartechea y era sobrina de los Ibarigüngoitia, ricos misántropos, en cuya casa - claustro y raniconio - tejía y destejía la fabulosa gesta de su ventura.⁶⁶

Again in this story some mythological and classical allusions appear. As is common they are used to clarify the portrayal of a female figure. Nemesis, goddess of vengeance, Ifigenia, sacrifice of Agememnon and priestess of the goddess Diana, Artemis, counterpart of the Roman goddess Diana in Greek mythology and Helen of Troy, symbol of great beauty in a woman. All these women, so different from each other, clarify the great changes which took place within the personality of Oriana. These changes were a symptom of her madness.

⁶⁶Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 144.

Madness is a favorite theme in the works of Yáñez.

In this case its use differs from that in other works in that the reason for it is not given. Usually it is the result of a conflict which the character cannot resolve. He retreats into madness in order to escape. Here, however, it is not the girl's madness which is important, but the protagonist's reaction to it as he runs away. This flight is a symptom of his immaturity. He cannot face the defects in the woman he loves nor the problems which may arise.

The next story in Archipiélago de mujeres is entitled "Isolda, o la muerte." It is based on the story of Isolda, the king of Ireland's daughter whom Tristan won by killing a dragon and brought back to marry King Mark of Cornwall whom he had told of her beauty. On the way they unwittingly drank of a magic potion, meaning that they would love each other until death. She married the king. Later Tristan was wounded and she sailed to cure him. If the sails were white when the ship arrived it meant that she was on it. A jealous woman told Tristan that they were black. He died of disappointment. When Isolda reached him she died on his breast.

The story in Archipiélago de mujeres is again moved to a Mexican setting. In order to win Isolda and bring her back as a bride for his uncle, the hero kills a large coyote which is thought to be the Nagual, legendary beast which threatened the countryside. On the way back to his uncle with Isolda they drink from a spring. At once they are doomed to love each other until death. Here, however, she does not marry the uncle, but dies on the way there of some unknown fever, leaving her lover protesting that without his death she cannot die. He is, however, dead in a way as he spends the rest of his life in hospitals and insane asylums.

The title of the work, "Isolda, o la muerte," suggests the major theme of the work. This story again, as in "Alda, o la música," explores the death of a young person. Here, however, death is the major theme. In Alda, o la música even the girl's death was related to music and she died to the tune of funeral music. Her death was expected both because even in the first sentence of the story she was spoken of in the past tense and because in the story of Roland and Alda, on which the story in Archipiélago de mujeres is based, she died when she heard of her lover's death. It was all part of a musical composition.

In "Isolda, o la muerte," however, the death occurs in an atmosphere of enchantment. It was not meant to happen as it did, for in the original tale Isolda did not die until after the death of Tristán.

Tristán does die in a way, however. His insanity, caused by the death of Isolda, is a kind of death, a removal from society. To Váñez, life seems to consist of interaction with others. When this membership in society ceases, life ceases. Tristán says:

Ese día morí yo también para cuanto no fuese la comunión de su vida. Cárcel, manicomio y hospital han sido los santuarios de la muerte.⁸⁹

This same idea, although not so clearly stated may be found in the lives of Luis Gonzaga Pérez in Al filo del agua and Concha Inés Alas in "El tercer enemigo del alba." They too are presented as having left society. Through excessive self-interest they lose contact with others.

Another important aspect of "Isolda, o la muerte" is the description of the landscape of the violent southern tropics over whose mountains Tristán crosses.

Estábaros en la puerta - casi celestial - de la temerosa región que ha sido el otro mundo para las gentes de nuestras comarcas. Mundo de sombrías abusiones. Mundo trágico.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Váñez, Archipiélago, p. 195.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 156.

This presentation of the region as a terrifying place is congruent with Mañez's desire to present the atmosphere of each of the settings of his stories. The setting of this story in the almost enchanted mountains where time seems to stand still is appropriate to the presentation of the superstitious belief in the Nagual. He is the scourge of the countryside and all evil events are attributed to him.

Mientras más nos acercábamos al cañón de Atemónica, nos iban llegando rumores de fechorías atribuidas al Nagual. En cuarenta leguas a la redonda no se hablaba de otra cosa: que el Nagual robó anoche Huejúcar y casi a la misma hora hizo una muerte en Monte Escobedo;...⁹¹

Such a use of a typical regional superstition helps to make more real to the reader the atmosphere of the setting of the story. Probably Mañez's main purpose in these stories is the placing of the action in the appropriate setting so that the atmosphere of the location may fit in with the emotions of the characters in order to form a unified whole. He certainly succeeds in this purpose in "Isolda o la fuente."

In the final story of the work, "Doña Juana, o el amor," he has finally reached maturity. From the title we know that the protagonist has found real love.

⁹¹Mañez, Archivológico, v. 201.

The story begins "Don Juan va a tener un hijo."

As it continues we find that he is no longer the "ladies' man" that he once was, but rather has settled down and become a good father. His new attitude toward life is illustrated by the following quotation.

Futuro perfecto. ¿Pudo antes imaginar siquiera este concepto? La perseverancia de su amor -ahora- le conseguía el doble milagro de fé y esperanza en la trinidad de un hogar: su hogar, el hogar de don Juan.⁹²

He doesn't understand how he was caught, but acknowledges that he is. His wife is expecting a child, one on which he had not planned. His thoughts are now focused on the child to come. He worries about what it will think of its father. In his dreams the fathers of the women he deceived will return to deceive his daughter if the child is a girl. Dreaming again, he sees the baby as a boy and a monster. His description typifies the type of hallucination the subconscious can conjure up in the dreams which Yáñez portrays.

...horrible magalocéfalo de labios leporinos y acondoplástico.⁹³

⁹²Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 201.

⁹³Ibid., p. 207.

In his dream also appear the grinning women whose innocence he ruined. He sees Tisbea, Aminta, Isabela, doña Ana, doña Elvira, Constanza and Julieta, now cortesans.

His mental state is greatly agitated and he goes to doctors for myriads of tests. His wife too is subjected to numerous examinations in order to make sure there is no reason for the baby to be less than perfect.

Finally, the major theme of the story, redemption through love, is made clear. Yáñez writes:

Ha muerto don Juan; pero hasta la muerte -hoy- es jubilosa: pasa el entierro del pecador entre serenatas de campanas. Ha nacido Juan a otra vida que le buscó el amor de doña Inés.⁹⁴

In this woman the protagonist finds what has not been there in any of the other stories, a true love so strong that it changes him, binds him to its object, and makes him jubilantly happy.

Yáñez has carried the reader through all the "Escalas de Adolescencia." In doing so he has made of each story a montage of elements, past and present, from different locales, in order to present a general rather than a specific picture, a portrayal of the experiences of a typical young man and thus of all young men as they move through the various stages of emotional development.

⁹⁴Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 209.

3 - Al filo del agua

Al filo del agua was a more ambitious fictional effort than any of Yáñez's preceding works. It is definitely an actual novel while Archipiélago de mujeres and Flor de juegos antiguos might be considered collections of short stories or short novels.

Preceding the first chapter of Al filo del agua is Yáñez's explanation of the meaning of the novel's title plus a brief resume of his purpose in writing it and the methods used in attempting to achieve that purpose.

Al filo del agua es una expresión campesina que significa el momento de iniciarse la lluvia y - en sentido figurado, muy común - la inminencia o el principio de un suceso.

Quienes prefieran, pueden intitular este libro En un lugar del Arzobispado, El antiguo régimen, o de cualquier modo semejante. Sus páginas no tienen argumento previo; se trata de vidas - canicas las llama uno de los protagonistas - que ruedan, que son dejadas rodar en estrecho límite de tiempo y espacio, en un lugar de Arzobispado, cuyo nombre no importa recordar.⁹⁵

Neither the exact setting⁹⁶ nor the plot of the novel is important. Rather, Yáñez is trying to evoke the atmosphere found in any small, tradition-bound Mexican town immediately preceding a major change such as the Revolution of 1910.

⁹⁵Yáñez, Al filo, p. 2.

⁹⁶It is probably Yahualica.

Al filo del agua is not a conventional novel held together by a plot which continues throughout the work, a plot to which all the actions of the characters contribute. Nor is there any one person who is the "main character," the protagonist of the novel. The ordinary process is reversed as the plot and characters are relegated to a secondary position and the town's atmosphere becomes its primary concern. The town itself is the protagonist and all incidents which occur contribute to the portrayal of the atmosphere or "personality" of this protagonist. The novel has been called the "psychological analysis of a town"⁹⁷

The unity of the work which makes it possible to call it a novel is provided by two factors. The first is this atmosphere toward which all incidents contribute. It is characterized by a monotony and an aura of frustration. The primary influence in the development of this aura is the church, the strongest restraining influence of the town's inhabitants. Their lives are built around its rituals. Its influence on the people, especially the women, leads to complexes, frustration and inhibition.

⁹⁷Elaine Haddad, "The Structure of Al filo del agua," Hispania, September, 1964, Vol. XLVII, No 3, 527-528.

Because the church resists new ideas, it comes into conflict with the second unifying element of the work, the approaching revolution. It is the atmosphere of monotony and frustration existing not only in this town, but throughout the nation which causes the desire for revolution. It is the existence of an opposition to ideas of reform which makes the revolution necessary. All incidents of the work not only help to define the atmosphere of the town, but also lead toward the inevitable revolt against the frustrating influences which make up that atmosphere.

In the sense that the impending revolution provides the mood of expectation, unrest and dissatisfaction which pervades the work, Al filo del agua is connected with the novels of the Revolution. These earlier works were characterized, however, by the straight narration of the events which occurred and by the description of individuals and their surroundings. In Al filo del agua Vázquez goes more deeply into his characters than a mere physical description. Through the use of "stream of consciousness," interior and exterior monologue and other contemporary techniques typical of the existentialist writers, of some of whose methods he is a precursor, he gives a psychological insight into the lives of his characters. Not only what each character does,

but why he does it and how he feels about it is expressed by means of a portrayal of what is going on in all levels of his mental processes.

Not only does Yáñez give his novel a psychological twist through a presentation of the reactions within each character's mind, but he also provides a sociological slant as his characters do not operate only as individuals, but as members of society, each having an effect on every other member of the society which they comprise. They are, as one of his characters says, "canicas," marbles, rebounding against each other within a closed circle of time and space.

It is this interaction among the characters which makes up what there is of a plot in Al filo del agua. The plot does not follow consecutively through the novel. The reader must piece it together by considering the separate chapters of the work, each a part of the life of one or more of the characters. The events in a later chapter may actually have occurred before those treated in an earlier one.

There are really two plot lines in the story, the one on a national scale which finds its climax in the Revolution of 1910, the other on the local scale which reaches its high point with the murder by Darían Limón of his father, don Timoteo Limón, and his sweetheart, Micaela Rodríguez.

A brief summary of the main events might be given as follows. In a small, traditional, church-dominated town at the time of Madero when the country is about to erupt into revolution, various characters are thrown together in an atmosphere of impending cataclysm.

As the work begins, don Timoteo Limón, though oppressed by guilt because of his thoughts, wishes for the death of his sickly wife so that he may marry one of the young women whom he has seen about the village. On the night of the return of their son, Damián, who has been working in the north the mother does die of the shock of his return.

The long-awaited reunion with his son does not provide the happiness expected by don Timoteo. Both father and son become interested in the same girl, Micaela Rodríguez, who, like Damián, has been to the north and been infected by the more modern life there. Damián's dissatisfaction with life in his small town home is evident in a violent temper which becomes apparent when he kills his father's dog. Micaela's attitude is characterized by a wish to escape to the big city if only to attend school away from this small, dead town, or if that is not possible, to defy the rules which make up the framework of the lives of the town's inhabitants. Purposely she plays father against son until finally Damián's temper takes control and two murders are the result.

It is the influence of northern ideas which caused the disruption just discussed. Another purveyor of such disturbance is Victoria Branciforte who comes as an innocent visitor during Los Días Santos and stays in the home of the Pérez family. Her provocative dress and city ways, foreign to this provincial town, excite the imaginations of all the men and turn their minds to thoughts which appall the priests.

El pensamiento en Victoria, la sombra de Victoria invade las conciencias de viejos, hombres maduros y mancebos, pesajosamente, que ni el confesionario, donde se revela, logra desarraigarla siquiera en los casados.⁹⁸

Victoria's relationship with two men is of particular importance. The first, Luis Gonzaga Pérez, is the young son of the family with whom she stays during Los Días Santos. The effect of her presence as a guest in the household, coupled with the strict religious atmosphere of the town and the ambition to do great things without the perseverance to stick to one thing and carry it out leads to emotional conflict and madness in the life of this young man.

⁹⁸Yañez, Al filo, p. 165.

Her presence in the life of a second adolescent, Gabriel Martínez, the bellringer, leads to his confusion, disgrace and eventual expulsion from the town. He develops a crush on Victoria which causes his music on the day of her departure to be so bad that he is expelled from the bell-tower. The playing of the bells has been his life. His attitude deteriorates and he is sent away to school before a romance with María, the niece of the priest, don Dionisio, has a chance to flower. As a consequence, María's frustrations continue to mount until finally she escapes with the revolutionary army.

One other important faction plays its part in the development of this complicated net of circumstances. The priests, padre Islas, padre Abundio Reyes and don Dionisio compose the three facets of church influence on the town. Padre Islas is overly strict, stoic in philosophy and devoid of personal friends among his parishioners. He is the leader of the Hijas de María, composed of most of the young girls of the town. Under his influence they are shaped into a mold of such strictness that a happy relationship with a young man becomes almost impossible. The case of Merceditas Toledo is an example of this as she loses her chance with Julián because she is afraid to accept even his love notes. He turns to and marries a girl from another town.

Padre Abundio Reyes presents a contrast to padre Islas as he dedicates his life to initiating modern ideas through the institution of trade unions and changes in church ritual. Padre Reyes' ideas are not carried out, but serve to point out how the traditional society is failing the developing country with its wish for a better life.

Padre Dionisio is important primarily because of his two nieces, Marta and María, in whose lives are evident the conflicts which occur in the lives of all the young women of the town. Marta turns to excessive maternal feelings toward the children of the town while María loses herself in dreams of escape as she reads the forbidden sensationalistic newspapers which are her link to the life of the cities. Their uncle agonizes in dream and hallucination over what is happening to the lives of the young people under his care, but is powerless to act effectively against the forces which have built up. With the coming of the revolutionaries, María goes off with the soldiers and thus realizes her dream of seeing other places.

Yáñez's style of writing Al filo del agua is unique. It has been called the "repentista" style. By the repetition of certain words and phrases, Yáñez attempts to impress on the mind of his readers a certain atmosphere which he wishes to convey. These repeated phrases are usually composed of elements of church ritual and serve to emphasize in the mind of the reader the domination of the church over the town.

Yáñez's stylistic portrayal of atmosphere is also characterized by the description of sounds and of colors. His style is poetic and metaphoric. It has even been said that he uses techniques better suited to poetry than the novel.⁹⁹ These aspects of his style will be treated to a greater extent later in this chapter.

This is unquestionably a psychological novel. However, it does not follow the method usually employed in such a work of focusing on one person and making all actions converge on the person. Rather, all actions serve to portray the atmosphere of the town in which these people live.

⁹⁹Raúl Pedro González, Trayectoria de la novela en México (México, 1951), p. 334.

Thus, as mentioned earlier, the novel might be called the "psychological analysis of a town."¹⁰⁰ This idea is supported by the "Acto preparatorio" which precedes the first chapter of the novel. In it Vázquez, through the use of descriptive phrases, creates the atmosphere in which his characters will act. It is a "Pueblo de mujeres enlutadas,"¹⁰¹ a "pueblo sin fiestas."¹⁰² It is a town of somber tradition in which a voice is never heard lifted in spontaneous song. "¡Cantarán las mujeres! No, nunca, sino en la iglesia los viejos coros de generación en generación aprendidos."¹⁰³

The tolling of the bells sets the atmosphere and regulates the life of the town's inhabitants. "Pueblo sin otras músicas que cuando clamorean las campanas, propicias a doblar por angustias,..."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰Haddad, "The Structure", pp. 527-528.

¹⁰¹Vázquez, Al filo, p. 3

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 4.

Cuando a campanas lentas, lentísimas, toca los doce, las tres y la oración, se quitan el sombrero los hombres, en las calles y en la plaza. Cuando la Campana lagor, pesada lentísimamente, toca el alba, en oscuras alcobas hay toses de ancianidad y nicotina, toses leves y viriles, con rezos largos, profundos, de sonoras cuerdas a medio apagar; viejecitos de nuca seca, mujeres y campesinos madrugadores arrodillados en oscuros lechos, vistiéndose, rayando fósforos, tal vez bostezando, entre palabras de oración, mientras la Campana renca da el alba con solemne lentitud, pesadamente.¹⁰⁵

All desires are repressed by fear.

Los deseos, los ávidos deseos, los deseos pálidos y el miedo, los miedos, rechinan en las cerraduras de las puertas, en los goznes reseco de las ventanas; y hay un olor suyo, inconfundible, olor sudoroso, sabor salino, en los rincones de los confesionarios, en las capillas oscurecidas, en la pila bautismal, en las pilas del agua bendita, en los atardeceres, en las calles a toda hora del día, en la honda pausa del mediodía, por todo el pueblo, a todas horas, un sabor a sal, un olor a humedad, una invisible presencia terrosa, angustiosa, que nunca estalla, que nunca nace, que oprime la garganta del forastero y sea quizá placer del vecindario, como placer de penitencia.¹⁰⁶

Honor is all important.

No hay dolencia en el pueblo como la del honor mancillado: preferibles todas las agonías, todas las miserias y cualquier otro género de tormentos.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Yañez, Al filo, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 10.

The married state is one of unhappiness.

Qué calvario del matrimonio bajo la hostil cerrada
extrañeza colectiva, tradicional.¹⁰⁸

Physical comfort is unimportant.

La comodidad es un concepto extraño. La vida no
merece regalos.¹⁰⁹

The accepted philosophy of life in this town is
conformity.

La conformidad es la mejor virtud en estas gentes
que, por lo general, no ambicionan más que ir viviendo,
mientras llega la hora de una buena muerte.¹¹⁰

The young girl is expected by the age of fifteen to
belong to the "Hijas de María," which:

conforma el carácter del pueblo imponiendo rígida
disciplina, muy rígida disciplina, en el vestir en
andar, en el hablar en el pensar y en el sentir de
las doncellas, traídas a una especie de vida con-
ventual, que hace del pueblo un monasterio.¹¹¹

Against the background of a traditional church in
conflict with the tide of the Revolution Yáñez presents one
by one the inhabitants of the town in interaction with
their society, under this stifling atmosphere which allows
a person only the prospect of conformity or rebellion with
unhappiness the result no matter what the choice.

¹⁰⁸Yáñez, Al filo, p. 11.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 12

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

The analysis of the atmosphere of the town is equated with that of the personality of one individual. The main character of the work is the town itself. The creation of atmosphere had been Yáñez's purpose in many earlier works, and here again it has a major role. The interaction among the characters has its effect on the formation of the atmosphere and it in turn affects the lives and actions of the characters.

The use of augury helps to create a strained atmosphere and sense of impending doom just prior to the Revolution toward which all events lead. Augury of events is a favorite technique of Yáñez, particularly in Al filo del agua. In this novel Lucas Macías is its main instrument as by telling stories of the past, he foretells events of the future.

Luis Gonzaga Pérez's fate because of Victoria is foretold in Lucas Macías' story of a young man of the past led astray by a pretty circus performer. The death of another performer previews that of Micaela. Near the end of the book Lucas Macías' deathbed invocation of the title of the book "*¡Estamos al filo del agua!*"¹¹² constitutes the most important augury of all as it foretells the Revolution to come.

¹¹²Yáñez, Al filo, p. 376.

Other omens and superstitions also serve as auguries of trouble to come. Halley's comet is an omen of evil. The superstitious people of the village consider it not only an omen, but a cause of evil events such as the madness of Luis Gonzaga Pérez.

The barking of dogs and dreams of various characters also serve as auguries of evil events. The barking of Orión foretells the death of his master, don Dimoteo. María's dream predicts her own fate and that of Micaela. That of don Dionisio is an omen of the coming unhappiness of Marta, María, Micaela, Gabriel and Darían as well as an insight into what is wrong at the core of the village.

All these events foretold in auguries and omens occur at the climax of the story as the ideas which fostered the national revolution have fermented in the minds of the townspeople to the point of explosion and as the troops themselves arrive and carry María away.

Superstition is also used in order to heighten the atmosphere of the work. August is portrayed here as in many of Yáñez's other works, as a deadly month. The coffin-makers have collected supplies ahead of time for the inevitable funerals. The bells of St. Pascual Bailón announce the proximity of death. As the heat increases and water becomes more scarce, tempers rise. The dogs bark foretelling death.

It is "la cañavieja," the month of "la gata serena," both seen frequently in Vázquez's earlier short stories.

Overlying these themes is the sense of impending doom which is diffused primarily through the use of augury. This everpresent apprehension aids in holding the various parts of the novel together. The doom is to occur on two levels, local and national. Leading toward this climactic moment have been two separate series of events which may be related to each other on a common psychological level. On a local level the sexual repressions and fears burst into the open with the madness of Luis, the murder of Micaela and the escape of María. On the national level there is more and more news of happenings in other cities until the report of the rebellion of Madero signals the start of the Revolution.

Al filo del agua is written from the point of view of the omniscient author. A traditional method of presentation, it has been adapted for use in the more modern novel which goes into a description of the consciousness of its characters. This is what is referred to as the "stream of consciousness" technique. Actually no one technique exists, but several quite different techniques are used to present the stream of consciousness.¹¹³ It is used here in

¹¹³Murphy, Stream of Consciousness, p. 4.

combination with the direct and indirect interior monologue. The second refers to "that type of interior monologue in which an omniscient author presents unbroken material as if it were directly from the consciousness of a character and, with commentary and description, guides the reader through it. It differs from direct interior monologue basically in that the author intervenes between the character's psyche and the reader."¹¹⁴

Let us examine a selection from the novel as the consciousness of don Timoteo Linón is presented.

El infierno, la muerte, el juicio, la gloria, su mujer, Darián, el difunto Anacleto, las formas de garrilas muchachas, el huizachero de Juchipila, sus dolores, las siembras, las lluvias, la sequía, los ladrillos de Orión le daban vueltas en revólino; la cabeza le daba vueltas, que era una desesperación, toda la santa noche, la eterna noche, y su cuerpo nerva daba vueltas de un lado a otro de la cama, sin conciliar el sueño, sin oír las esperanzas de los gallos, sin sentir señales de vida, ladridos presagiosos, relinchos, mugidos, nases, carrañadas, Dijérase que hubiera tomado café o frutado más de cuatro cigarritos; pero ni eso. Ido el sueño, se le iba la cabeza vacía, no, llena de jaqueca y de malos pensamientos molientes que le hacían daño físico, y el esfuerzo por desecharlos y conseguir dormirse lo extenuaba más que una fiebre, durante las horas interminables. El pecado de superstición era el culpable: si no hubiera consentido las abusiones por el aullar del Orión, el Enemigo no viniera con tantos embellecos. Parecía quedarse quieto, en sueños, y un sobresalto pasaba otra vez todos los filos de la rueda sobre la cabeza: se habrá muerto Darián,

¹¹⁴Humphrey, Stream of consciousness, p. 27.

si lo enviara a cobrar lo que tengo, sufrirán la
larga sequía, las cantaderas de la feria, me voy a
morir...: ruidos filos de la rueda ineluctable, cada
vez más retoscos, más atascos y pectusinosos; más
debil cada vez la resistencia, en la noche sin fin.¹¹⁵

Now we see a progression from author description through
indirect to direct interior monologue as followed again by
comments by the omniscient author.

Márquez's main technical innovation in Al filo del agua
was the telling of diverse stories, more or less related,
in a complex narrative sequence, alternating his chapters
instead of giving each story separately. This method gives
the reader a sense of the multiple simultaneity of life
itself.¹¹⁶ It has an effect resembling that of Huxley's
Point Counterpoint or John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer.¹¹⁷
Márquez himself has said: "Busqué la forma de aplicar a un
pueblo pequeño lo que Dos Passos hace en Manhattan Trans-
fer."¹¹⁸ He succeeds in his attempt to apply Dos Passos'
technique. In Manhattan Transfer Dos Passos gave a picture
of the atmosphere of New York City during the first third

¹¹⁵Márquez, Al filo, pp. 21-22.

¹¹⁶Alberto Arce Felde, Índice crítico de la literatura
hispanoamericana (México, 1959), Vol. II, pp. 764-405.

¹¹⁷José Luis Martínez, Literatura mexicana del siglo XX,
1910-1949, I (México, 1949), p. 219.

¹¹⁸Emmanuel Carballo, "Márquez hace la Defensa de 'La
Creación' su última vapuleada novela," México en la Cultura
(7 de febrero de 1960), 3.

of the twentieth century. To do so he alternated episodes from the lives of his characters. An episode from the life of one character might be only a paragraph long with several episodes included in one chapter. In Al filo del agua each chapter deals with one main character in relationship with others, but the effect is the same. By portraying the emotional conflicts and social relationships of single representatives of the various groups of people in either the large city or the small town, each author produces an exceptionally clear and moving picture of life in the atmosphere which he has chosen.

There are major differences between the two works. Yáñez's novel does not cover the length of time of that of Dos Passos. Dealing with only a two year period, it cannot portray the entire life of each of its characters. Dos Passos treats the lives of the main characters of his work from childhood to adulthood and thus is able to portray contrasts between each one's ideals and his accomplishments and between the parent's hopes and the children's fulfillment or lack of fulfillment of them. Yáñez does manage in later novels to cover more of each character's life and development through the use of flashback while still keeping the scope of time to only a few years. In Al filo del agua,

however, the limited period of time is a part of his purpose as he states at the beginning of the work. It is the reactions between his characters "en estrecho límite de tiempo y espacio"¹¹⁹ which it is his purpose to portray.

Yáñez writes in what is called the "repentista" style. By the repetition of Latin and Spanish phrases and excerpts from church ritual he attempts to portray for the reader the mood and atmosphere of the setting of his novel. We find an example of this in the chapter entitled "El día de la Santa Cruz."

Cada frase como si fuera marcada con hierros encendidos, se rompía en la exclamación: ¡qué calor!
 -¡Qué calor!
 -¡Qué calor!
 -¡Qué insoportable calor!¹²⁰

This is the chapter in which Damián murders Micaela. The heat is represented as responsible for the emotional state of each of them which makes her murder inevitable. The repetition of the words "¡qué calor!" emphasizes the effect of the great heat on all members of the community.

¹¹⁹Yáñez, Al filo, p. 2.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 100.

The monotony of the life of the town symbolized by religious ritual is emphasized by a similar method in a repetition of religious ritual.

as...
 as...
 as...
 as...
 Monótonamente. Morirás, pasarás, encontrarás,

 as...
 as...
 as...
 Cuesta arriba. Puños de mujeres enlutadas.
 Hombres de mentón comprimido. Muchachitos de ojos
 desmesurados.¹²¹

The reader feels the monotony of the town's atmosphere when he reads the same sounds over and over again. He senses the drowsiness which must occur and realizes the reason for the rebellion of some of the people in this town where nothing new ever happens.

The Latin words from the ritual sung for the dead, "dies illa, dies irae"¹²² also symbolize the mood of the town. They refer to the two climaxes of the story, the murder of Micaela and the arrival of the revolutionaries and the flight of María. Repeated several times, they warn the reader that a climax is coming and prepare him for it. They create in the reader a receptivity for the events when they occur.

¹²¹Yáñez, Al filo, p. 203.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 207-208.

Various adverse criticisms have been made of the work. González criticised Yáñez's repetition of concepts and words in Spanish and Latin which he feels are only used artistically and stylistically rather than because of any necessity in defining characters.¹²³ In González's opinion the quotations are used at times to produce in the mind of the reader, through the repetition of concepts, sentences and words, a sensation of somnolence, quietude, sopor, and inertia typical of the town, and at others a sensation which intends to provoke a philosophic and metaphysical indolence. However, he feels that the most frequent object is mere form and style in the manner of Poe. After careful consideration, however, it seems that Yáñez's purpose is not merely that of demonstrating style, but rather he is again attempting to portray atmosphere. Style is important to this portrayal, but style is not the object of Yáñez's endeavor. González feels this repetitive technique is more appropriate to poetry than to prose where it tends to produce monotony and fatigue.¹²⁴

¹²³González, Trayectoria, p. 334.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 327-338.

It seems, however, that this repetition of concepts and words in Spanish and Latin, especially when composed of church ritual, serves to heighten the impression in the mind of the reader of the church domination of the town and to point out the all important part which the church plays in the lives of the town's inhabitants. If in Manhattan Transfer what one hears is the noise of the bustling city, in Al filo del agua what is heard is the repetition of prayers and the ringing of bells which help to make up the atmosphere of the town.

Yáñez's concentration on a two year period is advantageous for he is interested not in following the characters' actions over a long period of time, but rather, in probing their personalities. The compactness of the work and the depth to which he is able to probe make this a powerful work.¹²⁵ In his "Acto preparatorio" he stated that his characters's actions would occur "en estrecho límite de tiempo y espacio." He is interested in this time of crisis, not in the events which led up to it.

¹²⁵Haddad, "The Structure", p. 528.

Another possible deficiency in the novel has been pointed out. There is an omnipresent, omniscient author who reflects about settings, the emotional states of characters and tells the reader what the characters are saying or doing. This use of the omnipresent, omniscient author makes less intimate the contact of the reader with the characters of the work. On the other hand, the omniscient author must by definition be all-knowing and is therefore appropriate in a novel where the purpose is to present accurately all the characters of the work and their reactions with each other. It seems that it is worthwhile to sacrifice a little intimacy for a great deal of accuracy. In Al filo del agua Yáñez succeeds in accomplishing the purpose which he stated at the beginning of the work, presenting the reactions of the characters within a narrow period of time and space. It is unfair to judge him by standards which do not apply to the purpose which he set out to accomplish.

C - RECENT WORKS

As recent works we shall treat Las tierras flacas La tierra pródiga and La creación. They are characterized by more experimental techniques. The plots are even less evident than in the works of the major period. Rather than plot, the most important aspect of each is the psychological presentation of the characters in reaction with society. It is this interaction of characters which holds each novel together. In the presentation various modern techniques are used. Counterpoint is common, particularly in La tierra pródiga. The use of italics to distinguish between thought and spoken word is used to a great extent in the written communication of this counterpoint.

Las tierras flacas

Las tierras flacas deals with don Epifanio Trujillo and the empire which he has built up in the arid lands of Mexico. With two of his sons, Jesusito and Felipe, whom he has picked as his lieutenants, he controls the entire area and its inhabitants. These include Mariana, the soothsayer and herbhealer who is blinded by don Epifanio's men, Romulo who can never be the man his grandfather was, Mercedes, his wife, who is not satisfied with that which her husband provides, and their daughter Teófila who brought education to the young girls of the area. Don Epifanio loved her and wished to marry her. At her death she became a saint in the eyes of her neighbors and her sewing machine a sacred relic whose possession was fought over by various factions among the inhabitants.

Into this atmosphere of controversy and suspicion returns Jacob Gallo, also called Miguel Arcángel, another son of Epifanio Trujillo who had denounced his father and taken his family to the north. Before he left he had been his father's choice of a successor. Through promises of a bright future with the help of the modern ideas, such as electricity, which he has brought back with him he wins the support of most of the people away from his father.

The final paragraph of the novel gives an augury of the future under which the lot of the poor man will be no better than before as it rains on the ceremony for the dedication of the new electricity.

Fulguró nuevo relámpago, seguido de furioso trueno. Comenzaron a caer, sonoras, dispersas, grandes como tostones, las primeras gotas de la tormenta.¹²⁵

The psychological makeup of the characters of the novel is presented by means of a description of their reaction to conflict with other characters and with their environment. Don Epifanio Trujillo is a strong man ruling all others, until he meets the young Teófila with whom he falls in love and offers to make his first wife, although he has had children by many other women without the benefit of marriage. Other characters also are defeated when essential weaknesses become apparent as they meet challenges which they cannot overcome.

The theme of the family dynasty is unique with this work. In others there has appeared a man who held the position of a dictator, but this is the first instance where he delegated responsibility to his sons who he planned to have succeed him as ruler.

¹²⁵Yáñez, Las tierras flacas, p. 360.

Another unusual aspect is the delegation of sainthood to Tecófila by the inhabitants of the region who make of her sewing machine a relic and a symbol of power. Superstition is displayed in this work more than in any other. An airplane flying over is thought to be a great bird and an evil omen. Electricity is a great miracle rather than a scientific achievement. Madre Matiana, the herb healer and soothsayer is thought to be a witch and a person of great power.

The clash between modernity and superstition which occurs is also unique, primarily because it occurs as such a definite contrast. Only in Al filo del agua does a similar situation occur in the clash between traditional ideas, as symbolized by the church, and modern thought with the Revolution as its bearer.

La tierra pródiga

La tierra pródiga again involves a man who is the virtual ruler of the area in which he lives. This rule is achieved primarily through the force of his personality. He is called "el Amarillo" because of the yellow flash of his gold teeth when he smiles. His land is on the western coast of Mexico and he has dreams of making it and the surrounding area into a resort as important as Acapulco. It is his belief that he has succeeded in persuading the government to back him in this project. However, when the government envoys arrive, they bypass him in favor of neighboring landowners. Completely broken in spirit by the loss of his dream, he turns to a young girl, the daughter of one of his enemies, rather than to the wife who has supported him through all his previous disappointments. The wife commits suicide.

The characters, el Amarillo and his wife, Elena, are first presented by a brief description. The reader's knowledge of them is then allowed to grow through the use of flashback and other techniques used in the presentation of their reactions, both past and present, to various situations. El Amarillo is first described as follows:

Éste es el Amarillo famoso, Ricardo Guerra Victoria, dueño de La Encarnación - veinte kilómetros de litoral asombroso - y de miles de hectáreas, tierra adentro. Fabuloso. Ya dobla el medio siglo y parece tener veinte, no más de veinticinco años: ágil, parlanchín, risueño, sangre liviana, parece incapaz de matar a una mosca y su leyenda es de demonio. Hazañoso. La gente lo ve al mismo tiempo en sitios entre sí muy distantes.¹²⁷

His wife is presented as she was when they met.

La muchacha Elena era la más bonita de todos esos rumbos. Había sido reina de las fiestas patrias y del carnaval. Grandes ojos negros de Dolorosa, iluminados de pasión. Enérgico el porte, sin blanduras costeñas. Precozmente desarrollada. La voz deliciosamente quebrada. Alto el empeine. Caderas musicales. Cabellera frondosa de suaves ondulaciones. La piel apiñonada, fragante.¹²⁸

Their relationship at the time of the story has cooled and he no longer feels the jealousy which he experienced during their first years together.

Among the techniques used more often in this work than in others is the description of beautiful surroundings. The area which el Amarillo hoped to make a tourist paradise is described in the following quotation.

¹²⁷Agustín Yáñez, La tierra pródiga (México, 1960), p. 34.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 79.

Playas dilatadas, vistas desde las alturas como vastos abanicos lentamente ondulantes, dilatados abanicos de nácar, tendidos, rematados en filigranas espumosas, lentamente ondulantes; breves, graciosas playas tenues, encajonadas en granitos escarpados; rumorosas playas al son de guijas, caracoles y conchas; abiertos mares embravecidos, bramantes; cólera de olas en vano contenidas por hostiles rocas; olas mugientes, hinchadas, abatidas en estrépito de perlas; epifanías de colores: azul profundo, verde, turquesa, azul celeste, rematados en crestas, dilatados en faldas, en holanes, en flecos de blancura burbujeante, espesada morosamente como limos de aire sobre los ocres y los oros arenosos, o sobre las fortalezas de piedra, donde queda su huella, la marca de sus niveles, pronto borrados por el rápido embate incesante; caminos de sol sobre las olas, profundos a medida de la tarde, cuando los escarlatas, bermellones, solferinos, morados, lilas, rosas, grises, hasta la solemne caída en la oscuridad, bajo el velo negro de la noche; murallas del litoral, el pecho contra la furia intermitente, a veces rotas en senos deleitosos, mansos; murallas de altas torres, cambiantes los colores de punta en punta: negro hierro, bravío bronce, rojo vivo, rosa tierno, verde seco, grises recios, distintos de punta en punta, y la tropa de accidentes en avanzada sobre la mar, enhiestos contra las marejadas poderosas: morros, alfiles o simples peones al jaque de las aguas; delgadísimas agujas de piedra, victoriosas una y otra vez, al emerger de los turbiones.¹²⁹

Interesting in the above quotation is the length of the sentence. Yáñez does not wish to interrupt the train of thought by the use of a period. Rather, the description flows on as if the scenery were being panned by a motion picture camera with a smooth passage from one point of interest to another. This same type of description was

¹²⁹ Yáñez, La tierra pródiga, pp. 51-52.

seen in "Isolda, o la muerte," one of the parts of Archipiélago de mujeres which dealt with the same geographical area, the hot lands of the coast which are especially appropriate as the subject of beautiful description.

Yáñez's basic theme for this story, that of a man who turns to a younger woman, is universal. Each of his novels has some universal theme which makes it more important than if it were merely an amusing story built around a plot.

La creación

The novel La creación continues the story of the life of Gabriel Martínez, the bellringer in Al filo del agua. As the story begins he is returning from Europe where he has been completing his musical education. By means of flashbacks it is revealed that his education was financed by the two women who were important to his life in Al filo del agua, María the niece of the priest don Dionisio and Victoria who had turned the heads of so many of the men of the village with her city ways and dress. As the narration continues, he takes part in all segments of the musical life of Mexico City as well as travelling through the provinces as a teacher of music and associating with people in other fields of the arts including the dance and painting. This survey of the artistic life of the city is aided by the various "Diotimas"¹³⁰ who are his inspiration during different periods of his experience. These women include María

¹³⁰Diotima appears in the dialogues of Plato as the woman who explains the nature of true love.

and Victoria between whom there is a continuing conflict in his mind as well as a model, a ballet dancer, an actress, an opera singer and others.

Yáñez originally intended to entitle the work La sinfonía erótica.¹³¹ This title is derived from the major symphony which Gabriel Martínez composes as well as from the life which he lives moving from one woman to another. The title which was the final choice, La creación, is a more general title. As such, it refers not only to the life of Gabriel, but to the creative process in general.

Rather than tying the work together by a strong plot, Yáñez uses the structure of a musical composition. A list of the titles of the main sections will aid in an understanding of his method.

Primer movimiento: andante

Segundo movimiento: creciente

Tercer movimiento: galopante

Cuarto movimiento: vehemente

The action which takes place is not physical, but occurs in the psychological condition of Gabriel as he moves faster and faster, struggling against the chains of personal involvement, in rhythm with the titles of the chapters, in his search for true beauty and freedom.

¹³¹Yáñez, "Sueño de Verano", p. 268.

At the climax of the work it is his decision that the chains of involvement are the price paid for fame and must be accepted.

Other aspects of a musical composition are also evident. Counterpoint, the art of a plural melody where there is one melody moving in accompaniment with one or more others related to it, but independent, is used extensively. The best example of this technique is found in the relationship between María and Victoria. An example of its use will serve to illustrate Yáñez's utilization of the technique. It consists of two paragraphs, the first dealing with Victoria, the second with María. Because of their length, only a portion of each paragraph will be quoted.

En ella -la espléndida mujer que lo condujo esas doce horas y no se lo apartó hasta dejarlo a bordo- se condensan los débiles recuerdos de Veracruz. Ella es Veracruz, para él. En ella, en sus fulgidos ojos, descubrió el mar; en sus manos confió el aturdimiento de tanta sorpresa; en su serenidad se paralizaba el miedo, aunque recrecía la vergüenza insoportable de aquellos días, de aquellas horas terribles y dichosas. Cuando asomen las luces del faro, serán las miradas mismas que lo despidieron con brillos de gracia y de resignación; las miradas de la madre que al principio del camino ha esperado la vuelta del prodigo y se dispone a celebrarla con sus mejores dones; el regazo temido y querido.

Pero ¿la otra? La otra es el mundo, la inquietud del mundo, la primera rebeldía contra la rutina del vivir y la última revelación del poderío de la voluntad en lucha con el destino; sembradora de ansias tempranas por huir de la conformidad, y echarse a los caminos, y agotar las emociones; compartió con ella la triste infancia y el principio de la adolescencia en el confinamiento pueblerino;...¹³²

The counterpoint in this work is not as clearly defined as in some of his works, where italics are used to distinguish the counterpointal melody. It does, however, occur again and again as the influences of Victoria and María on the life of Gabriel Martínez are compared.

An important theme of the work is the dialogues of Plato. It is first introduced when Gabriel mentions the receipt of a copy of "Los diálogos platónicos editados por Vasconcelos." In these dialogues Plato sees love from all sides and Socrates speaks of the love that he learned from Diotima. From her he learned that the person who wishes to proceed correctly should first love beautiful forms, first a person. Then he has to love beautiful minds, then the beauty of laws, institutions, the sciences, and finally, having perceived all beauty as of the same family, he will love the Idea of Beauty. In connection with this theme, all the women in Gabriel's life are referred to as Diotima for a time, teaching him some aspect of love.

¹³²Yáñez, La creación, pp. 14-15.

They move through the steps of the above mentioned process as he progresses from the beautiful model to a woman who is crippled in body, but beautiful in spirit. A counterpart of the banquet at which this dialogue occurs in Plato's dialogues is seen in La creación. It occurs in a chapter entitled "El banquete. O de las glorias de Cusido."

At the end of the work all the themes are briefly repeated. One paragraph will serve as an example of this technique which might also be found in a musical composition.

Era la capitulación. Pero también otra cadena al cuello. El músico tuvo impulsos de rechazarla cuando escuchó repetidas las palabras de tan gran señora. Fallido impulso. Victoria - laría. El prodigio. Las bellotas. Campanas lejanísimas. Lo asaltó el presentimiento de la felicidad sin tan gran señora; el presentimiento de la resignación por ignorar hasta el nombre de la mujer que lo admiraba desde que lo escuchó en Guadalajara; la felicidad, a pesar de la pérdida, y la conformidad con otro bien después de la Visión. Cuántos pasos perdidos. Tornaban vencedores los recuerdos culpables ahuyentando el espectro deslumbrante de la Belleza. ¹³³ sería feliz. La carrera de aplausos no tendría fin.

All of these works have one thing in common, experimentation. Vázquez went off in different directions in each of the novels, but there is a certain similarity of technique and theme among them. Of particular importance are the techniques used in the psychological analysis of characters.

¹³³Vázquez, La creación, p. 309.

The techniques by which this psychological analysis is presented include those associated with the stream of consciousness. These depictions of the thoughts of the characters are presented in italics in order to distinguish them from the spoken word and from the author's narration. This technique is often characterized by the use of long sentences. An excerpt from Las tierras flacas illustrates Yáñez's use of this method.

-Yo ya lo sabía y me lo esperaba desde la Noche de Muertos, cuando antes de acostarme, haré quince días, fui a la sala para prenderles sus velas a mis Ánimas, y allí me encerré, allí, esa noche del primero al dos de noviembre como teno costumbre, me puse a recordar, a pensar, y después de arreglar los candeleros, meterlos y acunarles las velas, después de encenderlas y componerlas bien para que al arder no se ladearan o los pabiles se enchucaran, me quedé allí medio dormido, y se me aparecieron difuntos con vivos, revueltos en el sueño, y vi que San Miguel se me dejaba venir derecho, levantando su espada, y oí que me decía: tú, cristiano, pela los ojos, preventivo, agérrate bien de la silla, el caballo se te va a parar de manos, las yaguas te van a tirar patadas, las reses quieren brincar las trancas, y luego lloró cantando la Tentación, en figura de Teófila, me quitó la máquina de coser, hicieron rueda los diablos juntos con los pastores y el ermitaño, riéndose a carcajadas, cantando, bailando, volando, encabezados por la Madre Matiana, la demontre de bruja, la que más alto volaba y se carcajaba más, mientras la bola de mis hijos, caritaneados por Felino y Jesusito, allí me más con los brazos cruzados, esperando, sin trazas de ayudarme, de sacarme de aquel ajigolón.¹³⁴

¹³⁴Yáñez, Las tierras flacas, p. 123.

This example consists of the thoughts of don Epifanio Trujillo as he lies in bed attempting to go to sleep. The entire quotation consists of one long sentence. In presenting don Epifanio's thoughts by this "stream of consciousness" method, Vázquez hopes to give the reader the same psychological feeling which was occurring in the consciousness of the character in the novel. This is often Vázquez's purpose, to influence, by the calculated use of words, the feeling of the reader of his works. Thus, certain words may be repeated, certain types of punctuation used, in order to impart to the reader the mood of a town or the psychological condition of a character. In Al filo del agua he used the repetition of church ritual to portray the boredom of life which created frustration and led to rebellion. In these more recent works this technique is still used. In La tierra pródiga we read:

-¡Embargaron al Amarillo!
 -¡¡Embargaron al Amarillo!!
 -¡¡¡Embargaron al Amarilló!!!

Los ecos llegaron a todos los rincones de la comarca, reptaron entre mangles, volaron sobre árboles y cerros. (Ahorcarlo es lo que debían hacer).¹³⁵

The repetition of the words, "¡Embargaron al Amarillo!" makes more emphatic the idea of the opposition to the war.

¹³⁵Vázquez, La tierra pródiga, p. 147.

La creación also contains examples of this technique, particularly in the chapter entitled "Tercer movimiento: calorante." In this chapter Gabriel is suffering hallucinations on the morning after a big party and he sees the muses and the graces of Greek mythology. They appear to him as women of his acquaintance and demand his attention. Repeated again and again are the words "- A mí, a mí, a mí..."¹³⁶ emphasizing the urgency with which each claims her right to his attention.

In the paragraph just mentioned occurs again the technique so often seen in earlier works of the use of dreams and hallucinations. Here various women of his acquaintance, representing various fields of the arts, appear and symbolize the conflict which he is undergoing in trying to find his true place in life. In this hallucinatory state his unconscious mind comes to the fore and the depth of his consciousness can be presented.

In Las tierras flacas the dream of Epifanio Trujillo has already been mentioned in which his hopes and frustrations are presented without the barrier of the conscious mind.

¹³⁶ Ríos, La creación, p. 172.

In La tierra pródiga such a situation does not occur. Here it is the conscious thoughts of the characters which are presented as they plot against each other for the control of the potentially valuable territory which they inhabit.

In all three works no character stands alone although they may try to do so. El Amarillo and don Epifanio believe in their own strength, but fail when they come into conflict with others who have the one attribute which can defeat them. All other characters also are what they are because of reaction with society and their environment. It is this theme which is seen in all of Yáñez's works, the characters like "canicas," or marbles, bouncing off each other and rebounding about the circle which is their environment.

NONFICTIONAL WORKS

Yáñez's nonfictional works will be discussed from two points of view: first, as part of his attempt to portray all parts of the Mexican culture past and present, and second, with the emphasis on the influence of each of the writings on Yáñez himself. This will be followed by a brief discussion of themes prevalent in his non-fictional works.

Yáñez's major nonfictional works dealing with Mexico may be listed as follows. This list includes those works which the writer has encountered. There are undoubtedly others in existence which are not listed here.

"Raíces indígenas."

"Historia vieja y actual."

Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas el conquistador conquistado.

"El hombre providencial de romanticismo." (Santa Ana)

"El ideario educativo de Justo Sierra."

Poesías y estudio general sobre don Justo Sierra, su vida, sus ideas y su obra; A. Yáñez director of the edition.

Don Justo Sierra, su vida, sus ideas y su obra.

El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana.

Fichas mexicanas.

"Una historia sagrada."

"Imposición de la paz."

"Justo Sierra y el Porfirismo."

By examining the above list we find that Ríos has chosen those periods and people which he feels have had a great effect on the development of the present-day Mexican culture. Whether he is writing a full-length novel, a short article, or a review of the work of another writer, he chooses carefully in order that he may feel that what he writes has significance in the documentation of the Mexican scene, past and present.

He discusses first the period before the Spanish conquest. Next he deals with the period of the conquest, the first meeting of the two cultures. In El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana and in the chapters of Fichas mexicanas, several of which had appeared as prologues, he explained these stages of the development of the Mexican culture.

He wrote about Lizardi, as the first Spanish American novelist. Santa Ana received attention as the man who dared defy the United States. Finally, Justo Sierra, who advocated a modern educational system is seen as an important man in the movement toward a modern Mexico.

These nonfictional works combined with his fictional production give what Yáñez intends to be a complete picture of the modern Mexican scene and the important men and events which make up the background of it.

Yáñez's treatment of history is analytical. He studies it from a sociological standpoint. The interaction between the individual and society and the result of that interaction is the main theme of many of his works.

In "El hombre providencial de romanticismo," a work about the reason for Santa Ana's rise to power, he states:

Literal y extremada, la tesis de Carlyle es falsa. Todo caudillo es el reflejo de su grupo; pero también todo caudillo influye en el carácter de su grupo. Hay un doble movimiento entre la masa y el individuo. De otro modo no habría historia. Un orden estático la devoraría."¹³⁷

Neither the group nor the individual is more important in the selection of a leader, it is the interaction between them which produces the leader. Each influences the other, but neither is dominant. Yáñez studied not only the "what" of history, but also the "why" and the "how." He explains the circumstances which allowed Santa Ana to gain and retain power.

¹³⁷Agustín Yáñez, "El hombre providencial de romanticismo," Cuadernos Americanos, mar-abr, 1946, 215.

Yáñez also wrote biographies of important people of history. These works also deal with men, the society in which they lived and the interaction between the two. It is in his biographies that the influence of Yáñez's works on the author himself appears most clearly. His two most important biographies are: Fray Bartolomé de las Casas el conquistador conquistado and Don Justo Sierra su vida, sus ideas y su obra.

In Fray Bartolomé de las Casas el conquistador conquistado Yáñez presents the priest as "uno de los grandes creadores del 'ethos' americano."¹³³ He was a Dominican priest who had great influence in the drafting of laws to force the conquistadores to treat the Indians as human beings. Bitterly opposed by others, particularly the Franciscans, he attempted to evangelize the Indians and to make them more Spanish. Paradoxically he did favor trade in Negro slaves, apparently considering them the stronger of the two races and choosing the lesser of the two evils.

¹³³ Agustín Yáñez, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas el conquistador conquistado (México, 1942), p. 184. —

Summing up his view of Las Casas, Yáñez says:

Ligado con América por afecciones anteriores al descubrimiento, y luego por la entrega total de vida y pasión, Bartolomé de Las Casas es uno de los grandes creadores del "ethos" americano. El estilo del apóstol es en buena parte el estilo del Contiempo.¹³⁹

Yáñez is in fray Bartolomé de las Casas el conquistador conquistado essentially a historian. His reason for choosing Fray Bartolomé de las Casas as a subject is that he is one of the creators of the American "ethos."

Among Yáñez's works of critical nature is the prologue to El pensador mexicano.¹⁴⁰ Here Yáñez praises the portrayal of the character of Mexican life which is seen particularly in El Periquillo Sarniente. He finds that Lizardi deals in his works with human values and that they are rooted in the subsoil of Mexican essentiality. The problems dealt with in the works of Lizardi according to Yáñez are stated in the following quotation.

...el problema del indio, el de las tierras, el de la superstición; los rencores que dividen a nuestros grupos sociales, el pauperismo, la justa distribución de la riqueza y las reivindicaciones en todos los órdenes, las virtudes, los vicios, la desviación de las vocaciones individuales y colectivas, los cacicazgos, y la injusticia medular de nuestras instituciones.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹Yáñez, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, p. 184.

¹⁴⁰Lizardi, El pensador mexicano, Estudio preliminar seleccion y notas de Agustín Yáñez.

¹⁴¹Yáñez, Pichas, p. 61.

The double religious heritage, pre-Cortez and Catholic, also mentioned in El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana, is discovered in the works of Lizardi. Yáñez refers to it as "una doble herencia religiosa precortesiana y católica."¹⁴² This idea of the "mestizaje" of the Mexican people is a theme often seen in Yáñez's works.

Another of Yáñez's favorite themes, schools and education, is also mentioned. Yáñez writes:

Con frecuencia el Pensador refiere el tema al aspecto escolar y aun formula iniciativas concretas para la multiplicación de planteles educativos y mejoramiento de los estudios; no menos frecuente es la insistencia crítica sobre la calidad de los maestros; pero la cuestión es más amplia, rebasa los límites de la escolaridad y, principalmente en las obras mayores, se plantea como concurso de fuerzas ambientales que deben ser controladas.¹⁴³

Thus we see Yáñez preoccupied again with the theme so prominently displayed in Don Justo Sierra, su vida, sus ideas y su obra as well as in others of his non-fictional works and in many of his fictional works as well. The interest in education which is so evident in his life is also clearly displayed in his literary production.

¹⁴²Lizardi, El pensador mexicano, p. 67.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 83.

The life and works of Justo Sierra are discussed in Don Justo Sierra, su vida, sus ideas y su obra as well as in others of Yáñez's works. The number of works which Yáñez wrote about this man suggests the influence which his life must have had on Yáñez himself. This is also attested to by the similarities in their lives, particularly in the field of education. Justo Sierra was a poet, newspaperman, diplomat and a major figure in the government of Mexico. His greatest achievements were in the field of education. He considered Education one of the "Bellas Artes." It was his belief that school should consist of not just instruction, but education. The best teachers should be recruited and a degree should not be accepted as the only proof of a person's ability to teach. School should be national, integral, secular, free and required.

After extensive travels in Europe and the United States as well as throughout his own country he saw that the nations of the world could learn a great deal from each other. Therefore he initiated an exchange program between the teachers of the various countries.

Strongly nationalistic, he saw education as the only defense against American imperialism and industrial expansion. A national university with an integrated program would be able to provide people with the skills to compete against foreign intervention in Mexican industry.

Justo Sierra was a man of intuition regarding educational decisions. He cannot be designated a philosopher for he had no set plan regarding the nature of life. Yet there were certain essentials to the conduct of his life. He believed in his country, liberty, human dignity, and justice. These beliefs are evident also in the works of Yáñez.

At times Yáñez's purpose is primarily to give a picture of a certain place and the atmosphere which surrounds it. Such a work is "Genio y figuras de Guadalajara"¹⁴⁴ which Yáñez himself characterizes as a "descripción del ambiente intelectual."¹⁴⁵ It describes the city of Guadalajara in the years of 1929-1930.

¹⁴⁴Agustín Yáñez, "Guadalajara," Revista Abside, V. 5, 1941, 10-37.

¹⁴⁵Personal correspondence.

It is the first of a series of articles of various types by different authors with which the magazine, Revista Abside commemorates the fourth centenary of the founding of the city.

Guadalajara was Yáñez's home at the time he wrote this work. He was a professor at the normal school for girls there from 1923-1929. It was published in Revista Abside ten years later in 1941 at which time he states he looked back on it and found nothing which he wished to change.

The structure of the work is simple. It is divided into sections, each of which gives a picture of a certain aspect of the city. The titles of these sections give an idea of what they contain.

1. Panorama
2. Postales
3. Figuras - Barrios. Ellas. Por ellas, ellos.
4. Señas
5. Horizontes
6. Clima, trazo y fragancias
7. Toques, pregones, ruidos.

It is composed of descriptive passages, beautifully written in poetic language. In few, but appropriate words Yáñez gives portraits of the significant people, places and things which make up the city. Added together they make up a complete and animated photograph of a provincial Mexican city which the author knew well and presents with artistry.

The major theme found in the non-fiction works of Yáñez is the emphasis on the dignity of the individual. The best rendition of this theme is found in "Imposición de la paz."¹⁴⁶ Here Yáñez discusses the prevalence of war. His belief is that war exists because man does not dare hope for peace. He does not rebuild for fear of seeing that which he has rebuilt torn down in the inevitable war to come. Yáñez states:

La psicosis de guerra ofrece pues dos aspectos: el apetito dirigido de unos cuantos y la pasividad compleja de grandes grupos expoliados, desilusionados y desesperados en medio de distintas circunstancias adversas; tiranías locales, restricciones ideológicas y materiales, daños irreparados, condiciones de vida tanto o más duras que en el tiempo de la guerra, y una tarea de reconstrucción que no hay ánimo para emprender bajo las amenazas de nueva destrucción o de interminable duración de las circunstancias aflictivas.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Agustín Yáñez, "Imposición de la paz," Cuadernos Americanos, nov-dic, 1942, 18-24.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 22

...

Destaquemos en esta actitud la nota más profunda, que es la renuncia de la dignidad humana, renuncia, que da la tónica antihumanista de nuestro tiempo.¹⁴⁸

...

Conquistar la paz en nosotros mismos es hallar el camino de imponerla en el mundo.¹⁴⁹

This emphasis on the dignity and importance of the individual is also found in other works. In his prologue to Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Doctrina we find Fray Bartolomé saying:

'Todas las cuales gentes son ánimas racionales, criados y formados a la imagen y semejanza de la Altísima Trinidad.'¹⁵⁰

Later appears a quotation from Pope Paul III

"Los indios son verdaderos hombres...."¹⁵¹

Yáñez's choice of these quotations which stress the importance of the Indian illustrates his belief that each person is important. Not only does each person have his responsibilities, but each also must be looked upon as a fellow human being and treated as such.

¹⁴⁸Yáñez, "Imposición" p. 22

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁵⁰Yáñez, Fichas, pp. 41-42.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 42.

In Raíces indígenas he states:

Ha llegado a padecerse un cierto género de absurda vergüenza por lo indígena, signo de una de nuestras mayores miserias y de ignorancia en cuanto lo indígena fue y es en cuanto subsiste dentro del alma nacional.¹⁵²

Here we see that he considers the Indian's contribution to society an important one which should not be ignored.

That which Yáñez opposed is the lack of individual decision based on the working of the individual conscience. Action by the group without thought is seen as wrong and detrimental to society as a whole.

In "El hombre providencial de romanticismo"¹⁵³ it is because of the universal group image of a romantic hero that Santa Ana is able to gain and hold control. The individual conscience does not function in perceiving his lack of real aptitude for the job. He projects the image of a flamboyant romantic hero. The era of Napoleon had just passed and Santa Ana took his place in the eyes of the Mexican people. Better men existed but lacked the flamboyant personality which kept Santa Ana before the eyes of the people.

¹⁵²Yáñez, Fichas, p. 21.

¹⁵³Agustín Yáñez, "El hombre providencial, 202-216.

To Yáñez it is the individual who holds the key to a better world. Each man must find within himself and not in the proclamations of the group that which he feels to be right.

Another theme receiving a great deal of attention is that of the cultural mixture existing in South America and its effect on South American literature. The ramifications of this combination of old and new world cultures are explored in various of Yáñez's non-fictional works. It makes its major appearance in El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana. Here he says: "...la literatura iberoamericana es mestiza, cuando es auténtica,..."¹⁵⁴

In Raíces indígenas he again stresses the indigenous heritage of the peoples of South America and deplores the ignorance of it.

Allí perdura el alma indígena con sus herencias, e infructuoso error ha sido el querer desconocerla y el obrar negándole beligerancia. Sus vicios han resultado así más peligrosos, y sus virtudes quedan como fuerzas perdidas,..."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴Yáñez, El contenido, p. 20.

¹⁵⁵Yáñez, Fichas, p. 21.

The Indian culture is a part of the Mexican civilization and it should be recognized as such.

In his own works Yáñez demonstrates the existence of this mixture of cultures by the use of Indian tradition as a background for the characters. In so doing, he demonstrates what he feels all Mexicans should do, recognize and not look down on this part of their country's past which is such a large part of its present culture.

The importance of education is the last theme which receives a great deal of attention in Yáñez's non-fictional works. His choice of subjects is one clue to his interest in the field of education. In writing about fray Bartolomé de las Casas, an educator of the Indians and don Justo Sierra, once Minister of Education, who had dedicated his life to the improvement of the educational system of his country, Yáñez demonstrated his own interest in that field. In the parallels between his own life and that of Justo Sierra we see in part the influence which this man had on Yáñez. Particularly the comparatively large volume of his works dealing with don Justo Sierra emphasizes his interest in that man and the contributions which he made.

Xáñez's own work in the field of education is, of course, the greatest proof of his interest in that field. That interest appears frequently in his non-fictional production as well as in that in the fictional field.

The non-fiction works of Xáñez may be said to explain and clarify the fictional works which he has written, from the pictorial to the more involved and psychological works.

His non-fictional works also range from the pictorial to the psychological. They deal with the same problems which are presented fictionally in Xáñez's novels and short stories.

CHAPTER IV

THEMES

TIME, SPACE AND REALITY

Pictional works have always had a setting, a location in time and space in which they took place. This is still true in the modern work. A physical setting still exists. However, there has been added the dimension of psychological time and space. The closed plot with a beginning and ending is abandoned. Clock time loses its validity at the lower levels of the consciousness. Everything is presented as seen by the characters, or as they perceive it in the lower levels of their consciousness. This psychological time-space is a relative thing depending on the past experiences of the character which affect his view of present experience. Relationship to an event may also affect a person's perception of it. Thus, a person who has had unpleasant experiences in the past will have unpleasant associations regarding it at later encounters and it may seem to last a longer time. A fire seems greater to the owner of a store than to the other spectators and seems to burn more rapidly.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶Carlos L. Terán, "El concepto del espacio en la literatura," The Modern Language Journal, Vol. XLV, No. 8, December, 1961.

Vázquez's portrayal of the depths of the consciousness is most commonly achieved through the presentation of hallucinations, delirium or dreams. These techniques are particularly common during the middle period of his works, from 1943 to 1955. Archipiélago de mujeres and Al filo del agua are especially characterized by such portrayals. A more recent work, La creación, also makes some use of these methods.

In Archipiélago de mujeres there exists the setting of Mónico Delgadillo's home where he experiences his dreams. This setting constitutes the basic reality of the work. Mónico Delgadillo's dreams compose the next layer as Vázquez uses this method to probe and portray the lower levels of his consciousness. At this level a new scheme of time and space are introduced. The location becomes that part of Mexico most appropriate to the legend being transplanted in his dream to Mexican soil. The time, although seemingly the present, contains elements of the past as characters and situations borrowed from classical sources are introduced. Alda, Melibea, Isolda, Ximena, Calixto, Rolando and Tristán, as well as others live again in a Mexican setting. This telescoping of time and space leads to a situation where what is seemingly reality actually exists only in the mind of Mónico Delgadillo.

Still, the situations do possess a certain amount of reality in the universality of the emotions experienced by the young man who is the hero of each. They are situations which could be real even if they are not in these particular instances. As Alegría has said, "Todos hemos sido Calixtos, Rolandos y Tristanes en un momento dado o soñado."¹⁵⁷

Auguries of the future are another instance of the telescoping of time which are found, although not to any great extent in Archipiélago de mujeres. The most conspicuous example occurs in "Alda, o la música." As Rolando dreams he foresees the death of Alda, although in his dream she is thrown into a well as a sacrifice while her actual death will be because of a broken heart.

In Al filo del agua the portrayal of dreams and hallucinations again plays its part in the presentation of the subconscious of various persons. The dream of don Dionisio is a good example. Triggered by the sounds of a catfight, his subconscious imagines the cries and protestations of all the suffering, confused members of his congregation, as the women agonize in childbirth and the men confess their many sins. The night seems to stretch out into eternity.

¹⁵⁷Alegría, Breve historia, p. 239.

En la eternidad del desmayo continuaban los gritos insufribles, por muchas horas, por muchos días, por toda la eternidad.¹⁵⁸

On awakening comes the question of what reality is:

"-y si todo lo soñado era la realidad mortal."¹⁵⁹

Although all the occurrences of the dream could not actually have happened; although the women giving birth could not be three women at once, nor the man making confession be two different men, yet the thoughts expressed could be true, a realistic portrayal of the situation in the town.

Auguries play a much larger part in Al filo del agua than they did in Archipiélago de mujeres. They are presented primarily by Lucas Macías as he foretells the future by use of stories from the past. This method is consonant with Yáñez's view of time as everchanging yet cyclical. These ideas are found in the prologue to Los sentidos al aire entitled "Música celestial."

Vida del hombre. Los acólitos del zodiaco la esgrimen; el sesgo del sol, en cada mes, en cada día, la colora de modo diferente:...

.....

Pero cuando vuelve el sol a la misma posada, los colores devorados reaparecen con la puntual veracidad que Jonás en la boca del monstruo: el alma oye músicas de antaño, vive emociones transcurridas, recrea escenas....¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸Yáñez, Al filo, p. 213.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 213.

¹⁶⁰Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 20.

The same sort of incidents happen again although the characters and setting may have changed.

Yáñez's use of mythological and classical allusions also contributes to his idea of cyclical time. The idea of the possibility of the recurrence of such figures as symbols or of their reappearance as characters in his work illustrates this belief. As Melibea, Isolda, Alda, Desdémona, Ximena and Doña Inés have their place in a modern setting, so the three graces and the nine muses find their counterparts in the presentation of La creación. In his prologue to Los sentidos al aire Yáñez states:

Alma del Universo, talladoras de ilusiones (Clío, Euterpe, Talía, Erato, Terpsícore, Melódome, Calíope, Urania, Polimnia): ¿cuándo será que pueda olvidar las inválidas cartas de Beatriz, Melibea, Laura, Carlota, Ifigenia, Isolda, Betsabé? -Ellas son una sola mujer y ésta vive en nosotros, más acá del zodiaco, envuelta en la inaudible música de las esferas,...¹⁶¹

So we see Yáñez's view of time as ever-changing, yet cyclical. The same attributes reappear, but no person is seen as the exact reproduction of another. This idea is illustrated by the confusion of Gabriel Martínez as he attempts to ascertain the identity of the muses and by the inability of don Dionisio to decide conclusively who the pregnant woman and the man desiring confession in his dream are.

¹⁶¹Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 22

Space for ^{the} Yáñez may also change, for in the portrayal of the consciousness, the character may move from one place to another without the necessity of physical movement. In a dream he may be wherever he dreams himself to be, while actually he is still in his bed.

Two levels of reality appear. The first is the basic reality, the protagonist as he lies in his bed and dreams or experiences his hallucinations. The second is the universal truths which are revealed to him in his state of unconsciousness through auguries of the future, recurrent character traits which appeared in the past and are seen again in the present, or other aspects of the present which, although distorted and confused as in the dream of don Dionisio in Al filo del agua, nevertheless are illustrative of the real state of the lives of the people of the village.

WEATHER, CLIMATE AND CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

The use of weather, climate and celestial phenomena throughout Yáñez's works has two functions. First, they serve as symbols of evil things to come and second, through the attitude of the characters of the works toward them, they serve to point up the superstition inherent in the people and thus to build up the atmosphere of the works.

Hot weather, particularly in the month of August, has a particularly sinister connotation. It causes the breaking out of rebellion and hatred. In Al filo del alma we see:

¡Nunca había hecho tanto calor! ¹⁶²

El calor sofocante atizaba la desesperación de
Damián... ¹⁶³

Agosto el mes de suerte y de desgracias. ¹⁶⁴

Agosto el mes funesto. ¹⁶⁵

Ya no acabaría nunca de contarles las desgracias que
ha traído agosto. ¹⁶⁶

¹⁶²Yáñez, Al filo, p. 197.

¹⁶³Ibid. cit.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 251.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 256.

Mention of the canícula or dog days, as well as the gota serena, or a drop of night air, is particularly prominent. The gota serena is mentioned in Pasión y convalecencia as follows:

...en aquellas noches, cuando había luna, aunque
mi madre me prohibiese mirar fijamente al astro
"porque cae gota serena."¹⁶⁷

An entire story is entitled "Gota serena" which emphasizes the importance which Máñez gives this particular theme. This story deals with a young boy's visit to his cousins in the country. Their persecution of him and the tormenting of a deaf mute lead to the mute's tragic execution.

La canícula is mentioned twice in the story "Gota serena." The first mention contains a listing of all the bad things envisioned at this time of year.

Tras la canícula mentaban el maldejojo, el chagüisto, los rayos y centellas, el carbón, el piojo, la garrapata, el maldeparto, el hervor de sangre, la puérpera, el tabardillo, el misereve, las andancias de todas clases, las criaturas y crías monstruos;
...¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷Máñez, Los sentidos, p. 115.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 185.

The second mention of "la canícula" in the story "gota serena" relates both the canícula and the "gota serena" to the cruelty of a slaughter-house scene. The sensitive child is sickened by the barbarity of the scene.

Con ganas de vomitar, no quise ver el fin de la matanza.

.....
He conocido el rostro de la crueldad.¹⁶⁹

.....
...;definitivamente cerca, en espera inminente de la gota serena, de la canícula y de los otros males, retñados con fuerza en las punzadas de cabeza, en el sobrecalto del pecho.¹⁷⁰

Halle's comet is the celestial phenomenon which is most often mentioned. In Pasión y convalecencia it is mentioned as having been thought the cause of the Revolution which began at the time it appeared. In Al filo del agua which takes place at the beginning of that Revolution it has many uses. It helps to point out the superstition of the people as they anticipate the evil consequences which they are sure it will have. As an omen of the future, it heightens the anticipation of the disasters which are to come both on the local and on the national level. It is used as an example in the conflict between superstition and science as the scientific explanation is presented in contrast to the unthinking dread of the uneducated.

¹⁶⁹Xáñez, Los sentidos, p. 195.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 196.

These superstitions all play their part in the picture of a town, and on a larger scale, a country which is ready for a revolt, a country in which the modern elements are about to make themselves heard.

CITY VERSUS COUNTRY

The theme of the conflict between the city and the country did not appear in Váñez's early works where the setting was just one place and was not compared to any other. In Pasión y convalecencia the first comparison between the two occurs. The city is described as:

esta red de alambres, rieles y calles, a este transitar de agonía contra gentes que no sofrenan su concupiscencia de adelantarse, a este circo de todos los días en que el hombre, ensordecido, ha de luchar contra máquinas, poseídas por el demonio de la velocidad; la altura de los edificios que estrechan y oscurecen las calles....Gran ciudad. Los nervios se distienden, se enredan, se rompen. Babilonia.¹⁷¹

In contrast to the fast-moving city life, the protagonist, who is recovering from an illness, finds the country town to which he has returned unchanged in the years since he left.

En las calles, las mismas fachadas, idénticos rostros, casi iguales los vestidos de los transeúntes de hoy que son los encontrados, en puntual sitio, hace siete, hace diez años.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Váñez, Los sentidos, p. 112.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 123.

He finds the city calling him, however, and his ideas begin to change.

...suscitó la idea de la ciudad como una atracción lejana irremisiblemente perdida...los rincones azules de Babilonia, las horas propicias, el disipulo, la amplitud, la facilidad y variedad de aquel mundo, el río interminable de mujeres con cuya poligamia era posible alcanzar la mujer perfecta:...¹⁷³

Thus, each is seen as having advantages and disadvantages and in the end he chooses to return to the city. "Y violentamente dispuso la vuelta a la ciudad."¹⁷⁴

In "Melibea o la revelación," as the protagonist comes home for vacation, we find the city a forgotten fantasy and the country an idea.

Ya entonces la ciudad con sus diez largas meses, la ciudad en que anoche mismo dormí, era un lejano fantasma que perdía todo perfil, ahogado en la plenitud estival de la naturaleza, rechazado por tantos arroyos en creciente rumorosos, tumultuosos, que habíamos cruzado a paso de victoria.¹⁷⁵

The city's siren call is not presented in this story.

In "Isolda, o la fuerte," however, we again find the city as a necessary evil.

¹⁷³Máñez, Los sentidos, p. 135.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁷⁵Máñez, Archipiélago, pp. 29-30.

No era un extraño en las calles y salones de la ciudad. La odiaba y odiaba a sus rentes; odiaba sus instituciones y costumbres. Pero la necesitaba - con sus mujeres, sus instituciones y costumbres - como una droga para su tristeza.¹⁷⁶

The city and the modern life have become a necessary evil. Men have become used to its conveniences and cannot live without the . If they are unhappy, at least they are comfortable.

In Al filo del agua the city is again viewed as both good and evil. It is good because modern ideas have a chance to flourish there. However, it is seen as evil by the church, and to a certain extent with reason, because it corrupts with new ideas the minds of the young people who go there. Al filo del agua, however, does not point out the evils of the city as have some of the earlier works. Its purpose was to portray the small town in which it took place. That town is portrayed in a bad light, and thus the city gains somewhat by contrast.

La creación is the first of Vázquez's novels (except for some describing the pastimes of children and taking place in Cuadalupe) which takes place in a city. It portrays in some detail the various levels of artistic life in Mexico City. In so doing, although Gabriel, the protagonist and purveyor of Vázquez's own opinions, rejects each group, we find him in the end accepting his obligations to the city which has become his home. He discovers that all

that is necessary is the search for beauty.

Esta noche comenzó la composición del poema
sinfónico inspirado en Helena de Troya.

"La dimensión es la grandeza"- puso por
epígrafe.¹⁷⁷

La tierra pródiga treats the city as an unknown,
distant and untrustworthy place.

Las tierras flacas does not deal with the city as
such, but with the modernization which Joseph Lillo has
brought back with him. This modernization, although it
brings the poorer people the conveniences of electric light
and running water, really just presents them with a new
master to whom they may give their allegiance and pay their
taxes.

Thus, we see that Yáñez presents neither the slow-
moving life of the country with its tradition and super-
stition left over from the Indian culture nor the accel-
erated, complicated and unruly modern life of the city as
a great deal better than the other. He does, however,
favor the freedom of ideas which comes with city life and
for the right to express these ideas, the city must be
accepted. New ideas and modernization are inevitable and
necessary, and at their worst, at least make a man more
comfortable.

¹⁷⁷Yáñez, La creación, p. 309.

SCHOOL

Agustín Yáñez has held many positions in the field of education. At present he is Secretary of Public Education. Probably because it has had great importance in his own life, one finds that education plays an important part in Yáñez's fictional works. Many of the characters in his works are students or teachers and school is the setting for several of his short stories.

Near the beginning of Esta es mala suerte is a description of the end of a school day as the students are being dismissed.

Salón de dibujo pletórico de prisas y deseos. Entra el prefecto le chican y ordena que se guarden los útiles: suena la regla sobre el pupitre, una, dos repetidas veces. Serio, miope, imponente, como cuando va por la calle sin saludar a nadie, el maestro de dibujo se soba con el pañuelo los bigotes, sacude los faldones de la levita, endereza el duro cuello de mariposa...

-De pie -ordene el prefecto-, ¡uno! ¡dos!

Uno, dos ruidos. Ni tan uniformes. Rastreo de pies. Y en castigo, para que aprendan la disciplina:

-A sus lugares: uno, dos.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸Yáñez, "Esta es mala suerte, Los sentidos, p. 67-68.

In Piña Esperanza a child is on his way to school as the story begins and it is his trips back and forth which regulate the action of the work. Before and after school the protagonist passes the home of the sick girl, Esperanza, and has his first experience with death.

In El tercer enemigo del alma the main character is a good student who fails because of too much attention to a girl and not enough to his studies. The narrator is a professor who has known the young man as a student and describes his progression into degradation.

In Pasión y convalecencia is found a description of what many schools were like. This is probably the type of school with which Yáñez was familiar as a child.

Aquella escuela a coro... Aquel maestro supersticioso y cruel, recta como la regla: tambor, batuta y castigo... Aquellos libros antiguos, complicados y, en el recuerdo, amables...¹⁷⁹

This is the picture which Yáñez gives of the provincial school in all of these early works. The rules were hard, the teacher cruel, the equipment poor, the methods antiquated, but in memory its associations are happy. It is not the lessons which are remembered, however, but the love note written in drawing class, the day of hooky at the beach, the friends on the streetcorner and watching the girls go by.

¹⁷⁹Yáñez, Los sentidos, pp. 133.

The works of his major period find the emphasis has shifted from the school to the students on vacation. Flor de juegos antiguos is composed of the experiences of the protagonist as he plays games with his friends, as he is ill and home from school, and on a vacation trip to the ranch of a friend.

Archipiélago de mujeres when it mentions education also mentions it as a thing of the past. In "Melibea, o la revelación," one of the parts of Archipiélago de mujeres, the protagonist is a student on vacation. In another part, "Isolda, o la Muerte," he is trying to forget his days in school.

Yo era un bello, recio animal. Y para serlo mejor, una noche de insomnio quemé los pocos libros atornentadores que había traído de la ciudad: libros de filosofía y poetas.¹⁸⁰

The story of "Alda, o la música" begins in school, but the main part of it takes place after school has ended.

The student on vacation is presented in each case as a problem to the adult world. In Al filo del agua he is no exception. As they arrive with their "miradas desdeñosas, léxico pedante, vestidos ajustados"¹⁸¹ the parents know that the time has come to keep a closer eye on their daughters and to defend the ideas which tradition has taught

¹⁸⁰Yáñez, Archipiélago, p. 62.

¹⁸¹Yáñez, Al filo, p. 104.

them are correct. In Al filo del agua the vacationing students with their ideas about modernization, freedom and change, with their little groups plotting revolution are one of the major factors in the buildup of the action toward its climax. Their ideas have the town in a ferment just as do the same ideas in hundreds of cities and towns throughout the country.

In the recent works the student has not played an important part. Las tierras flacas and La tierra pródiga deal with uneducated men in a struggle for power. La creación has as its protagonist Gabriel, part of whose educational life is presented. It is, however, his experiences in the world in which he makes his living which are important. The other recent works make no mention of formal education. One reason that education no longer plays as important a part in Yáñez's works is that the protagonists in the recent novels are adults while in the early short stories and in the novels of his major period they were most often children and adolescents. School understandably played a more important role in their lives and therefore when Yáñez portrayed them he did not omit this important aspect. School becomes a major part of the setting.

BELLS AND MUSIC

Yáñez feels that music is a basic part of Mexican life and as such it has an important place in many of his works. He stresses especially the ringing of the church bells which regulate life in the Mexican town. They signal the dawn.

La voz de una campana rompió sueños hechizos.¹⁸²

A lentos intervalos la campana mayor del pueblo que tocaba el alba le recordó dónde estaba...¹⁸³

¡Despertadlo!-cantaron todas las campanas del pueblo
...¹⁸⁴

Ya cantan los gallos. Ya suena la campana de la parroquia. Ya comienza a esclarecer.¹⁸⁵

The bells also are presented as representative of the town. They are part of the remembered atmosphere of childhood.

Había venido la niñez al lento conjuro de la campana, de los trinos de pájaros y el olor de anís.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸²Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 132.

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁸⁵Yáñez, Al filo, p. 25.

¹⁸⁶Yáñez, Los sentidos, p. 133.

In Al filo del agua their pervading character receives special emphasis. Their call to chapel for meditation, are heard in the sacred silence of the "Pasión," are noticeable for their silence on the Thursday and Friday of Holy Week. The music of Gabriel, the bellringer, echoes the atmosphere of the town.

Gabriel, rector de pozos, agonías y duelos; lengua común, que ha sabido arrancar a los timbres de las campanas el acento, los acentos con que habla el pueblo de mujeres enlutadas, el pueblo seco.¹⁸⁷

The bells even have the power to affect the state of mind of the citizens of the town.

Descompuesto el ritmo de las campanas, todo el pueblo marchaba mal.¹⁸⁸

They were badly disconcerted, even fearing the end of the world, when Gabriel wildly rang the bells at the time of Victoria's departure.

The bells, then, are symbolic of the atmosphere of the town and even help to form it.

¹⁸⁷Yáñez, Al filo, p. 177.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 186.

Music in general also plays an important part, primarily in the novel, La creación. In this work Gabriel, the bellringer of Al filo del agua, now educated and able to express himself in more than one musical medium, searches for inspiration for his work. He visits the provinces organizing orchestras and choirs. A part of the cultural mission of Vasconcelos, this project is successful in awakening an interest in a music which is a combination of classical and folk themes. The combination in the background of Gabriel's life parallels the combination which makes up the culture of Mexico itself. As Yáñez is attempting to write truly Mexican literature, so he has Gabriel seek for an authentically Mexican music.

Thus, we see that in Yáñez's works the musical theme, as well as the others used, are employed in order to portray the authentic Mexican culture which is a combination of many factors. Although Yáñez sees the Mexicans as a basically musical people and many types of music are presented, particularly in La creación, the one most often mentioned is that of the church bells. These bells which regulate the lives of the people and symbolize the church which they represent are a major factor in the atmosphere of every Mexican community and thus have an important place in the works of an author who is attempting to portray authentically the Mexican scene.

RUINED LIFE - MADNESS

The life ruined because of the loss of a dream is another, often seen there.

In Asearrín de muñecos Mauricio Galaviz's illusion of being well-informed about other parts of the world, the study of which has become the main purpose of his life, is shattered when he discovers that he has mispronounced the names of many places in front of an important and well-travelled guest. His world falls apart, he neglects his duties in the church, he gives up on his studies of the world and becomes a recluse.

In Las avispas the director of a school, a firm disciplinarian looked up to by all, makes the mistake of kissing one of the woman teachers at a party. When he learns that his one false move has become known to all the students and because of it they have lost their respect for him, he goes mad.

In the story "Isolda, o la Muerte" in Archipiélago de mujeres Tristán goes mad when he finds he has lost Isolda.

Don Epifanio Trejillo in Las tierras flacas, when Teófila, the saintly young daughter of a neighbor, dies, gives up his struggle for power and allows himself to become fat and lazy.

El Amarillo in La tierra próxima, when he discovers that he will not be the one to exploit his dream of making his and the surrounding coastal holdings into a resort area, turns away from the wife who has been his strength to a young girl who makes him feel young again. His wife, upon the loss of her husband to this other woman, commits suicide.

So is repeated again and again the theme of the person who cannot accept defeat and keep on fighting.

The opposite picture, as in Lande pascual where a prostitute is redeemed and Esta es mala suerte where Leopoldo Parra is not permanently defeated by the ignominious dunking which is the result of his first love affair is seen. The theme of the person who gives in to defeat is much more prevalent, however.

In each of the stories where the person cannot accept defeat he either consciously or unconsciously removes himself from society. Whether by insanity, suicide, or some other irrational act, he removes himself from interaction with others in the life which he has formerly led. Society has proven to be too much for him and he has taken steps to remove himself from its problems which to him seem insurmountable. This aspect of the entire social picture is a part of Máñez's exploration of the workings of society.

A basic purpose of all his works is to present a picture of the interaction of the individual with his surroundings. Other facets of his presentation of society are discussed in other parts of this paper.

CONCLUSION

Augustín Váz[~]quez is a man who has accomplished a great deal not only in the field of literature, but in those of education and government. Much of his life has been spent as a teacher in various institutions. As governor of Jalisco he led in the implementation of plans for improvement in the educational system of that state. His position as Minister of Education allowed him to extend this influence throughout the country.

In the literary field he is not only a writer, but holds editorial positions on various publications, including some of the most influential.

Besides these accomplishments, he has written short stories, novels and non-fiction, both in the historical field and in the fields of social and literary criticism.

The most important aspect of his literary contribution is the psychological analysis of his characters through a presentation of their reaction with society and their physical surroundings. This presentation is carried out through the use of various "stream of consciousness" techniques including, counterpoint, long sentences and the use of dreams and hallucinations. Some of his characters

win in their conflict, others lose, and through a presentation of what is occurring on all levels of their consciousness, Vázquez makes clear to the reader the developments within each one's psychological makeup. In Al filo del agua he carries out this process with the greatest success as he presents the frustrations occurring in the minds of the characters of a typical small village, frustrations which on a larger scale lead to a revolution.

Vázquez's works exemplify a return to the classical. In particular he makes use of mythological and classical allusions. In Archipiélago de mujeres mythological and classical heroines are placed in modern Mexican settings. In La creación the Muses and the Graces appear in the guise of women who have had a part in the life of Gabriel Martínez. In Baralinton and Pasión y convalecencia examples of such allusions occur.

It is not Vázquez's purpose, however, to make of his works a mere revival of the classical. Rather, he wishes to give a true picture of the Mexican culture. In his non-fictional works he praises Lizardi who he feels has accomplished this aim by realistically picturing the common man of Mexico.

Yáñez's own view of the true Mexican society is presented in El contenido social de la literatura iberoamericana and in Fichas mexicanas. He views it as a combination of the European and Indian cultures. Basically similar in many ways, the two have merged to become a single culture where Indian superstition and Catholic dogma together make up the common man's religion and where the small-town bellringer returns from his European musical education to encourage peasants to play their native music. Yáñez in presenting his picture of the real Mexico, attempts to portray all types of people, places and occupations with the superstitions, attitudes and customs associated with each.

Behind all his portraits is one basic theme, that time, space and reality are cyclical, yet ever-changing. Counterparts of past characters and situations occur again and again in cyclical fashion, yet never exactly the same. In his dreams a man may be transferred to any time or space. Thus is reality changed. So in the hallucinations of Gabriel Martínez of La creación, the Graces and Muses may reappear as his acquaintances, but he is never sure which one represents which friend.

Yáñez tries to present universal truths with the idea that the people of Mexico as well as all people of the world still behave as did the classical heroes of both Europe and Mexico, while still presenting a true picture of his own country. In this matter he largely succeeds, particularly in the works of his best period, Flor de juegos antiguos, Archipiélago de mujeres and Al filo del agua.

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