Indigenism and Feminism in the Prose Fiction of Rosario Castellanos.

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INDIGENISM AND FEMINISM IN THE PROSE FICTION OF ROSARIO CASTELLANOS

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INDIGENISM AND FEMINISM
IN THE PROSE FICTION OF
ROSARIO CASTELLANOS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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in

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by
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ABSTRACT

The novel of Indian concern has had a long vogue in Latin America, where it is known alternately as novela indígenista or novela indígenista. This tradition in the novel has produced such well known works as López y Fuentes' *El indio*, Alcides Arguedas' *Raza de bronce*, Jorge Icaza's *Huasipungo* and Ciro Alegría's *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, all published between 1919 and 1941. These novels seek to illustrate the deplorable conditions of life in Indian communities from Mexico to Bolivia. In so doing, however, the Indian characters of these novels are generally reduced to single dimensional characters devoid of individuality. They are objects acted upon by more powerful elements of society, usually landlords, political bosses and an indispensable priest.

By mid-century several forces were at work to produce major changes in the novela indígenista. Changes in style allowed a break with the realistic-naturalistic tradition of the past. Increased anthropological studies of contemporary Indian communities and the publication and study of written documents of Indian composition called attention to aspects of Indian life other than that of exploitation. The psychological make-up of the Indian, his system of perceiving the world were now added to the prime element of social concern. The result was the creation of characters who stood out in relief against the back-
ground of their community; individual, full-dimensioned characters now emerged.

In Mexico this new tradition in the indigenista novel is best represented by the works of Rosario Castellanos: two novels, Balún-Canán (1957) and Oficio de tinieblas (1962), and a collection of stories, Ciudad Real (1960). These works explore the psychology of both the Indian and his exploiting landowner, revealing considerable parallels between Indian and non-Indian societies and thus calling attention to the very human condition of both groups.

Literature dealing with the condition and experience of women in Latin America has a history going back at least to the second half of the seventeenth century. In the works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz we find concern for the exploited nature of women, for the poor education of women and for the lack of regard accorded the feminine mind.

The twentieth century has witnessed a resurgence of concern for aspects of the feminine experience of life. Poets such as Juana de Ibarbouru, Alfonsina Storni, Delmira Agustini and Gabriela Mistral address problems of sensuality, sterility, isolation, lack of education and exploitation. Together with the achievement of the vote in Latin America and the increasing world-wide interest in the condition of women which followed World War II, these and other women have helped to spawn a new feminine consciousness.

In Mexico Rosario Castellanos has addressed a wide range of feminine issues in poetry, in essay, in her Master's thesis, and in fiction. In the two novels of indigenista concern, Castellanos introduces the element of concern for the condition of women in Indian and

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non-Indian societies, raising this concern to a level equal to that of concern for the condition of the Indian.

Castellanos' last two collections of stories, Los convidados de agosto (1964) and Album de familia (1971) abandon the Indian in order to concentrate solely on the existential dilemma facing women in Mexico both in the provinces and in the metropolis.

This work examines the development of Castellanos' Indian characters and the gradual evolution of her female characters, noting parallels in the condition of both the Indian and woman.
Critical study of the Indianist fiction of Rosario Castellanos (1925-1974) has been based almost exclusively on the author's two novels, *Balún-Canán* (1957) and *Oficio de tinieblas* (1962). These studies indicate that Castellanos has given a new direction to Mexican Indianist fiction, a direction in which the author breaks with the tradition of Jorge Icaza and the Indianist tradition before 1940 in that she, not unlike José María Arguedas and to some extent Ciro Alegría, internalizes Indian values and creates individual characters within a world defined neither by Occidental exotic taste nor by the simplification of social conflict into polar opposites of good and evil. Rather the characters of her fiction function according to those very values and world view which the professional anthropologist defines as characteristic of a particular society.

Critical study of the portrayal of female characters in Castellanos' fiction is sparse; work published to date is limited to the study of the principal female Indian character of the novel *Oficio de tinieblas* and of several non-Indian characters from later short stories. Attention has been called to the Indian character primarily for the same reason that critics generally laud Castellanos' Indianist works, i.e., the creation of individual characters functioning within an authentic world. Consideration of the female characters from the later fiction...
deals primarily with the need for authenticity of personality.

There exists no study of Castellanos' Indianist fiction based on the totality of her work of that concern. Particularly conspicuous by its absence from critical studies is Ciudad Real, a collection of short stories published in 1960, which won the Premio "Javier Villaurrutia" and which the author declares to have been the preliminary sketches for the novel Oficio de tinieblas. Absent also from studies of the two novels is serious consideration of the social implications of elements of the Mayan supernatural and of the portrayal of Ladino society which appear in those novels.

As is the case with studies of Castellanos' Indianism, there likewise exists no comprehensive study of her portrayal of female characters. Most studies neglect all female characters from the novel Balún-Canán with the exception of that of the child narrator. Female characters from Oficio de tinieblas, with the sole exception of the primary Indian character, have also, until recently, been generally excluded from critical studies. Furthermore, there is no study which links the portrayal of Indian and Ladina women in the two novels to the portrayal of female characters in Castellanos' later non-Indianist fiction.

Since there exist so many lacunae in critical studies of Castellanos' fiction of both Indianist and feminist concerns, it should not be surprising to learn that there exists no study which seeks to analyze Castellanos' fiction in its totality; nor should it surprise us to learn that, with the exception of some material on the author's poetry, there is virtually no critical attempt to consider the life of the author in relation to her works. Biographical sketches are few and
The purpose of this dissertation is multiple. In it we seek first to analyze Castellanos' presentation of Indian characters and her portrayal of Ladino society. Of particular importance here is the author's use of elements of Mayan cosmology as they affect both Indian and Ladino. Secondly, we seek to analyze the portrayal of female characters in all the author's prose fiction. Of particular interest here is the extent to which female characters do or do not conform to patterns of prescribed behavior, patterns which we, following Castellanos' example, shall call the feminine myth.

In the belief that an acquaintance with the author's life and works provides valuable insight into the development of her Indianist and feminist literature, and given the relative paucity of biobibliographical studies of Castellanos, we offer as part of this introduction a study in which we attempt to illustrate the presence of both Indianist and feminist elements and the interplay of these elements in Castellanos' life and works, in particular those works which fall outside the realm of prose fiction.

The thesis proper begins with an examination of critical opinion concerning the nature of Indianist literature and Castellanos' place within that tradition. This is followed by a brief clarification of terms common to Indianist literature and especially to Castellanos' literature. There follows then an examination of Castellanos' views of the portrayal of female characters in literature both past and contemporary and of her concerns regarding the social, economic and intellectual position of woman in society and the relationship of literature to
these concerns.

The following chapters will examine in chronological sequence the elements of Indianism and feminism as they appear in her prose fiction published between 1957 and 1972. At the end of each chapter we offer partial conclusions based on the work studied. In our concluding chapter we offer a summary analysis of the development of Castellanos' Indianist and feminist prose fiction. We will also delineate the relationships between these two traditions in Castellanos' prose fiction, noting certain characteristics common to both.

Life and Works

Rosario Castellanos Figueroa was born on the 25th of May, 1925, in Mexico City.¹ She was the elder child and only daughter of a wealthy landowner from the highlands of Chiapas, where she shortly returned with her family and where she received her primary and secondary education in Comitán de las Flores, the town nearest to her father's estates.² We may presume that in these years she came to know the Maya-speaking Indians who were her father's laborers and who formed the bulk of the population in the area. Indeed her first novel, Balún-Canán, attempts to capture something of what her feelings were as she grew up on her father's hacienda amidst the agrarian reforms of the 1930's.³ She was

¹There is some confusion concerning the author's place of birth; some sources give Chiapas and others Mexico City as the location. Castellanos herself in an autobiographical sketch included in Los narradores ante el público, gives her birthplace as Mexico City.


³Günter Lorenz, Diálogo con América Latina (Santiago de Chile: Pomaire, 1972), p. 185.
brought up in a somewhat neglected manner since it was her parents' plan to have her enter a convent; however upon the accidental death of her brother, on whom all training and education had been lavished, her parents' attitude changed. Her father divided his lands among the Indians as required by the reform laws and the family moved to Mexico City.  

Here at the age of fifteen Castellanos entered the National Preparatory School from where she registered in the National University (UNAM), enrolling in the faculties of Law and of Philosophy and Letters simultaneously; but she soon abandoned her legal studies and devoted her entire energies to obtaining a degree in philosophy. While at the UNAM she formed part of the so-called "Generation of 1950," working closely with Emilio Carballido, and would frequently spend Saturdays with Carballido in the offices of a building where the latter published the magazines Zona Intermedia and Triple Porfía. While still at the UNAM she helped to found Barco de papel, a short-lived journal of the sort in which she published her early poetry. In an interview with Emmanuel Carballo she says that she began to write poetry in 1940,

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4Dybvig, p. 16. 5Lorenz, p. 185.
7Rafael Solana and others, Los narradores ante el público (Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1966), p. 89.
8In her self-portrait in Los narradores ante el público Castellanos includes among the members of this group Wilberto Cantón, Miguel Guardía, Luisa Josefina Hernández, Jaime Sabines, Ernesto Cardenal, Sergio Galindo, and Emilio Carballido.
having had little prior acquaintance with literature, and that in 1948, upon finding in an anthology of poems entitled *Laurel* one called "Muerte sin fin," she was so moved that she wrote her first book of poetry, *Trayectoria del polvo*, in only one week.\(^{12}\) Three more volumes of poetry soon followed: *Apuntes para una declaración de fe* (1949), *Dos poemas* and *De la vigilia estéril* (both 1950).

The year 1950 also witnessed the presentation of her master's thesis, *Sobre cultura femenina*, and her departure later in the year for Spain, having received from the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica a scholarship for a year's study in aesthetics at the University of Madrid.\(^{13}\) Both the thesis and the year spent in Spain would mark important stages in the development of Castellanos' attitudes; the former allows us a glimpse of the author as she first approaches intellectually the question of the role of women in society and the contributions of women to society and to "culture," i.e., the arts; and the latter signals a major break in the thematic content of her poetry and would seem to be a contributing factor to Castellanos' work among the Maya of Chiapas upon her return to Mexico in 1951.

Let us consider first the thesis, *Sobre cultura femenina*. The author's concern here is to determine the existence or non-existence of

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\(^{12}\) Victor N. Baptiste, "La obra poética de Rosario Castellanos," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1967), p. 2. In their article Beatriz and Salvador Reyes Nevares note that Castellanos did not like to read her poetry in public, but that the UNAM finally published, about 1962, in the series "Voz viva de México," a record of her reading a selection of her poems. For this occasion she had to be trained in the art of reading aloud, since until then she had never considered the sonority of her work.

\(^{13}\) Dybvig, p. 20.
what she calls a "feminine culture," that is, whether there is a specifically distinct feminine tradition in the arts. Castellanos' conclusion is that there is not now nor has there ever been such a tradition. Such a conclusion, especially when offered by an author who was later to assure herself a place in Mexican literature, needs some explanation. As Beth Miller rightly suggests, Castellanos' thesis has two major faults. The first is its scope; it is too broad a subject to be adequately dealt with in a master's thesis. The second is that Castellanos simply did not know her material well enough to deal conclusively with the subject. Absent from the thesis is any consideration of the numerous women writers of the Western European tradition and mention of earlier feminist works both within and without the Hispanic tradition. In contrast, there is a heavy reliance upon minor Austro-German behaviorist philosophers of the nineteenth century and on popularizers of Freud. The author herself was to comment years later that she had declared "públicamente, y ante grandes carcajadas del público, la inexistencia de la cultura femenina o los móviles espurios por los cuales una mujer se dedica a actividades tan contrarias a su fisiología."

The thesis, then for the reasons given above, has little merit

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16 Beth Miller, Comments at the 22nd Conference of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies, Tempe, Arizona, October 21-23, 1976.

17 Solana and others, p. 95.
in and of itself. Its value lies in that it is the "punto de partida intelectual del movimiento de las mujeres de los últimos años en México" and in that many of the ideas expressed in it are precisely those which are imposed upon the characters of Castellanos' fiction by the societies in which they live. For this latter reason we shall attempt in our presentation of "Feminism" in Chapter I a summary of those ideas expressed in the thesis which will later provide the ideology which governs the actions and attitudes of Castellanos' fictional characters, in particular the female characters.

Many of the themes addressed in Castellanos' later prose fiction are already present in the poetry published prior to her departure for Spain in 1950. Victor N. Baptiste, in his dissertation "La obra poética de Rosario Castellanos," finds two generally overriding themes in her poetry: the themes of solitude and of disillusion. Both are dominant themes in all the prose fiction and characterize the relationships of Ladinos with Indians and of men with women. They are particularly characteristic of the ultimate condition of the Indian and of woman.

According to Baptiste, the author first becomes aware of her solitude through disillusion. For Baptiste the first signs of this disillusion leading to isolation appear in the poetry connected with the theme of awakening adolescence found mostly in her first collection, Trayectoria del polvo. Overshadowing an incipient sensuality is a sense of shame and modesty and a constant struggle in her "búsqueda incesante/

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19 Baptiste, p. 142. 20 Baptiste, pp. 139-140.
hacia la luz más íntima/ que se le esquiva siempre como en un laberinto."

Both the second poem of Dos poemas ("esta celda hermética que se llama Rosario") and the tenth poem of Trayectoria del polvo succinctly state the author's awareness of herself as an isolated entity, an entity which builds defenses to protect itself from the emptiness which it perceives around it. This bastion and refuge is poetry.

Hoy es en mí la muerte muy pequeña
y grande la esperanza.

. . .
Ahora sabe que su ser es isla.

. . .
No ignora que el vacío la rodea
y siente la amenaza del gusano.
Pero edifica muros de arena, defendiéndose.
Tenaz e infatigable
elabora y destruye sus pompas de jabón
y es la aniquiladora y creadora de un Cosmos
transfigurado y líquido.
Trabaja con la llama.

. . .
Les dice un día fantasmas y otro les dice juego
pero el nombre escrito en el que se refugia
como en la magia o en el sortilegio,
ese nombre es el nombre impalpable de Poesía.

In addition to elaborating the theme of solitude, Trayectoria del polvo also introduces material on the conflict which, in the mind of the author, exists between her vocation as poet and her condition as woman. The author's consciousness of this tension stems at least in part from material which she read in the preparation of her thesis. The authorities whom she cites, and with whom she reluctantly agrees temporarily, deny woman a place in the world of the arts. They further deny

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21 Rosario Castellanos, Trayectoria del polvo (Mexico: Costa-Amic, 1948), poem ii.
to her the possibility of disillusion and solitude on the ground that
woman is by nature lacking in the rational faculties by which one ar-
rives at a knowledge of these experiences. In the light of Castellanos' 
poetry which records these very experiences, the conclusions of her 
thesis must indeed have presented a considerable dilemma for her.

In attempting to resolve the dilemma raised by the conflict of 
her own experience and her need for artistic expression with the conclu-
sions of her thesis, Castellanos resorts to "el rechazo de los aspectos 
más obvios de la femeninidad."\textsuperscript{22} This rejection of her obvious woman-
hood appears in \textit{De la vigilia estéril} in connection with an apparently 
androgynous created self.

\textit{Sobre el cadáver de una mujer estoy creciendo, 
en sus huesos se enroscan mis raíces 
y de su corazón desfigurado 
emerge un tallo vertical y duro.} \textsuperscript{23}

\textit{Soy hija de mí misma. 
De mi sueño nací. Mi sueño me sostiene.} \textsuperscript{24}

That this rejection of her more feminine aspects offers no 
permanent solution (and indeed appears itself to be rejected) is ap-
parent from the presence of two other powerful themes in \textit{De la vigilia 
estéril}: the positive experience of passionate love and a positive at-
titude towards maternity. We note Castellanos' ecstatic love experi-


\textsuperscript{23} Rosario Castellanos, \textit{De la vigilia estéril} (Mexico: Ediciones de América, Revista Antológica, 1950), "Origen."

\textsuperscript{24} Castellanos, \textit{Vigilia estéril}, "Muro de lamentaciones," ii.
ences as a further development of the awakening sensuality of her adolescence, as an element which further compounds her woman's dilemma, and as an example of an aspect of feminine experience frequently denied to the characters of her fiction. The change in attitude from a negative view of maternity to a positive view is apparent in the presence of the motif of the lost or unborn child.

More important in terms of her later fiction, we believe, is the poet's attitude towards children. The poems of Trayectoria del polvo, De la vigilia estéril and Apuntes para una declaración de fe offer a certain ambivalence towards the presence of children, suggesting first displeasure at her inability to conceive ("Cuando os llame fecundos, arrojadle/ su mentira a la cara.") and later a rejection of maternity ("No quiero dar la vida") because of the shame and displeasure which it brings.

Parimos con dolor y con vergüenza,
cortamos el cordón umbilical aprisa
como quien se desprende de un fardo o de un castigo.

The several effects on women of the presence or absence of children is a major concern of all of Castellanos' prose fiction. The loss of social position and consequently of self-esteem suffered by the barren woman is particularly poignantly addressed in her two novels, Balún-Canán and Oficio de tinieblas, and an attempt at compensation for the lack of children is one of the two major narrative threads of the second

25 Castellanos, Trayectoria del polvo, poem VIII.
26 Castellanos, Vigilia estéril, "De la vigilia estéril," I.
of these. Both novels also offer studies of women for whom marriage and children are insufficient fulfillment. The internal conflicts of unmarried women whose sensuality finds no acceptable physical outlet is a unifying element for the majority of other female characters in both the novels and the short stories.

While in Spain both Castellanos and her traveling companion Dolores Castro were struck by the intellectual poverty of that nation, especially in literature, and discovered for themselves particular meaning in the manners and customs that make up the fabric of "lo mexicano." At the end of the school year the stay abroad was rounded out by travels to several Western European nations where Castellanos was able to meet and talk with Simone de Beauvoir, some of whose ideas she later adopted and a copy of whose recently published *The Second Sex* she is said to have been given by Octavio Paz while in Paris.

Upon her return to Mexico in 1951 Castellanos spent only a short time in the Federal District before going to Chiapas, where she had been granted the position of directress of cultural activities for the Instituto de Ciencias y Artes in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. Here she stayed until some time in 1952 when worsening tuberculosis obliged her to return to Mexico City for treatment and rest. Her stay in the capital would last more than a year and since she was confined to bed for much of this period, she read widely and intensively, particularly the works

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28 Dybvig, p. 19.

29 Dybvig, p. 20; see also Solana and others, p. 96.

30 Dybvig, pp. 20-21; see also Solana and others, p. 96.

31 Solana and others, p. 96.
of Tolstoy, Proust, and Thomas Mann.\(^{32}\) The year of her return to Mexico City saw the publication of *Presentación en el templo* and *El rescate del mundo*, two volumes of poetry published together, and *Tablero de damas*, a drama about several women writers.

In addition to her reading, Castellanos had ample time for writing, producing several one-act verse dramas, "Eva," "Judith," and "Salomé" (the latter two published together in 1959), one two-act verse drama, "Vocación de Sor Juana," and two other three-act plays in prose, "La creciente" and one on a theme similar to that of *El gesticulador* of Rodolfo Usigli, the as yet unpublished "Casa de gobierno."\(^{33}\) These plays were written for a class which she was then taking from Usigli at the UNAM with the intention of broadening her abilities beyond the essay and poetry.\(^{34}\) Disappointed with what she considered her lack of dramatic ability, Castellanos abandoned the drama until the 1970's when she began to write the very forceful *El eterno femenino*, published shortly after her death in 1974. This play incorporates many of her earlier dramatic attempts and is in effect her ultimate statement on the condition of woman in Mexico.

In 1953 Castellanos applied for and was granted a stipend from the Centro Mexicano de Escritores for the period 1954-1955. In return she was to produce more poetry and do research on the "participación de las mujeres en el proceso cultural en México," thus continuing an interest already visible in her thesis and early poetry.\(^{35}\)

In 1955 Castellanos began writing short fiction of an Indianist

\(^{32}\) Solana and others, p. 96.  \(^{33}\) Solana and others, p. 96.  
\(^{34}\) Dybvig, p. 29.  \(^{35}\) Solana and others, p. 96.
character in preparation for a novel about her childhood in Chiapas; the first of these pieces was published in 1956. At the suggestion of Emilio Carballido she turned her full attention to the completion of the novel, finishing the work in ten months. The finished work, Balún-Canán, finally appeared in 1957 and was an immediate success; it was followed soon afterwards by Poemas (1953–1955).

While finishing Balún-Canán and then making tentative sketches for the future Oficio de tinieblas Castellanos worked for the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) at the Instituto Coordinador Tzeltal–Tzotzil in San Cristóbal Las Casas from 1956 until 1957. This work was undertaken without salary in the hope of atoning for the injustices visited upon the Indians of the region by her family, an attitude present in the thematic content of Al pie de la letra, her next collection of poetry. Upon the death of the director of the "teatro guinol" (later named "Teatro Petul" after its leading puppet character) Castellanos was given this position at a token salary. After two years with the INI in Chiapas, she returned to Mexico City where she continued editing texts for use by the Instituto and advising it on matters of style for its other publications.

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36 Rosario Castellanos, "Un venado muerto," Abside, XX, 1 (1956), pp. 112–114. This story was later incorporated into Balún-Canán as Chapter XXII.

37 Solana and others, p. 96.

38 Solana and others, p. 97; see also Miller, "Voz e imagen," p. 36.

39 Solana and others, p. 97. 40 Solana and others, p. 97.

41 Solana and others, p. 97; see also Miller, "Voz e imagen," p. 36.
Castellanos' literary production from her return to Mexico in 1951 until the publication of her first novel in 1957 reveals the continuation of several concerns already noted in her earlier work. Most prominent among them are the themes of solitude and disillusion and a concern for the nature and position of woman, in particular woman as creator, both as an artist and as a mother. Baptiste notes a shift in tone and intensity in the poetry on isolation and disillusion and suggests that, beginning with the poetry of Presentación en el templo, the author attempts to break out of this isolation and through the experiences of God and of love she comes to a greater appreciation of society, of Mexico and of the beauty of small things. What had previously been bitter disillusion now appears as resignation and even optimism in some of the verse of Poemas (1953-1955).

This period in Castellanos' production witnesses an intensification of her already strong interest in the concerns of woman. Tablero de damas presents a variety of female characters of unusually varied psychological make-up, all of whom are litteratae of greater or lesser renown. Of particular interest are the portrayal of interaction among these women and the degree to which each has or has not sacrificed certain characteristics or behavior considered essential to the nature of woman. The author's dissatisfaction with this piece as drama caused her later to redraft the work as the title piece of the collection of stories published in 1971 as Album de familia.

Four of the plays which Castellanos produced for her class with Usigli have titles which suggest feminist concerns and the two plays of

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42 Baptiste, p. 127. 43 Baptiste, p. 138.
this group which were later published ("Salomé" and "Judith") are almost militant in their rejection of traditional female roles. In both plays the protagonists openly refuse to follow through with actions expected of them and thus re-state the existential dilemma of woman first offered in Sobre cultura femenina.

A new direction in thematic concern appears in El rescate del mundo, the very title of which suggests self sacrifice for the good of the community. This new direction is what Baptiste calls "lo mexicano." Here the theme of salvation of the Indians through self-abnegation replaces an earlier concern for the poet's own salvation. This Mexican theme has two subdivisions, the first of which is folkloric Mexico with emphasis on the appeal to the senses offered by aspects of geography, folk craft and other costumbrista elements and the use of these elements as the metaphor for the new poetry of atonement. The second aspect of "lo mexicano" apparent in the new poetry is the Mexico of myth and legend. The Mexican theme receives its fullest treatment in El rescate del mundo and in Poemas (1953-1955), diminishing in intensity in the later poetry.

Of the six plays written between 1952 and 1955, two have titles which reflect concern for Mexican myths; the two published plays (Salomé and Judith), although concerned primarily with feminist themes, are set in Chiapas and the action of Salomé takes place during a nineteenth century revolt of the Chamula Indians of that area. The concerns of Balún-Canán may be said to be a further development of the mixture of feminist

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44 Baptiste, pp. 150-151. 45 Baptiste, p. 148.

and Indianist themes present in Salomé. In much the same manner the structure of the novel reflects the structure of the preceding play.

During the years 1951 to 1957 Castellanos gradually developed a style in poetry, drama, and fiction which incorporated elements of mythology, Classical and Biblical mythology at first, followed later by Meso-American mythology. This process is presumably a reflection of what Baptiste calls her attempts to reach beyond herself and to identify with certain elements of society. Certainly it reflects a gradual universalization of experience. Hence the identification of the poet with Eve, with Dido, and with Sor Juana.

Apparent too in Castellanos' use of myth is her selection of certain key aspects of a myth to be retained while drastically altering other aspects in such a way that the mythological figure takes on new meaning. Thus Dido of "Lamentación de Dido" does not die but rather lives on as the symbol of woman resigned to a life of betrayal and disillusion. Likewise, in Salomé the protagonist, although interested in a man whom her father has imprisoned and for whom she has been cast as the instrument of execution, breaks with the legend by refusing to obey her mother's suggestions. A certain tension is thus created as the two forms of the myth (original and re-created) are contrasted. These contrasts also produce an irony which will be characteristic of all of Castellanos' later prose fiction. In the literature produced in this period, this irony is perhaps best seen in the novel Balún-Canán, for here aspects of Mayan mythology which clearly refer to the defeat

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48 The last poem included in Poemas (1953-1955), "Lamentación de Dido," is different in tone, length and structure from the other poems of this collection, being more akin to "Salomé" and "Judith."
of the Maya during the Conquest are now made to apply to the decay and decline of the conquerors.

Aware of the defects of Balún-Canán even before its publication, Castellanos began in 1956 a broader, more technically perfect novel based on many of the same themes found in Balún-Canán. The composition of the chapters for what would eventually be Oficio de tinieblas alternated, the author tells us, with the composition of short stories which would later be collected in Ciudad Real and with the writing of the poetry of Al pie de la letra, all of which were written "sobre la marcha" while in Chiapas with the INI.

The year 1958 witnessed Castellanos' return to Mexico City, her receipt of the Premio "Chiapas" de Literatura for Balún-Canán, and her marriage (at the age of 32) to a professor of philosophy at the UNAM. Despite her husband's support and encouragement of her literary career, for a variety of reasons the marriage was not to last. Among these reasons was a series of what appear to have been either miscarriages or still births, which provide much of the thematic content of the poems of Lívida luz, published in 1960 following the publication of Salomé and Judith and Al pie de la letra in 1959.

Ciudad Real also appeared in 1960 and was awarded the Premio "Javier Villaurrutia" in 1961 on the very night in which Castellanos' only child, Gabriel, was born. The successful birth of a child appears

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49 Dybvig, p. 33. 50 Solana and others, p. 97.
51 Solana and others, p. 97; see also Manuel Durán, "In Memoriam: Jaime Torres Bodet, Salvador Novo, Rosario Castellanos," Revista Iberoamericana, 90 (enero-marzo, 1975), p. 82.
52 Solana and others, p. 97. 53 Solana and others, pp. 97-98.
to have stirred a new spirit in the author, for her activities turn now increasingly to literary criticism and away from indigenous concerns. This year saw the completion of several prefaces and prologues to editions of Spanish classics and to Spanish editions of French classics. At the same time Castellanos began a weekly column of reviews and criticism for the newspaper Novedades and later for Excelsior and for the literary supplement of Siempre!.

Her increasing activity as literary critic led her to give several lectures in the United States and to attend a meeting of German and Latin American writers in Germany in 1962. Upon her return from Germany she was awarded a professorship in Comparative Literature at the UNAM, a position which she continued to hold after her appointment to the Office of Press and Public Relations of the UNAM.

In 1964 she published the last of her fiction to deal with Chiapas, Los convidados de agosto, shifting her focus from Ladino-Indian relations to that of interaction between Ladino men and women of the area. It would be her last published fiction for seven years. By 1966 she had published the first of several collections of essays written over the last fifteen years, Juicios sumarios, and considered that she was about to finish Rito de iniciación, a novel which was never published but whose principal concern was the life of women in Mexico City.

Castellanos' activity as essayist increased markedly over the next several years as witnessed by the variety of publications in which

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54 Solana and others, p. 98.  55 Solana and others, p. 98.
56 Solana and others, p. 98.  57 Solana and others, p. 98.
they appear and by their collection and republication in *Mujer que sabe latín...* (1973), *El uso de la palabra*, and *El mar y sus pescaditos*, the latter two published posthumously in 1975. The first of these concerns the image of woman in general and in particular the image and concerns of the woman as writer; the second is general in scope; the third deals principally with Latin American literature.

From about 1969 there is a new surge in Castellanos' poetry and other original literature. This year saw the publication of *Materia memorable*, her last separately published collection of poems. With the exception of *Presentación en el templo*, all the poetry from 1948 until 1972 (including "Judith," "Salomé," and several "versiones" from the French) was finally collected in an "obra poética" published in 1972 under the title of *Poesía no eres tú*. Castellanos' last collection of prose fiction, *Album de familia*, was published in the spring of 1971. In 1971 she also began work on what would be her last major work, the drama *El eterno femenino*. The work was written in Israel between 1971 and 1973 and was published six months after her death, in January of 1975.

In the spring of 1971 Castellanos was named Mexican ambassador to Israel, a position which she held until her untimely death on August 7, 1974. She is buried in the "Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres" in Mexico City. 58

The period 1957 to 1964 is the apogee of Castellanos' prose fiction. During this period her novels and stories appeared at inter-

58 "Rosario Castellanos Dies: Mexican Envoy to Israel," *New York Times*, August 9, 1974, p. 36; see also Miller, "Voz e imagen," pp. 33, 38; Durán, p. 79.
vals of two and three years compared with a lapse of seven years before
the appearance of Album de familia. All this fiction is characterized
by those themes which we have seen develop in earlier works, namely iso-
lation, disillusion, varying attitudes towards maternity, concern for
the condition of woman and of the Indian. In terms of technique, these
volumes have one unifying element: contrast or counterpoint. In all of
these works there are constant contrasts of myth with reality, of nar-
rative point of view, of theme, and of tone.

Castellanos' work as essayist and literary critic spans a period
which we date from 1960 (the date of her first major critique of Mexican
literature) until her death in 1974. However, the majority of these
essays were produced from about 1961 to 1969. Indeed, it is Castellanos
the essayist who dominates the late 1960's as the poet and novelist had
dominated earlier periods. We have noted a sharp decline in her fiction
after 1964 and there is a decrease in quantity of original poetry in
this essay period. While the Indian plays an increasingly smaller role
in the essays, the major themes continue to be "lo mexicano," woman and
society, and woman as author, and there is a new element, general and
Latin American literary criticism. There is also a relatively large
corpus of autobiographical essays. The essays, despite their general
brevity, maintain the author's usual sense of irony. Style is much more
relaxed after Juicios sumarios and many of the later essays approach her
level of short prose fiction, including use of contrapuntal technique
and selective use of myths in new contexts. Beth Miller, quoting
J. E. Pacheco, suggests that "los artículos que Castellanos publicó

59 Rosario Castellanos, "La novela mexicana contemporánea,"
México en la cultura, August 22, 1960, pp. 1, 5, 10.
entre 1964 y 1969 en *Excelsior*, son antecedentes del nuevo periodismo en México."\(^{60}\)

The poetry published after *Lívida luz* reflects the shifts in content and, to a lesser extent, in tone, already observable in the essays. With the exception of the Indian, who almost disappears from her poetry, the usual themes remain. The language does change, however. Ever since Castellanos' adoption of mythic language in *El rescate del mundo* and in *Poemas (1953-1955)*, her poetry never reverted to the extremes of abstraction to be found in the earlier works; even in *Lívida luz*, which is frequently quite bitter, the tempering effect of the new language is apparent.\(^{61}\) After *Lívida luz* there is a noticeable increase in lightness of spirit and tone; there is a touch of humor not noticeable before 1960. Testimony to her work in comparative literature and her continuing interest in woman as writer are her numerous translations and "versiones" from the French and English included in *Poesía no eres tú*. This period also produced what we may call Castellanos' "arte poética," the poem "Poesía no eres tú." As both the poem and the author's explanatory essay make clear,\(^{62}\) paramount to Castellanos' poetry is a break with sentimental romanticism in terms both of tone and of the passive role of woman as merely muse and source of inspiration. A more strident tone in poetry more nearly suited to the author's needs for expression and a presentation of woman in an active, expressive posture seemed desirable to this woman poet.

\(^{60}\) Miller, "Voz e imagen," p. 37.

\(^{61}\) Miller, "Voz e imagen," p. 36.

\(^{62}\) Castellanos, *Mujer que sabe latín...*, pp. 201-208.
The last two major works, Album de familia and El eterno femenino, produced during the author's truncated creative revival, reveal her continuing interest in the condition of woman. In a sense they represent a return to Castellanos' original point of departure in that they are here much closer to a universal representation of woman than at any time in the earlier works.
Chapter I

DEFINITIONS

Indigenism

In our attempt to present Castellanos' position within the tradition of literary indigenism in this study we have felt it necessary to review some definitions and descriptions of this tradition in Latin American literature, particularly in the light of the frequent confusion of the Spanish terms *indianista* and *indigenista* and the English usage of "Indianist" and "indigenist." Ours is not a conclusive study of the development of these terms, but is rather an outline of the major points of view, from which we draw our own conclusions.

Since our concern in this study is with the literature of the twentieth century, we have avoided application of the above terms to the literature of the colonial period, despite the fact that both Concha Meléndez and Aída Cometta Manzoni seek the origin of the terms and of the consideration of the Indian as a social problem in the tradition of Las Casas and Ercilla.

In 1929 José Carlos Mariátegui published *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*. In these essays he sets forth what he believes to be the problems of Peru, one of which is the need to redress grievances committed against the Indian masses of the nation. Of particular importance for us here is his concern for the role of the writer in the process of redressing these grievances, for it is while
expressing this concern that Mariátegui makes one of the first attempts at a definition of literary indigenism.

The essay most closely concerned with this issue is that entitled "El proceso de la literatura." Here Mariátegui relates the social problem of redress of Indian grievances (indigenism) to the arts.

El problema indígena, tan presente en la política, la economía, y la sociología no puede estar ausente de la literatura y del arte.¹

Indigenism is present in literature and art, but, says Mariátegui, "no es aquí un fenómeno esencialmente literario (...)."² "El indigenismo, en nuestra literatura, (...)," he says, "tiene fundamentalmente el sentido de una reivindicación de lo autóctono;"³ it is a literature of protest whose authors "colaboran, conscientemente o no, en una obra política y económica de reivindicación (...)."⁴

This true indigenism is to be distinguished from former attitudes towards the Indian which sought "el tipo o el motivo 'pintoresco'" in their choice of subject.⁵ These former writers exploited indigenous themes out of mere love of the exotic; they sought "restauración" or "resurrección," not the redress of political and economic wrongs.⁶

Concerning literary indigenism, Mariátegui has some reservations. First among these is his recognition that literary indigenism

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¹ José Carlos Mariátegui, Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana (2d ed.; Lima: Biblioteca Amauta, 1945), p. 257.
⁴ Mariátegui, p. 260. ⁵ Mariátegui, p. 261.
⁶ Mariátegui, p. 260.
cannot render a completely authentic picture of the Indian.

La literatura indigenista no puede darnos una versión rigurosamente verista del indio. Tiene que idealizarlo y estilizarlo. Tampoco puede darnos su propia alma. Es todavía una literatura de mestizos. Por eso se llama indigenista, y no indígena.  

If one is to approach authenticity of evocation, however, it must be by lyrical, rather than naturalistic or costumbrista, means. Only through a lyrical approach will literary indigenism grasp the "emociones sustantivas de la vida de la sierra," and provide "algunos escarzos del alma del indio." The search for "el origen del sentimiento cósmico de los quechuas" must include consideration of "the loveless marriage" of the Indian's animism, his "filosofía panteísta y materialista" and the catechism of the Roman Catholic church.  

In 1934 Concha Meléndez published a monograph entitled La novela indigenista de América 1832-1899 in which she makes the following statement:

Hemos aislado en nuestro estudio un aspecto de la literatura romántica en la América española: las novelas indígenistas. Incluimos en esta denominación todas las novelas en que los indios y sus tradiciones están presentados con simpatria. Esta simpatria tiene gradaciones que van desde una mera emoción exotista hasta un exaltado sentimiento de reivindicación social, pasando por matizcs religiosos, patrióticos o sólo pintorescos y sentimetales.

Any sympathetic treatment of the Indian, including novels of "reivindicación social, pasando por matices religiosos, patrióticos o sólo pintorescos y sentimentales."

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7 Mariátegui, p. 262. 8 Mariátegui, p. 261.  
9 Mariátegui, pp. 263-264. 10 Mariátegui, pp. 264-265.  

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cación social," would then be classed by her as **indianista**, but it is also clear from her definition that a realistic approach to the portrayal of the Indian is not necessary to the formation of **indianista** literature.

In 1939 Àida Cometta Manzoni, in *El indio en la poesía de la América española*, establishes a distinction between **literatura indianista** and **literatura indigenista**.

In **indianista** literature, Cometta Manzoni continues, "el indio es un ente abstracto, pierde su categoría social y humana para convertirse en objeto del pasado, o bien se le considera sólo como realidad étnica (...)." Lacking in this treatment of the Indian is any concern for Indian psychology and for the idiosyncracies of any particular Indian.14

By contrast, **indigenista** literature trata de llegar a la realidad del indio y ponerse en contacto con él. Habla de sus luchas, de su miseria, de su dolor; expone su situación angustiosa; defiende sus derechos; clama por su redención.13

The **indigenista**, she says, "considera el problema desde un punto de vista puramente humano y le interesa como obra política y económica de


reivindicación, no de resurrección."16

This preoccupation with the Indian in his economic and social environment and amidst his struggles and sufferings is, in effect, the preoccupation with class struggle. The Indian ceases to be a Romantic ideal and becomes a Marxist ideal. "El problema del indio ya no es un problema racial, sino que se transforma en problema de clases. El indio es el proletario del campo que sufre la explotación de gamonales y caudillos políticos (...).17

In the same manner as the role of the Indian has shifted from Romantic to Marxist ideal, there is also an observable change in the pose of the author; for while the Romantic indíanista sought in the Indian the reflection or the projection of his own ego, the indigenista writer seeks to react to a pricked conscience.

El escritor ha sentido (...) un imperioso llamado a su conciencia y ha respondido en forma decidida. Testigo de la explotación inicua que pesa sobre el indio, se ha echado encima la responsabilidad del censor que acusa el estado de miseria y oprobrio en que viven esos seres.18

In 1950 Gerald E. Wade and William H. Archer published in Hispania an article entitled "The Indianista Novel Since 1889," a survey of approximately forty novels of indigenist content published since the appearance of Clorinda Matto de Turner's Aves sin nido in 1889.19 The authors use the terms "Indianist" and indígenista interchangeably and

16Cometta Manzoni, El indio en la poesía, p. 259.
17Cometta Manzoni, El indio en la poesía, pp. 243-244.
18Cometta Manzoni, El indio en la poesía, p. 244.
with reference both to the Romantic tradition surveyed by Concha Meléndez and the realistic-naturalistic tradition in vogue between 1900 and 1950. They appear to have excluded from their survey those works inspired in ancient Indian texts.

The authors agree in acknowledging Aves sin nido as the first novel to deal realistically with the exploitation of the Indians by bosses, governors, and priests and they agree that the "Indianist novel offers an excellent record of the effect of his environment on the Indian." Little of the Indian's reaction to this environment is offered, they suggest, except very superficial reactions. They also note the presence of great quantities of Indian lore introduced in most of the novels of their survey, suggesting that while this provides a good social record, it often mars the structure of the novels since it is generally not well integrated into the body of the novel. As a particular instance of the social reality documented in these novels, they note the presence in some Indianist novels of a communal protagonist instead of the individual Indian protagonist.

The authors recognize two deficiencies in the content of the Indianist novel. The first is "its failure to penetrate the native heart and mind." They cite as the one possible exception to this pattern Ciro Alegría's El mundo es ancho y ajeno, since it is "the most successful effort to get into the Indian's soul." The second failure is that these novels are "conspicuously devoid of descriptions of

\[\text{20} \text{Wade and Archer, pp. 211-212. } \text{21} \text{Wade and Archer, p. 217. } \text{22} \text{Wade and Archer, p. 220, note 17. } \text{23} \text{Wade and Archer, p. 217.}\]
In 1960, in *El indio en la novela de América*, Cometta Manzoni again takes up the question of indigenism in literature. Quoting Alfredo Yépez Miranda, she says that "el indigenismo quiere resolver problemas que no han sido tocados desde la conquista." 25 Throughout the work, however, she uses the term *indigenismo* in an extremely broad sense to indicate not only the treatment of the Indian in his present socio-economic and socio-cultural state, but also to refer to a tradition which evokes the Indian's historical past.

In addressing herself to the presence of the Indian in Mexican and Central American fiction, she distinguishes three trends in literary indigenism. The tradition of protest characterizes most novels concerned with the Indian; but there exists a group which

> también se interesan por él [el indio] aunque en otro sentido. No ya como ser humano, sumido en el dolor de su miseria y la tragedia de su esclavitud, sino como personaje de leyenda, que vive en la tradición o bien como intérprete de episodios históricos, al evocar su pasado grandioso. 26

There is a third group which blends the mytho-historic with the social protest tradition. Of these she says that

> Realidad y fantasía están en la novela tan estrechamente unidas que resulta difícil decir cuando acaba la primera y cuando comienza la segunda. El mundo legendario del indio y su mundo actual, de esclavitud y miseria, surgen

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24 Wade and Archer, p. 217.


In his doctoral dissertation of 1965 Warren L. Meinhardt offers the following definition of the term "Indianist" as used in the title of the dissertation, "The Mexican Indianist Novel 1910-1960."

Defined here as Indianist is the novel in which some or all of the central characters are Indians portrayed in situations that render dramatically and artistically the socio-economic and socio-cultural problems that have resulted from the collision of the indigenous and white races in Mexico—problems that have been thrown into sharp relief by the revolution of 1910. Meinhardt does not consider Indianist those works which are inspired by legend or the study of ancient indigenous literature. In particular he rejects as not Indianist the literature in the tradition of Medis Bolio.

John Brushwood, in his Mexico in its Novel (1966), offers a similar definition for the novela indigenista, and accepts its distinction from the novela indianista as set out by Cometta Manzoni.

This is a term used to identify novels that deal with the life and problems of the Indian population, and to distinguish them from the nineteenth-century novels that idealized the Indian.

Jean Franco's use of the term "Indianist" is perhaps the most comprehensive so far encountered, for in The Modern Culture of Latin America (1967) she applies the term to a broad body of Indian-inspired activity.

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27 Cometta Manzoni, El indio en la novela, pp. 79-80. The reference is to Miguel Angel Asturias' Hombres de maíz.


She first applies the term Indianist to the nineteenth century cult of exoticism already referred to by Mariátegui.

Of all the writers of the time, probably José Carlos Mariátegui realized more clearly than any other the connexion between Indianism and the European fashion for exotic art. (...) he associated Indianism in Latin American literature with the European cult of the exotic, which he declared was a sign of decadence. However, he was far from condemning Latin-American Indianism merely because it had received its first impetus from a declining Europe. This attitude she styles European-inspired Indianism and she contrasts it with the Latin American Indianism advocated by Mariátegui, the functions of which she summarizes.

Indianist literature in Latin America was to have two distinct functions. One was to fulfill a direct social purpose by arousing a general awareness of the plight of submerged sections of the population. The other (...) was to set up the values of Indian culture and civilization as an alternative to European values.

The aftermath of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, in addition to throwing light on the economic plight of the Indian, also "accorded to him a prominent place in the new revolutionary mythology." This mythification performed the task of resurrection which Mariátegui and Cometta Manzoni had earlier rejected. (...) there was a conscious attempt to revive certain mythological or historical figures (...) and invest them with significance for the modern Mexican.

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30 Jean Franco, The Modern Culture of Latin America (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 120.

31 Franco, Modern Culture, p. 120.

32 Franco, Modern Culture, p. 121.

33 Franco, Modern Culture, p. 121.
Products of this new cult of the Indian were initially threefold: scholarship, the historical novel, and the novel of social protest. Of the first Franco says that "Indianism in Mexico has produced some fruitful results in the field of scholarship," pointing out the issuance in Spanish of ancient documents in native Indian languages, particularly the *Popol Vuh* and the *Books of Chilam Balam*.\(^{34}\)

Concerning fiction, Franco notes that the novelists seldom approach the idealization of the Indian achieved by the politicians and the muralists of the Mexican Revolution, this even in the historical novel which evokes the Conquest. Instead, she says, the tendency in Mexico has been towards portrayal of the abysmal gulf which separates Indian and non-Indian societies.\(^{35}\)

There is later another tradition of fiction about the Indian which combines elements of the historical novel, the novel of social protest, material gleaned from the ancient Indian texts, and the results of modern ethnographic studies. In Mexico this tradition dates from approximately 1950, and specifically from the publication of Ricardo Pozas' *Juan Pérez Jolote* (1950), Ramón Rubín's *El callado dolor de los tzotziles* (1949), and Francisco Rojas González' *El diosero* (1952).\(^{36}\) Franco also includes in this tradition Rosario Castellanos.\(^{37}\) Outside of Mexico, the authors who signal this new literature are Miguel Angel Asturias, especially in *Hombres de maíz* (1949), and José María

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\(^{34}\) Franco, *Modern Culture*, p. 122.

\(^{35}\) Franco, *Modern Culture*, p. 123.


Arguedas. Within this post-Realistic tradition Castellanos, Asturias, and Arguedas represent that tendency, mentioned earlier, to extoll Indian virtues and to offer them as viable alternatives, often as more humane alternatives, to prevailing values, which are seen as European and foreign.  

Franco approaches the problem of the Indian in the Latin American novel in a somewhat different manner in Spanish American Literature Since Independence (1973). She sees three major trends in the presentation of the Indian in the novel: the heritage of Romanticism (before 1889); the tradition of Realism (from 1889 until approximately 1950); a tradition which rejects the Realistic mode and incorporates elements of Indian mythology (the literature after 1950). To the novels of the latter two traditions she applies the term "Indianist."

In considering the problems faced by the Indianist writer of the Realistic tradition, Franco echoes Mariátegui when she suggests that the major problem lies in the Indian being essentially an exotic, unfamiliar element to most Latin American writers. Any attempt to approach such exotic material realistically cannot but fail since the exotic material becomes stylized and becomes the symbol for other concerns. Thus it is that the Indian in the novels of the Realistic tradition has become the symbol of social injustice or the representative of native values in opposition to foreign influence.

38 Franco, Modern Culture, pp. 125-130.
39 Franco, Modern Culture, p. 124.
The novel which portrays the Indian as the symbol of social injustice falls into two general periods. The first of these presents the Indian as the victim of superstition and lack of education and flourishes in the 1920's. The second group portrays the Indian as symbol of injustice and emphasizes economic exploitation and class struggle. Franco does not elaborate on the Indian as symbol of native values in opposition to foreign influence; she does however speak of "the Indian's sense of organic relationships" in addressing herself to Ciro Alegría's El mundo es ancho y ajeno, which she considers a precursor of the literature of the post-1950 period in its attempt to portray the "consciousness" of the comuneros of the novel.\footnote{Franco, Spanish American Literature, pp. 163-166.}

In introducing the literature which has flourished after 1950, Franco observes that "Indian attitudes were only successfully conveyed in literature when the Realist mode was superceded."\footnote{Franco, Spanish American Literature, p. 166.}

Since other writers generally echo the material already presented, and since they frequently do so in a less thorough manner than Franco, we will attempt to summarize their attitudes according to points established rather than by critic and chronology. Most scholars now accept a three part division of the novel of Indian concern; there are 1) a Romantic tradition before 1900; 2) a Realistic tradition between 1900 and 1950; and 3) a post-Realistic tradition which incorporates varying quantities of Indian mythology (after 1950).

Seymour Menton accepts the further division, offered by Franco, of the Indianist novel into two Realistic trends; also like Franco and

\footnote{Franco, Spanish American Literature, pp. 163-166.}
Wade and Archer, he sees *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* as a forerunner of the literature of the post-1950's in its attempt to penetrate beneath the costumbrismo and stereotyping so common in the previous tradition and in its attempt to capture in the person of one character the Indian's peculiar concept of the cosmos.43

Only a few critics have acknowledged the achievement of the portrayal of individual Indian characters in the literature after 1950 and these tend to be in specific studies. Brushwood is perhaps the only major critic, speaking with reference to national and international trends in literature, to note this achievement.44

The last major point concerning the development of Indianist literature is that of its possible demise as a separate sub-genre. This was first suggested by Wade and Archer, was later rejected by Sommers and was again suggested by Menton and Schmidt, both of whom point out that there have been no novels with Indian protagonists since the mid-1960's. They see this lack of treatment of the Indian as proof that the post-Realistic tradition has exhausted the possibilities for portraying the Indian character. Menton notes the decline of the Indian from protagonist to peripheral character in the literature surveyed by him from the mid-1960's to 1972.45


The problem of terminology remains unresolved. Both Menton and Schmidt accept the distinction between literatura indianista and literatura indigenista offered by Cometta Manzoni; Sommers points out that the terms are, more often than not, used interchangeably. Sommers does, however, use the term indigenista with reference to the Realistic and post-Realistic traditions, and the same is true of Marta Portal. Wade and Archer's use of the term indianista encompasses both the Romantic and Realistic tradition. The English usage of "Indianist" solves the problem for the English-language reader only; the problem of an appropriate Spanish equivalent term remains unresolved.

What is the position of Rosario Castellanos in the present scheme of the Indianist novel? Several critics include her in that tradition which rejects Realism and which began approximately in 1950. With the exception of Franco, who abandons the use of indigenista and indigenista in favor of the English "Indianist," all the other critics refer to Castellanos as an indigenista writer.

Castellanos' own views on the tradition of the Indian in literature, as well as her view of her own position within that tradition, are set forth in several essays included in Juicios sumarios, El uso de la

46Menton, pp. 231-234; see also Schmidt, p. 652, note 1; and Sommers, "Indian-Oriented Novel," pp. 249-250; and Marta Portal, "Narrativa indigenista de mediados de siglo," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 298, pp. 196-197.

47Wade and Archer, p. 211.

palabra, El mar y sus pescaditos, and in an interview in 1965 with María Luisa Cresta de Leguisamón.

Castellanos recognizes the novel which treats of the Indian in Mexico as novela indigenista, but she has ambivalent feelings towards the inclusion of her works in this tradition. The root of her ambivalence appears to be the schematic presentation of European-Indian relationships (i.e., the portrayal of the blanco as exploiter, the Indian as victim) in the indigenista literature prior to the publication of Pozas' Juan Pérez Jolote in 1950. 49

According to Castellanos, Pozas' achievements are two: the first is an objectivity of treatment of the subject matter; the second, the individualization of characters. These two achievements are necessary to the new view of the Indian which must include the rejection of certain myths about the passivity of the Indian and about his dignity in the face of defeat and subjection. Also the author's view of him must shift from one which regards him as exotic to one in which he is presented as an ordinary being, capable of the normal range of emotions, albeit in a different social context. 50

Castellanos accepts the belief that literature can be a catalyst for social change; therefore to her the achievement of Pozas' work, while necessary for the future portrayal of the Indian, remains ambiguous concerning what is to be done about the situation. She believes that the new literature of Indian concern must present the subject in a manner which she terms dialectic. This dialectic view will illustrate

49 Cresta de Leguiázamón, p. 4.

what Castellanos believes to be the real situation of Ladino-Indian relations, that is, that the sword of injustice is a double-bladed sword, wounding equally the one who wields it and the intended victim.\footnote{Castellanos, \textit{Juicios sumarios}, p. 126; see also Cresta de Leguizamón, p. 4.}

The author tells us that in Chiapas, where all her \textit{indigenista} works are set, time has moved so slowly that little has changed in Ladino-Indian relationships since the time of Bartolomé de las Casas. What has happened, though, is that patterns of behavior in both Ladino and Indian society have become fixed and stereotyped. As a result, the Indian remains for the Ladino little more than an object at the latter's disposal. Such a situation inevitably presents extraordinary and unexpected situations, thoughts, and patterns of behavior.\footnote{Castellanos, \textit{Juicios sumarios}, pp. 126-127, 433.}

To express the unexpected there must be a style which will be in accord with the material expressed, a style which breaks with previous \textit{indigenista} tradition in an effort to present this new view. The author sees her works as lineal descendants of the tradition of Yáñez, Rulfo, and Fuentes in terms of style, in particular in their use of contrapuntal techniques, interior monologue, and the detached stance of the author which allows him to present the totality of a situation and to analyze the underlying drives and emotional states of his characters. Traditional limits of time and reality must disappear.\footnote{Castellanos, \textit{Juicios sumarios}, pp. 125-126.}

Three elements in particular will aid in achieving the new style: lyric prose, the use of Indian legend and cosmology, and the use of a child character. According to Castellanos, the Indian's cosmic
view lies outside the general world view of Western society, dominated as the latter is by reason; similarly, the child has not yet reached the years of reason and is thus not bound by its limits in her view of the world. In the cases of both the Indian and the child fantasy explains what is not otherwise understandable, and what better way to convey the idea of fantasy than by the use of lyric prose.54

With the works of Rosario Castellanos we appear to have come full circle and to coincide considerably with the ideas expressed by Mariátegui in the 1920's. The indigenista writers after 1950 are closely acquainted with the Indian and with his world view, having frequently done sociological or anthropological field work in Indian societies. That element of exoticism which Mariátegui found a hindrance to an accurate depiction of the Indian has been overcome in the very fashion which he predicted, that is, by the rejection of the Realistic tradition. The use of lyric prose, as advocated by Mariátegui, has helped to present the mind of the Indian. There is a departure from Mariátegui's prescription, however, in that Castellanos juxtaposes elements of Realism with lyrical passages which break with Realistic objectivity, thus offering the reader an overview of several sets of realities and relationships which allow the development of complex individual characters.

Racial/Cultural Typing

Any thorough consideration of indigenismo, we believe, must include, for the sake of clarity, some definition of the term indio, the

54 Cresta de Leguizamón, p. 5.
precise meaning of which is frequently lacking in considerations of literary indigenism, thus causing an ambiguity of terms and references. We offer as the most practical definition of indio that proposed by Alfonso Caso in his essay "Definición del indio y lo indio," especially since it is with this definition that Castellanos seems most in accord in drawing the Indian characters of her prose fiction.

Es indio aquel que se siente pertenecer a una comunidad indígena, y es una comunidad indígena aquélla en que predominan elementos somáticos no europeos, que habla perfectamente una lengua indígena, que posee en su cultura material y espiritual elementos indígenas en fuerte proporción y que, por último, tiene un sentido social de comunidad aislada dentro de las otras comunidades que la rodean, que la hace distinguirse asimismo de los pueblos de blancos y de mestizos.

Of the four criteria offered by Caso in his definition of an Indian, the two most important are a sense of belonging to a community apart from the rest of the world and the regular use of an indigenous language. Of these two the central element for him is the sense of community, without which, as we shall shortly see, we have something other than an Indian.

Es indio todo individuo que se siente pertenecer a una comunidad indígena; que se concibe a sí mismo como indígena porque esta conciencia de grupo no puede existir sino cuando se acepta totalmente la cultura del grupo; cuando se tienen los mismos ideales éticos, estéticos, sociales y políticas del grupo; cuando se participa en las simpatías y antipatías colectivas y se es de buen grado colaborador en sus acciones y reacciones.

To be an Indian, then is largely a state of mind, the possession

of a particular set of feelings and attitudes which, in combination with
certain racial and tangible cultural elements, are articulated in an
Indian language, the structure of which has been adapted over the years
to best express these feelings.

Lack of this sense of indigenous communal identity and regular
use of Spanish as the maternal language, says Caso, cause the individu­
als so described to be included in the mestizo category, regardless of
the racial or artifactual elements which they may preserve from pre­
Conquest times.

Pero un grupo que no tenga sentimiento de que es indígena,
no puede ser considerado como tal, aunque tenga abundantes
rasgos somáticos y culturales que lo coloquen entre los indí­
genas, si ha perdido por completo su antigua lengua y se
expresa ya en español. Tal grupo será mestizo y de estos
grupos está integrada gran parte de la población de nuestros
países, conservando, en menor o mayor escala, elementos
somáticos o culturales de ascendencia india.\(^{58}\)

By the same process, a blanco may be defined as one whose sense
of community lies with the heritage derived from Europe, whose language
is non-indigenous and usually Spanish, whose culture is predominantly
European, and whose skin color is generally caucasian.

As will be seen from the foregoing definitions, none is com­
pletely objective. Rather, we are faced with degrees of racial mixture,
with cultural blend, and with the very subjective elements of language
and sense of community. They are, however, working definitions and
provide a basis for the comparison of other terms which appear in
Castellanos' fiction.

Prose fiction concerning the Indian is replete with terms de-

\(^{58}\)Caso, p. 15.
noting persons with varying degrees of European and Amerindian physical and cultural blending. Apart from their direct racial and cultural references, these terms are frequently laden with pejorative overtones and seek to ridicule an individual of one or another of these groups. Their use and reference also illustrates the stratified society out of which they have developed. The characters of Castellanos' fiction are no exception.

Thus we find that in her fiction the term *indio* is usually pejorative, especially in the mouth of a non-Indian. By extension, the tribal names by which the Indians are known (*chamula, pedrano, zinacanteo*) carry the same pejorative tone as does the word *indio* when used by non-Indians. In Castellanos' prose, the term *chamula*, the name of the dominant tribe in the area of Chiapas where most of the action of her fiction takes place, frequently replaces *indio* as a general term referring pejoratively to Indians.

There are four terms of high frequency in Castellanos' fiction which refer to non-Indians. These terms are *mestizo, ladino, caxlán,* and *blanco*. Of these, the first two appear to be readily interchangeable, referring always to groups or individuals of mixed cultural and racial heritage. *Ladino* also refers to one who lives in an urban area. The social position of the *ladino* or *mestizo* is variable but is usually below that accorded the *blanco* or *caxlán* and above that of *indio*.

*Caxlán*, apparently an Indian version of *castellano*, is a term used exclusively by Indians to refer to non-Indians, and especially to non-Indians who occupy a high social position; it appears to be roughly the equivalent of *blanco* as defined above.
Feminism

Defined here as feminism is a concern for the nature of woman, for her position in society, and for those experiences which may be peculiar to woman because of her biological structure and/or her position in society. Castellanos addresses these aspects of feminism from what is essentially an existential point of view. That is to say, she rejects the presentation of women, either in fiction or in society, as one-dimensional beings easily stereotyped as virgin, mother, whore, spinster, etc. In the place of these figurones the author offers a spectrum of psychological portraits of female characters as these characters confront and respond to constantly changing circumstances of their lives. The tension created between the agonizing of the individual women and the tendency of the societies in which they live to view them as stereotypes creates an atmosphere of frustration and the need, on the part of the character, to take some sort of action to preserve her self or her self-image. Castellanos' fiction illustrates the degree to which individual female characters are able to take this step towards authenticity of personality.

The arena in which this struggle for authenticity takes place shifts gradually from the Indian community and the provincial town in the two novels and in Ciudad Real to the provincial town alone in Los convidados de agosto and finally to Mexico City in Album de familia. The societies of these areas, in which Castellanos' characters function, have very prescriptive (as well as proscriptive) standards of behavior for the several elements of the society. This is particularly true with regard to the ideals and models of feminine behavior. This aggregation of models, attitudes and expectations forms what Castellanos calls the
"image of woman" or the "feminine myth" (or mystique). In order better to grasp this myth of femininity there are several works which we must consider. The first of these is Castellanos' thesis, *Sobre cultura femenina*; the others are a body of essays included primarily in *Mujer que sabe latín...*, and an interview granted in 1965. We offer the following as a synthesis of the ideas expressed in these works, ideas which evolved over a period of approximately a quarter of a century but which retain certain constants throughout.

Central to the concepts of woman offered by the authorities whom Castellanos cites in *Sobre cultura femenina* is the equation of woman with inert matter. Woman is inert and formless matter, lacking any sense of self-knowledge or self-definition. This state pertains until such time as man may give her form and meaning, which he does when he adopts a sexual posture with regard to her. In terms of Castellanos' fiction, which reflects a society which holds approximately these same views, woman is of absolutely no value until she is accorded value by association with man. She is then usually accorded the role of either spouse or lover, a condition which for the first time allows her some degree of self-knowledge. Motherhood is assumed to follow naturally on the heels of this incipient self-awareness.

Apart from this central definition of woman as matter and of the necessity of having this matter given form by man, the authorities quoted differ in their elaborations of the more complex elements of male-female behavior. Since the analysis offered by Otto Weininger in Castellanos' thesis seems to come closest to the expected female behavior in her fiction, we shall expound his system.

Man, says Weininger, is matter which possesses rational facul-
ties. Through the use of these faculties he has been able to reach out of his matter toward form and in this struggle he has come to a know­ledge of himself, of his inner being, of his soul. In this process of self-discovery man also learns the nature of truth and the full meaning of dignity.

By contrast, woman is matter which possesses no rational facul­ties. Lacking these faculties, woman cannot proceed rationally to a knowledge of self and thence to the knowledge of truth and of the mean­ing of dignity. She must rely upon man for such impressions of truth, dignity, or self as she may receive, impressions which, since they are not of her own experiencing, are imperfect. Her lack of rational facul­ties also leaves her amoral. Unaware of the nature of truth which man has discovered, woman is not constrained by the limits of this truth and may thus move from a position defined by man as true to one defined by him as untrue without perceiving that any boundary has been crossed.

There exists, then, a relationship of active/passive, of de­finer/defined, and of rational/irrational between man and woman. Woman is inert (passive), responding irrationally (without rational faculties) to the form or definition which man gives to her. Responding as she dows to outside stimuli, she takes no conscious action of her own. She is thus relegated to the world of the inanimate, to the world of things, of objects.

Castellanos herself offers an elaboration of the contrast to be found in the masculine world of activity, here represented by "la cul­tura," and the feminine world of inactivity.

De la cultura sé (...) que es un mundo distinto del mundo en el que yo vege. En el mío me encontré de repente y
In presenting the reader with the inert world of women, Castellanos sets forth for the first time in her prose the existential dilemma of woman: she may choose to remain in her dark, non-vital world as an object acted upon by others or she may choose to reject this passive role for the more active life in the masculine domain where things are in an eternal state of creation and re-creation.

If, as suggested by Castellanos' sources, woman can only achieve a sense of self-knowledge and definition of self through sexual activity, the proof of which is offspring, then what is the possibility of self-knowledge for the barren or abstaining woman? Unable or unwilling to bring to fruition her definition by man, what courses of action are open to her? The two standard deviations from the expected norm of sexual definition are hysteria and artistic creativity. It should be clearly understood that Castellanos' authorities consider these two patterns of behavior as abnormal and indicative of a lack of sexual fulfillment.

The essays included in Mujer que sabe latín... are primarily concerned with the artistic expression of literary women of the twentieth century who have, through their literature, taken a step towards

59 Castellanos, Sobre cultura femenina, p. 34.
the rejection of conventional roles and towards that existential authen­
ticity of personality which Castellanos sees as all-important. Her
actual enunciation of the several myths and conventional attitudes which
must be broken to achieve this end are best set forth in the two essays
which begin the collection: "La mujer y su imagen" and "La participa­
ción de la mujer mexicana en la educación formal." Because of their
bearing on material set out in these two essays, we have also included
in our attempt to delineate her theory of the feminine myth material
from one essay of El uso de la palabra, "Historia de una mujer rebelde,"
and from another essay in Mujer que sabe latín..., "La mujer mexicana
del siglo XIX," as well as material contained in an interview granted to
María Luisa Cresta de Leguizamón in 1965.

Central to the problem of woman in Mexico, as Castellanos sees
it, is a generally held view of her as object or stereotype. This view
is held by society in general, both men and women, and effectively de­
prives woman of individuality, converting her into the incarnation of
destructive forces, the reproductive machine necessary to the economic
well-being of a landed population, and the repository of masculine honor
and of purity of lineage. As an object, woman is controlled by that
male relative of greatest age or authority within the extended family
and is thus never free to take any action of her own.

The process which has led to the present condition is one best
explained by the positing of a primal opposition of masculine and femi­
nine forces in Nature.60 Conflict between these two has led to a mascu­

60Castellanos, Mujer que sabe latín..., p. 7. Castellanos ad­
mits having borrowed this idea from Simone de Beauvoir.
line dominance over the female forces. Since the female forces are necessary to the continuation of the species in Nature, the victim of this struggle is never eradicated but is instead held in a restive subjugation.

On the human level, fear of a possible feminine revolt and subsequent dominance has led men to seek means of both venerating and at the same time controlling these forces. Over the years this leads through a gradual process of mythification in the course of which both men and women forget the purpose and fact of the original creation of the myth of femininity and come to see woman, not as another creature of flesh and blood, but as the incarnation of a generally threatening natural principle or force. This myth is lent credence and authority by Scripture and by the pronouncements of the Church Fathers and crystallizes in what Castellanos considers to be the prime example of static society, Western Europe from the Middle Ages to the Counter Reformation, a society which was transplanted to the New World by the Conquest. Here it abandoned, in practice at least, its pretense at veneration and reduced woman to the role of a domestic animal. The attitudes of this 16th century society persist today despite 20th century economic, legal, and educational gains by some women and these attitudes maintain most women in subjection through pure force and through the trappings and myths of idealized femininity. Thus it is that in Mexico woman is only chronologically distanced from the Middle Ages; in economic, social and intellectual terms, she generally remains part of this feudal society. The present condition of woman is one of contradictions since although some have achieved equality with men in many areas of life (and indeed are sometimes more economically independent), most are still treated in
terms of the old moral standards.

Castellanos sees the myth of the veneration of woman as a more subtle and more efficient means of controlling woman than is brute force. She distinguishes three levels on which this subjugation through veneration takes place, the first of which is the physical level. Canons of feminine beauty, the author maintains, restrict physical movement or inflict discomfort. Thus a generally universal preference for small feet as more feminine has led to the binding of feet in China and the use of excessively tight shoes with very high heels in the West. Both impede running and lend themselves to falling. Similarly, extremes of obesity and thinness as the feminine ideal reduce women's energy and inflict on her both poor health and immobility.

The more totally destructive of man's controls over woman occurs on what Castellanos calls the ethical level. As canons of physical beauty dictated preferred physical appearance, so here canons of ethical behavior prescribe what personality qualities a woman shall have. The embodiment of the preferred qualities is to be found in the image of the "hada del hogar," Castellanos' rendering of Virginia Wolf's Angel of the House, a figure which contains a seemingly contradictory array of characteristics which suggest that a model woman be both all-knowing and yet remain totally innocent. Castellanos cites the following description from Wolf:

'es extremadamente comprensiva, tiene un encanto inmenso y carece del menor egoísmo. Descuida en las artes difíciles de la vida familiar. Se sacrifica cotidianamente. Si hay pollo para la comida ella se sirve del muslo. Se instala en el sitio preciso donde atraviesa una corriente de aire. En una palabra, está constituida de tal manera que no tiene nunca un pensamiento o un deseo propio sino que prefiere ceder a los pensamientos y deseos de los demás. Y, sobre todo, --¿es indispensable decirlo?-- el hada del hogar es
pura. Su pureza es considerada como su más alto mérito, sus rubores como su mayor gracia.'61

Castellanos elaborates on the basic characteristic of the "hada del hogar," the concept of purity, a concept which she equates with ignorance.

Una ignorancia radical, absoluta de lo que sucede en el mundo pero en particular de los asuntos que se relacionan con "los hechos de la vida" como tan eufemísticamente se alude a los procesos de acoplamiento, reproducción y perpetuación de las especies sexuadas, entre ellas la humana. Pero más que nada, ignorancia de lo que es la mujer misma.62

This state of ignorance leaves woman open to exploitation by men, whose knowledge of natural functions is usually far in excess of that possessed by woman. This is particularly the case if a woman attempts to seek out and learn for herself the functions of her own body. The consequences of this knowledge may be dangerous and destructive to the girl. On the other hand, fear of the unknown can prompt a perpetuation of this purity or ignorance (under the names of innocence and virginity).

The appropriate attitude of woman, then, is one of waiting, of waiting for the man to instruct her in the use and functions of her own body (a lesson frequently poorly taught), of waiting for him to confer "citizenship" upon her through the initiation process called maternity. But even with maternity, fear of the unknown dominates the woman's attitudes, thus causing her to describe the whole reproductive process alternately as a miracle or an illness to be endured.

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62 Castellanos, Mujer que sabe latín..., p. 13

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Canons of behavior also require that a woman express herself according to preordained patterns of behavior. Thus the declaration in Genesis that "Parirás con dolor" must be adhered to. If the pains of childbirth are not strong enough to cause screaming, one must scream anyway lest she be thought to endanger her child or be considered abnormal.

Having given birth, woman now proves herself the incarnation of the ideal of daily self-sacrifice, a condition which supposes that the mother has magically divested herself of all the egocentrism with which the entire human species is presumed to be infected. Any other form of behavior towards the child would be considered unnatural. Castellanos thus appears to see adherence to the self-sacrificing model (which encompasses most of the characteristics of the "hada del hogar") as an outgrowth of the basic problem of ignorance hallowed as purity.

The third level on which the author sees the subjugation of woman is the intellectual. Here she departs substantially from her original cosmic clash and subsequent mythification of woman. Her chief premise is that society denies education to women on the ground that it would be wasted effort since women are incapable of assimilating it. She briefly dismisses all charges against the intellectual inferiority of women.

In her theory of the development of the myth of femininity Castellanos establishes a distinction between the concepts of myth and history. The latter is defined as the recorded accomplishments of men; the former is the general repository of material which eludes inclusion in history. Myth has also other names: conjecture, fable, legend and lie. By opposing the facts of men's achievements as recorded in history
and the conjecture that encompasses non-masculine achievement, the au­
thor establishes a dichotomy between a masculine world of truth and a
feminine world of myth and lies. We can see here Castellanos' debt to
Weininger's male achievement of the knowledge of truth through rational­
ity and the female experience of half-truths or non-truths due to lack
of rational faculties.

In opposition to this masculine view of reality, Castellanos
suggests that literature, with its subjective approach to issues, pro­
vides a much more complete testimony of a given period than does his­
tory since the latter seldom penetrates beneath the surface of issues
while literature offers the essence of an issue.

The attitudes and myths applied to woman in general take on a
stark reality when applied to the single woman. The spinster is por­
trayed as generally harrassed by family and society for not having fol­
lowed the expected norm of marriage and children. She is prevented from
living alone since such a condition would jeopardize family honor.
Rather, she is expected to put herself under the control of a male rela­
tive and to attach herself to a family nucleus, a process expressed by
the verb "arrimarse." As an "arrimada" she is expected to adhere to the
standards of the "hada del hogar," i.e., purity, ignorance, and self-
sacrifice. It is perhaps in her fulfillment of the last of these that
she is most exploited, for she is expected to pay little or no attention
to herself, spending of her goods and time for the benefit of the family
to which she is "arrimada," a family which at once expects the spinster
to be "arrimada" and despises her for it.

The spinster, especially in the form of the "arrimada," is seen
to experience all the ills of life reserved for woman without the status
or "citizenship" conferred by marriage and children. She is the first of Castellanos' characters to live what the author calls *nepantla*, i.e., a state of being neither one thing nor the other.

A similar situation pertains for the single professional woman who has accepted the general belief that marriage and a career are incompatible. This belief is fostered as the only avenue of intellectual advancement for women and once more imposes on her the need for self-sacrifice, here the renunciation of an emotional or family life. In discussing this enforced choice of alternatives the author introduces the figure of the "virgen fuerte," the archetypal woman who has renounced love, marriage, and family (a personal life) in favor of professional advancement. Castellanos takes the term from the title of a play on just such a figure by María Luisa Ocampo and, using the events of the play to illustrate her point, she rejects as unsatisfactory the establishment of the dichotomy family/profession since there exists a constant tension between these two routes to fulfillment which will eventually destroy the woman involved. The author implies that both must be satisfied and pronounces the figure of the "virgen fuerte" just another example of frustrated rebellion against traditional patriarchal attitudes.

In short, Castellanos sees woman primarily as victim, albeit frequently a willing and collaborating victim. She is the victim of a lie (synonymous with myth in Castellanos' vocabulary) which restricts her on physical, emotional, and intellectual levels. She must always wait to be instructed; initiative, except as self-sacrifice, is forbidden. In her waiting she is expected to adhere to prescribed norms of behavior, norms which she frequently does not comprehend but which in
her zeal to adhere to she frequently overdoes, leading to the charge of hypocrisy as a major characteristic of feminine behavior and to the creation of stereotypes at the expense of individuals. Castellanos substantiates her view of Mexican woman as a stereotype by reviewing briefly the portrayal of women in Mexican literature and in the accounts of travelers in Mexico.

To break the stranglehold of the feminine myth and that of its accompanying stereotypes Castellanos calls for an existential "acte gratuite" on the part of every woman. This action is to be taken once a "situación límite" is reached, i.e., once a point is reached beyond which it is intolerable to continue under present circumstances. As examples of women who have taken this type of existential action she cites Sor Juana, Melibea, Dorotea, Ana Karenina, Hedda Gabbler, Celestina, and, as the prototype of the modern rebellious woman, Nora Helmer of Ibsen's A Doll's House. These and other women the author considers to have taken that vital step towards authenticity of personality despite frequently high cost to life and name.

To achieve authenticity the myths must be broken, the false images rejected. The reconciliation through this action of each woman's behavior with her inner drives and real substance or nature will create a new, expressive, vital and beautiful woman.

Concerning her essays and her fiction (and she considers litera-

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63 Castellanos, Mujer que sabe latín..., p. 20.
ture a catalyst for social change), Castellanos proposes to raise the level of consciousness in the reader and to awaken a critical spirit which in turn may propagate itself in others. To achieve this end she proposes to reveal through an attitude of ridicule the terrible reality hidden behind the myths. She opts for ridicule rather than indignation or lamentation since the former will produce laughter, an ingredient necessary to the withstanding of the revealed reality.
Chapter II

BALUN-CANAN

Balún-Canán, Castellanos' first novel, appeared in 1957. It was immediately hailed as a masterpiece of Indianist literature and was subsequently awarded the Premio "Chiapas" de Literatura. The work takes its title from the Mayan name for the region around the town of Comitán in southern Chiapas, a region of nine (balún) guardian-mountains (canán).

The novel treats the society of the Comitán region during the agrarian reforms of the Cárdenas era and illustrates the extent to which the economic interests of the landed Ladino population have stunted the development of fully productive lives in both Indian and Ladino society.

We have established in Chapter I that Castellanos' fiction breaks with the Indianist literature which flourished prior to 1950, especially in its rejection of the schematic presentation of Ladino-Indian relationships. Balún-Canán, as the author's first work of Indianist fiction, offers Castellanos' first statement of the new aesthetic. Gone is the Ladino landlord seen only as symbol of exploiting forces. Instead the author offers a complex being torn between family tradition and irresistible change. Instead of the traditional agrarian novel of

1Most sources give balún as "nine" and canán as "mountains." The novel has been translated to English as The Nine Guardians, to which there is textual reference (p. 26). Here the "guardians" are the nine mountains of the Comitán valley. The title of the French translation (Les neuve etoilles) appears to be based on the work "k'an-al," meaning "star," to which there is no textual reference.
injustice, Castellanos offers the story of a society which, thinking to make itself everlasting, has striven in vain to maintain itself as the dominant force in the area. Jean Franco summarizes the Ladino-Indian conflict in her consideration of Castellanos in *The Modern Culture of Latin America*.

The clash (...) is more fundamental than a fight between exploiter and exploited. The novelist suggests that, although the White Man exploits his land, he is not a part of it. Once he leaves, his influence disappears, as if he had never lived there. No mark of his presence remains. This is not so with the Indians who, even in their defeat, profoundly influence the White inhabitants.²

*Balún-Canán*, as may be gleaned from the foregoing, breaks with the previous Indianist fiction in that it relates the decline and fall of Ladino society and the gradual ascendancy of the Indian over the Ladino, thus reversing the roles as usually offered in the earlier literature. Symptomatic of the Ladino collapse in *Balún-Canán* is the absence of male progeny in general and a high incidence of spinsters. Contrastingly, the Indian offers no sign of extinction, owing in part to the rapaciousness of Ladino men and to a greater extent to his animistic relationship with the land.

Although *Balún-Canán* is a novel of strong Indianist concerns, it is equally a novel of feminist concerns, offering an extensive study of feminine frustration and unhappiness and illustrating the relatively useless lives of the largest segment of society—women. The introduction of the feminist element into Indianist fiction allows Castellanos to develop the Ladino component of the Indianist novel to unprecedented

levels and to present this Ladino element not as the vile exploiter but rather as the pathetic victim of his materialist view of land, Indians and women.

The feminist element in the novel parallels to some degree that of the Indianist element. Not only are both women and Indians the exploited objects and possessions of Ladino men; they share the common trait of possessing a world view, a system of thinking which lies outside the rationalist, legalist and materialist pattern of behavior of Ladino men. Significantly perhaps it is a female landowner who retains her lands through her better comprehension of Indian ways after the principal male landowner has lost all his holdings.

The novel is divided into three parts comprised of twenty-odd poetic vignettes each. Narrative point of view is essentially dual, being that of a young girl's recollections in Parts One and Three and that of the omniscient author in Part Two. Through her use of varying points of view and of a young child narrator, for whom the bounds of reality are still quite elastic, the author creates an atmosphere of ambiguity about events in the narrative and about the reasons for their happening. The presence, at the beginning of each of the three major divisions of the novel, of epigraphs from ancient Mayan sacred books, as well as ample retellings of traditional legend and contemporary superstition, further complement this atmosphere amplifying the prime duality of perspective to that of multiple perspective. Likewise, the inability of women in the novel to distinguish (or their fear of recognizing) the differences between truth and fiction provides further ambiguity concerning what actually does happen in the novel, as does a constant distinguishing on the part of the Argüello family between legal reality on
the one hand and historical or physical reality on the other.

The tri-partite division of the novel appears to reflect the author's recent experiments with dramatic form prior to composing this work. The first part is the traditional exposition, for here all principal components of the forthcoming tragedy are introduced and the reader is provided with information concerning past events which have determined future actions. This expository act opens in Comitán and ends with the arrival of the Argüello family at its country property, Chactajal, site of the decisive events of the novel.

From the heights of power recorded in Part One and initially in Part Two, one by one the members of the Argüello family suffer losses of land, life, and self-worth until the burning of the sugar mill and the disgrace of incest and tarnished family honor force a return of the remainder of the family to Comitán, fleeing the seemingly imminent doom which hangs over Chactajal.

Part Three opens in Comitán with the resumption of the child's recollections. This part details the final collapse of the Argüellos, not through physical struggle, but rather through a fear-wrought refusal to act as their ancestors had done. Here the lords of the land who once held the Indian in subjugation through fear and superstition themselves fall victim to these forces. At the conclusion of Part Three (and of the novel-drama) the young girl narrator is left alone amidst the ruins of the Argüellos. This is at least what the reader observes. However, as far as the Argüellos are concerned, there is no one left; female off-spring do not count since they do not inherit.

I. Presentation of the Indian
Castellanos uses several techniques to achieve what is ultimately a sympathetic presentation of the Indians of Balún-Canán. Of these, the most outstanding are the use of a child narrator who, emotionally closer to her Indian nurse than to her own mother, establishes the Indian as a real person;\(^3\) the presentation of what we may call the mystic sense of the Indian;\(^4\) and the presentation of Indian characters in dimensions other than that of Ladino-Indian conflict.

Displaced by her younger brother, the narrator is virtually neglected by her mother and is entrusted to the care of an Indian nurse or nana. The nurse performs all the daily routine of physical care which a young child may need. The physical proximity suggested by this relationship is expanded to one of emotional proximity as the nana's role emerges as that of instructor in local traditions and basic social attitudes. Later the narrator protects her nurse from her mother's ill will on several occasions. When the nurse is finally dismissed the narrator searches through her belongings for certain items through which she will be able to remember her nana (pp. 236-237).\(^5\)

Against this background of close relationships, the narrator informs us of what she sees as the differences between Indian and Ladino.

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\(^3\) Franco, Spanish American Literature, p. 166.

\(^4\) The term is borrowed from Phyllis Rodríguez Peralta, "Images of Women in Rosario Castellanos' Prose," Latin American Literary Review, 6, 11 (1977), p. 74, and is used to refer to Castellanos' use of elements from Mayan texts, superstition and world view in addition to the use of language which suggests these elements.

\(^5\) Rosario Castellanos, Balún-Canán (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1957). All quotations, unless otherwise specified, are from the 1973 edition in the "Colección Popular" and only pagination will be given.
The narrator is told that drinking too much coffee rather than milk will make her become Indian (p. 10). It is revealed also that, unlike the narrator, the nurse wears no underwear and feels no shame at this practice (p. 10). The differences between the nurse and her young charge are thus revealed as purely cultural. Both are women; what determines their description as Indian or Ladina is a mere presence or absence of coffee or underclothes and a different attitude towards one's body.

This early presentation of the nana in close physical and emotional proximity contrasts with the child's perception of her parents. She sees them as large trees ("Me imagino que sigue creciendo como un gran árbol (...)" (p. 9)), whose tops are unknown to her: ("Me lo imagino nada más. Nunca lo he visto." (p. 9)). This establishes both a physical and an emotional distance between parents and child. Each inhabits his own world; one large and adult, the other small and inhabited by people whom the narrator can describe in toto.

Since the nana is accepted as an ordinary individual devoid of exotic elements, those Indians whom the narrator meets while in the company of her nana are likewise devoid of excessive costumbrista elements. They are identified by what they do, not by their unusual speech or dress. Thus we learn of the "hierba menuda [de las junturas de las piedras del camino] que los indios arrancan con la punta de sus machetes" (p. 11) and of "los indios que corren bajo el peso de su carga." (p. 11). The Indian women at market are described as weaving, talking, sighing (p. 11-12). The household servants, also Indian, are described in terms of stiff-starched clothes and perfumed hair (p. 13).

When the principal Indian figures are presented later in the novel the author avoids an exotic and costumbrista atmosphere by having
established in the narrator's mind, and thus in that of the reader, a sense of the ordinary about the Indian and his habits. Similarly, the author avoids a strident tone in her presentation of the injustices done to the Indian by developing a sympathetic attitude towards the Indian in the young narrator. This attitude is possible through the child's closeness to her nana and the nana's moving in the world of servants. This world becomes the child's world and the world of her parents becomes the strange, incomprehensible world. The sensitivity of the narrator to Indian suffering and her tendency to see her world in terms of the Indian values which she has absorbed from her nana appear in her identification of a slain Indian (Part One, chapter 10) with the figure of the crucified Christ (Part One, chapter 13). Both figures are lifeless victims who bleed from several wounds and whose hair is matted by sweat and blood. "—Es igual (digo señalando al crucifijo), es igual al indio que llevaron macheteado a nuestra casa (p. 43)."

The author's presentation of what one critic calls the mystic sense of the Indian takes several forms. Paramount among these is the role of the narrator's nurse in introducing her young charge to Indian patterns of thinking, a mode of thinking which accepts a supernatural cause for present physical conditions. The author presents this way of thinking at times in passing references to witchcraft. Early in the story the narrator asks her nurse the cause of a sore on the nurse's leg which will not heal. In response the nana offers a supernatural cause, citing witchcraft as punishment for serving the Ladinos (p. 17). In Part Three, Mario, the son of the Argüello family, becomes ill; again the nana suggests witchcraft: "—Los brujos (...) quieren al hijo varón, a Mario. Se lo comerán, se lo están empezando a comer." (p.
The nurse also introduces two local spirits which are believed to account for aberrant behavior. Prime among these are the dzulum, a figure that drives women mad and may eventually destroy them, and the sombrerón, another figure of sexual potency who stirs up horses and signals misfortune. (After the nurse is dismissed and the narrator and her brother become somewhat unmanageable, a third figure is introduced, that of Catashaná, "el diablo de las siete cuerdas," (p. 259), who appears to punish miscreant children.)

There is yet another means by which the author uses the figure of the nurse to introduce Indian patterns of thinking. This is the retelling of ancient Mayan legends, now modified to account for post-Conquest phenomena. This use of elements of oral tradition, although adequate in Balún-Canán, is more effective in Ciudad Real and Oficio de tinieblas.

The most outstanding of these modernizations of Classical Mayan legends is one in Part One, Chapter IX, where a short story later published as "El hombre de oro" is incorporated into the text. The story, a variation of the Mayan creation story seeks to explain, again supernaturally, the cause of the exploitation of the poor by the rich and the need felt by some wealthy people to help the poor. In this account of the creation, the gods make a man of gold before making men of flesh. The man of gold, helpless and possessing a hard heart, must be fed and carried by ordinary men, tasks which eventually soften the heart of "el

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hombre de oro" and cause him finally to thank the gods for his creation. In return for these thanks the gods approve the relationship between rich and poor with the stipulation that "ningún rico puede entrar al cielo si un pobre no lo lleva de la mano." (p. 30).

By first establishing the Indian as a real person and then elaborating his world view the author lends credibility to that world view. This attitude is reinforced by an old Ladino, Tío David, who counsels respect for the Indian's attitude towards nature, especially in avoiding any annoyance to the "nueve guardianes" (or "balún-canán") lest they bring tragedy upon all (p. 25). The omens and prophecies which occur throughout the novel are thus given a framework of accepted patterns of thinking. They are to be taken seriously and not to be scoffed at as the Ladinos generally do. Of these omens the most poignant is one which appears in Part One, Chapter XXII, and which recounts the useless killing of a deer. The story has two levels of meaning; the first is the illustration of Ladino brutality towards the Indian suggested in the Indians' naming the site "Lugar donde se pudre nuestra sombra" (p. 69) after declaring that the deer will rot there. The second seems to involve the Indian belief in an animal-soul which inhabits an animal of the forest while not in man. In this case it appears that Ernesto, bastard nephew of the Argüellos, has shot his own animal-soul and has thus sealed his own doom, for the death of the animal-soul brings about that of the owner. Ernesto's explanation that the deer "—Vino a buscar su muerte" (p. 68) proves to be precisely the case with Ernesto himself.

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7 Castellanos published this story earlier under the title "Un venado muerto" in *Abside*, XX, 1 (1956), pp. 112-114.
Another approach which the author takes in her presentation of the mystic sense of the Indian is one which we have seen intimated in our consideration of "El hombre de oro," that is, the use of written Indian texts. These texts are of two kinds: the first are sacred texts compiled by the Maya after the Conquest; the second are the written records mentioned in the course of the narrative.

We first encounter the use of Mayan sacred texts as epigraphs preceding each of the three parts of the novel. Part One opens with the following quotation from the Libro del consejo (Popol Vuh): "Musitaremos el origen. Musitaremos solamente la historia, el relato," (p. 8). Clearly this statement from the opening pages of the Popol Vuh itself indicates the author's intention to tell a tale, to narrate a history that has led up to an as yet unmentioned present, a present which in the Popol Vuh is one of defeat and subjugation. But the epigraph is important for at least two other reasons. The first of these concerns its origins in a book of traditional history compiled after the Conquest by the conquered Maya. A continuity of Indian past and present is thus established and the way is open for the introduction of much Indian oral tradition. The second of these reasons is that the epigraph suggests the sense of history, of time-honored tradition, felt by the patrician Ladinos; this suggestion is, however, immediately seen to be ironic, since we are told of the history of the ruling Ladino aristocracy not through the words of their descendants, but rather through the words of the subjugated and despised Indians.

The second epigraph preceding Part One, again from Popol Vuh, informs us, to a certain degree, of the nature of the approach to the history which will be told. "Nosotros no hacemos más que regresar
(...)" (p. 8) suggests a return to former times, something which becomes fact as the young girl begins her narrative, recalling as if in the present her remembrances of earlier childhood. That this is a recollection after a fall from power is suggested in the last part of the epigraph: "nuestros días están acabados. Pensad en nosotros, no nos borréis de vuestra memoria, no nos olvidéis." (p. 8). Additionally, this last sentence makes the irony of the author even more pointed, since although the quotation is that of the Indians vanquished by the Ladinos centuries ago, the tables are now turned and it is to the Ladino that the quotation refers as he is removed from his lands.

Part Two opens with a quotation from the Books of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, appropriately enough abandoning the mytho-historic tenor of Part One and of the Popol Vuh. The theme of the quotation is essentially that of vanitas vanitatem, for it warns that everything comes to an end, to a final resting place, even as it had once achieved power and importance. From the heights of power recounted in Part One and initially in Part Two, one by one the members of the Argüello family suffer a series of losses which obliges them to return to Comitán, where the two primary sources of their pride are finally lost: their land and, through the death of the only son, their family name.

In Part Three, the epigraph from the Anales de los Xahil introduces the element of superstition and a prediction of the end of Ladino dominance: "Y muy pronto comenzaron para ellos los presagios." (p. 217) The rest of the quotation brings into focus the social elements involved; that is, the poor predict the end of the rich while standing hungry outside the homes of the latter. "Un animal llamado Guarda Barranca se quejó en la puerta de Lugar de la Abundancia, cuando salimos
de Lugar de la Abundancia. ¡Moriréis! ¡Os perderéis! Yo soy vuestro augur." (p. 217). In the knowledge that Chactajal, the country property of the Argüellos, means "lugar abundante en aguas" (p. 192), the relationship of the prophecy to the outcome of the story becomes graphic.

Castellanos abandons direct use of ancient Mayan documents after the epigraphs just mentioned. However, she retains the style of these documents in her tale of the creation of the man of gold as well as in two other important sections of the novel. The first of these is a prophecy mumbled by the narrator's nurse at the beginning of the novel. In these words the Indian nurse offers a fatal statement on the future of Ladino society, a statement made out of the bitter memories of earlier despoliation at the hands of zealous conquerors who have spent their lives in fruitless attempts to establish themselves and their progeny as overlords of the area. Their failure is underlined by the use of "humo" and "ceniza." The nurse points out that as the smoke has disappeared into the air, so too will the ashes, the present generation of Ladinos, be dislodged, given the slightest breeze. The use of "soplo" here suggests a return of the lost "palabra" and with it the restoration of Indian dominance.

---Y entonces, coléricos, nos desposeyeron, nos arrebataron lo que habíamos atesorado: la palabra, que es el arca de la memoria. Desde aquellos días arden y se consumen con el leño en la hoguera. Sube el humo en el viento y se deshace. Queda la ceniza sin rostro. Para que puedas venir tú y el que es menor que tú y les baste un soplo, solamente un soplo... (p. 9)

This prophecy is fulfilled in Part Two when the sugar mill and cane fields are set afire by the revolting Indians. The work of the Ladinos has indeed become "humo" and "ceniza." Appropriately enough the
occasion of the fire is introduced in language which recalls that of both the nurse's prophecy and of the *Popol Vuh*. Each major paragraph which precedes the arrival of the Ladinos begins with a liturgical repetition and variation reminiscent of a litany: "Los que por primera vez conocieron (...)"; "los que por primera vez nombraron (...)"; "Los que por primera vez se establecieron (...)" (p. 192).

The theme of dispossession of the land which introduces the nurse's prophecy is picked up with language which both recalls and contrasts with that of the earlier references to "los que por primera vez (...)." Here we have "Los que vinieron después (...)" (p. 192) and references to renaming ("bautizaron las cosas de otro modo." (p. 192)), a reference which harks back to the lost "palabra" of the nurse's prophecy.

The importance of the "palabra" as contained in documents compiled by Indians is illustrated within the actual content of the novel by the compilation of two histories. The first of these is a falsified history of Chactajal, the Argüello estate, which relates, again in a style reminiscent of sacred texts, the origins of the Indians of Chactajal and the history of several generations of Argüellos. The opening paragraph in particular harks back to the epigraphs preceding Part One: "Yo soy el hermano mayor de mi tribu. Su memoria." (p. 57). This false history was ordered written by the father of the present Argüello to establish a title to the lands on the grounds of age-old association with the land. In the case of the Argüellos the ritualistic history would augment legal documents.

Quite a different situation pertains in the case of the history compiled by Felipe Carranza Pech, leader of the present Indian movement,
whose history records the gradual return of prosperity to the Indians. Several elements come into play here, for Felipe, the only Indian of the area who can write, feels duty bound to record for posterity the construction of a school for Indians which will teach presently unlettered children the lost art of writing which has allowed the Ladinos to maintain their overlordship. Here we are confronted once again with the power of the "palabra" and again the language of the history recalls that of the Popol Vuh. "Esta es nuestra casa. Aquí la memoria que perdímos vendrá a ser como la doncella rescatada a la turbulencia de los ríos" (pp. 125-126).

The author's third avenue of positive presentation of the Indian is the creation of individual Indian characters who have more than one or two dimensions to their personality. In this the author is less successful than in her later works for several reasons. First, the novel offers only four Indian characters who are portrayed in some degree of relief against the background of the masses, and of these four only the male figure, Felipe, appears with any frequency. Secondly, the novel is more concerned with a clash of forces than with the presentation of individual experiences. Thirdly, the work is essentially experimental; the author only touches on several possible points of future elaboration.

Despite these shortcomings the work offers three Indian figures who achieve some depth of personality through their experience of the tension created by the juxtaposing of reality and idealism. The fourth figure, María, though stepping out from the masses, never experiences the tension of the nurse, Felipe, or his wife Juana. Since consideration of the nurse, of Juana and of her sister María is appropriately
handled under our discussion of feminism, suffice it to repeat that the introduction of the feminist element into Indianist literature immediately gives the Indian more than Icazan or Arguedan dimensions.

The remainder of our discussion of the multi-faceted personality of the Indians will focus on the character of Felipe Carranza Pech, leader of the Indian uprising which eventually topples the Argüelles. Felipe is given relief of character by his occupying a position at the confluence of several traditions. He is torn between traditional approaches to dealing with the Ladinaz and more modern approaches based on his own personal experience outside his community. He is a man alone for he refuses to bow to traditional Ladinaz privilege but is too modern for his Indian followers. He must convince his own people of the value of education and at the same time convince the Ladinaz to build and staff a school to provide this education. Felipe thus appears as a classic alienated twentieth-century character obliged by circumstances and his view of his mission to keep his own counsel. In many ways his is an existential dilemma, a dilemma which is solved through compromise between tradition and modernity.

As a husband Felipe offers a different image, for while he seeks social justice for the Indians he remains unaware of or disinterested in the dissatisfaction of his wife. We are thus offered the figure of a full-time seeker after justice whose very preoccupation with his work closes his eyes to other crying personal needs.

Felipe's struggle with tradition and modernity within the Indian community is best seen in the juxtaposition of a previous revolution with the agrarian reforms of the Mexican Revolution. Here he recalls the Indians' attempt to deal with the Ladinaz on a supernatural level.
and the total failure of that attempt.  

Nadie sabía como aplacar las potencias enemigas. Visitaban las cuevas oscuras, cargados de presentes (...) y, ya desesperados, una vez escogieron al mejor de entre ellos para crucificarlo. Porque los blancos tienen así a su Dios, clavado de pies y manos para impedir que su cólera se desencadene. Pero los indios habían visto pudrir el cuerpo martirizado que quisieron erguir contra la desgracia. Entonces se quedaron quietos y (...) mudos. (p. 106)  

The failure of this revolt and the ensuing passivity or muteness of the Indians are the traditional forces against which Felipe recommends invoking "el papel que habla" (p. 101), i.e., the agrarian reform laws of the Cardenas era. Instead of emulating the Ladinos on a supernatural level as was done in the past, Felipe attempts to put himself in a sort of apostolic succession to Cardenas (whom he has met) and his agrarian laws. The "papel que habla" has given Ladino assent to the removal of other Ladinos from Indian lands; thus no supernatural elements need be involved.  

To be able to keep their lands after the expulsion of the Ladinos the Indians must be educated. This is Felipe's belief which sets him apart both from a community which cannot understand the need for what they perceive as useless education and from a Ladino community determined to deny education in order to maintain the status quo. Felipe breaks both Ladino and Indian tradition by addressing César Argüello in Spanish instead of his Mayan dialect. He is also responsible for the building of the school, its temporary closure until a suitable instructor can be found, the setting of the fire which drives the
Argüellos away and finally the first Ladino death in the novel. In all these actions he has dared to break both Ladino and Indian tradition. Yet tradition, ancient tradition, requires of him, as we have earlier seen, that he write down in a manner in keeping with traditional history the events surrounding the building of the school, the symbol of the new Indian.

II. Presentation of the Ladino

As we have indicated earlier, Castellanos breaks with previous Indianist tradition in her presentation of the latifundista. As is the case with her presentation of Indian characters, the author rejects schematic portrayals of Ladinos in favor of the creation of complex individuals beset by problems over and above those involving Indians. She offers a spectrum of characters of both sexes and of several social strata whose fates are interdependent and who, taken together, constitute Ladino society.

The salient characteristics of this society are the exploitation of privilege and the exaltation of tradition. Translated into human terms, the dominance of these two characteristics means a highly stratified society at the base of which are the Indians who exist to serve the Ladinos, their men to work Ladino land, their women to provide sexual diversion for Ladino men.

At the opposite extreme of society are the landed families of the area who maintain their economically privileged position through the veneration of the appearance of legitimacy and of the possession of land. Within this stratum of society there are two further levels of stratification: the privileged position of men over women and the pri-
Falling between these extremes of society are those Ladinos who do not fall within the patrician bounds of legitimacy or privilege but who mark their social distance from the Indians by having little or nothing to do with them. Individuals in this group tend to have tenuous connections with the patrician families, a situation which gives them a sense of importance in a society where they are accorded no real status. In their attempts to associate themselves with the patrician group, members of the intermediate group frequently exaggerate and caricature their betters and make laughing stocks or objects of pity of themselves.

Individuals of each Ladino social class look with a mixture of derision, possession and economic dependence upon the members of the other class. These attitudes tend to create a view of members of the other group as objects rather than as individual people. Both Ladino groups hold the Indian as an inferior object. The patricians regard him as an economic good to be passed on to posterity in much the same way that the land is preserved for future generations of Ladino landowners. Members of the intermediate group regard the Indian as something to be feared and kept at a safe distance. Both groups will resist any change in the status of the Indian, including his education, for fear that this will alter the entire social order. Because of the tenuous connections of members of the intermediate social group with the patrician class, this intermediate group will fight harder to retain the social order, since any change in the lower or upper classes means the breaking of these tenuous connections and the facing of an uncomfortable reality.

Social differences between Ladino and Indian are maintained through three means in particular: language, posture or location, and
the use of Indians as free labor or as beasts of burden. The exploita-
tion by Ladinos of Indian women for sexual pleasure is more appropriate-
ly treated in our consideration of feminism. With the exception of do-
meric servants (who appear to inhabit the lower echelons of the extend-
ed Ladino family) Indians are prohibited from speaking to their masters
or to other Ladinos in Spanish; they must use their native language.
Thus we hear of an Indian requesting a ferris wheel ticket in Spanish,
an action which provokes cries of "Indio embelequero" and "¡Es el Anti-
cristo!" (p. 39). Another comment underlines the seeming illegality of
the action: "--Oílo vos, este indio igualado. Esta hablando castilla.
¿Quién le daría permiso?" (p. 38). These quotations reveal utter shock
by both Ladinos and Indians at the breaking of fixed tradition. A simi-
lar situation pertains when Felipe Carranza Pech, leader of the Indian
revolt, speaks to César Argüello, his patron in Spanish.

César habla entonces al intruso dirigiéndole una pregunta
en tzeltal. Pero el indio contesta en español. (...) 
Zoraida se replegó sobre sí misma con violencia (...) 
¿Qué desacato era éste? Un infeliz indio atreviéndose
(...) a hablar en español. (p. 97-98)

In addition to language as a social marker, particular postures
are adopted when Indians and Ladinos converse. Similarly there are
limits in public and private places beyond which Indians may not go.
(Again domestic servants appear not to be included in these limits.)
César Argüello, when receiving his laborers at the end of the day lies
in a hammock on the porch and offers his hand to be kissed. The Indians
remain standing outside the porch where César lies except when approach-
ing to kiss the patron's hand or when asked to sit. The presence of
Felipe in the dining room of the hacienda in the last quotation com-
pounds his breach of tradition in using the Spanish language.

The third marker of social distinctions between Ladinoss and Indians is the Ladinoss' consideration of the latter as a beast of labor to be fed and watered but not paid. First reference to this is made on page 25 by Tío David who announces the end of the baldío or free labor and hence of the present way of life. This view of the Indian as beast of labor becomes one of beast of burden as the Argüello children and their mother are carried in litter chairs from Comitán to the estate at Chactajal. (Part One, Chapter 21) In Part Two there is a reference to a statue of the Virgin Mary which has acquired particularly miraculous powers because it was brought from Guatemala "a lomo de indio." (p. 77). The nurse's story of "El hombre de oro" in Part I, Chapter 9 offers supernatural authority for the existence of this condition.

The patrician class maintains control over the intermediate class through strict legitimacy of lineage and through the consideration of the group as exploitable goods. This view is apparent in the former's treatment of three characters: Ernesto, bastard nephew of César Argüello; Doña Nati, Ernesto's mother; and Zoraida Argüello, César's wife. Of these three, the last two are better considered under "Feminism."

The case of Ernesto is the most blatant. Illegitimate son of César Argüello's younger brother, Ernesto has had to rely first on the largesse of his natural father and later on those skills acquired before ill health made his mother dependent on him and thus cut short his education. One day as he makes his rounds delivering newspapers, César offers him the job of teacher to the Indian children of Chactajal. César is hard pressed by the reform laws, which he hopes to flout by conform-
ing to the letter. In his conversation with Ernesto we notice several points. César first flatters Ernesto, reminding him of their kinship and of apparent social equality.

---Es que...no quiero faltarle al respeto. No somos iguales y...  
---Pocos piensan ya en esas distinciones. Además creo que somos medio parientes. ¿No es así? (p. 53-54)

This apparent equality seems guaranteed in César's offer: "Vivirás con nosotros en la casa grande. Tu comida y tu ropa correrán (...) por nuestra cuenta." (p. 55). Having lured Ernesto through apparent inclusion in the patrician family, César now brings up the question of the rural school and suggests that Ernesto fits the image of the maestro rural. Not only has Ernesto appeared to rise in social category, he is now singled out and much is made of his meager abilities.

Tú sabes que ahora la ley nos exige tener un maestro rural en la finca.  
---Sí. Eso dicen.  
(...) Y ya que no hay yacimientos de maestros rurales no queda más remedio que la improvisación. Desde el principio pensé que tú podrías servir.  
---¿Yo?  
---Sabes leer y escribir. (...) (p. 54-55)

The aura of equality with César Argüello and inclusion in his family is shattered early in Part Two. Here after a conversation with Ernesto César reflects that in matters of importance "[Lo] legal es lo único que cuenta" (p. 81). To this insult César adds the reminder that Ernesto is only one of many illegitimate sons of a wayward father. Ernesto's absence from his father's will relegates him, along with other illegitimates, to the realm of non-persons.

No, no era cierto que perteneciera a la casta de los señores. Ernesto no era más que un bastardo de quien su padre se
avergonzaba. (p. 83)

There is also an implicit association of Ernesto with César's own half-caste offspring when he suggests that "los hijos eran de los que se apagaban a la casa grande y de los que servían con fidelidad." (p. 80).

Ernesto shortly becomes a general factotum around the Argüello house, a condition which he despises since it reminds him constantly of his inferior status by contrasting him with the legitimate offspring of the Argüellos ("¿No has oído como lo gritan los niños? ¡Bastardo! ¡Bastardo!" (p. 123)) and by associating him with the servants (all Indians) in the types of work he has to do.

Obliged by César to be present at the Indian school despite his inability to communicate with the Indians, Ernesto slowly goes mad, relying increasingly on drink. His soliloquies before an uncomprehending audience and the visible signs of frustration which appear in his beating some children cause the Indians to close the school and to request the instructor's removal. César now determines to use Ernesto in a last attempt to stop the Indian revolt. The mission fails and Ernesto is assassinated amid fantasies of power, prestige, and legitimacy.

III. Feminism

In our introduction to Balún-Canán we suggested that there exist certain parallels between the Indianist content and the feminist concern. We have suggested also that Ladino society is essentially a materialist and legalist society; that is, the men who dominate this society view their world in terms either of economic benefit or legitimacy. This view leads Ladino men to relegate women to the status of possessions which exist for the benefit of the owner. As is the case
with title to land, title to women must also be legally established. Relationships with women are thus categorized as either productive or non-productive, licit or illicit. As is also the case with the land, it is the owner who initiates any action; woman is thus obliged to adopt a passive role, awaiting her master's command. In light of these comments we propose to consider Castellanos' presentation of female characters under two headings: woman and social status, and woman and reality.

A. Woman and social status

Woman's ability to produce offspring is a quality valued highly by both Indian and Ladino societies. In both societies this ability confers upon the woman in question a status superior to that of her peers. So all-important is this ability that it is interpreted to be the proof of validity of a marriage among married women and is seen by at least one unmarried mother as the equivalent of marriage in the status which it confers upon her.

Let us examine first the questions of barrenness and fecundity as they appear in the Indian characters of the novel, remembering that it is the presentation of Indian characters in other than their relationships with Ladinos that sets Castellanos' Indianism apart. The childless Indian wife plays a dominant role in Rosario's next novel, Oficio de tinieblas, and is elaborated in Balún-Canán for the first time. It is thus well worth our while to pause and examine it in the person of Juana, as she contrasts with her sister María, mother of several children.

When we are introduced to the Indian María, she is identified as the mother of children. "Era su hermana María quien acompañada del
menor de sus hijos estaba parada en el umbral." (p. 174). That María considers herself superior in status to her married but childless sister is apparent in her ill-considered remark to the latter: "—Tú, como no tienes hijos, no puedes saber lo que es esto." (p. 177). It would appear that the childless woman is excluded from an élite of those women who have experienced childbirth and who are as a result in possession of certain knowledge denied to the uninitiated. The place of the childless woman among other women is only tangential.

Against a background of present loneliness broken by recollections of happier times we learn that "Juana no tuvo hijos" (p. 107). This condition puts her in a position in which she is looked down upon by others ("El aprobio había caído sobre ella." (p. 107-108)), an attitude already noted as present in María, Juana's sister. Her social status as wife is precarious, since the husband may at any time repudiate her, the fear of which constantly haunts Juana.

Pero a pesar de todo Felipe no había querido separarse. Siempre que se iba (...) ella se quedaba sentada, con las manos unidas, como si se hubiera despedido para siempre. Y Felipe volvía. (p. 108)

Felipe himself is aware of Juana's fear of repudiation and he plays upon this fear as he reproves her for some action of which he does not approve.

Aquel día Felipe le pegó y le dijo que cuidado y volviera a saber que ella seguía en aquellas andanzas, porque la iba a abandonar. (p. 175)

That Juana views herself as a failure, that is, as an unfulfilled woman, as a woman lacking in definition, is apparent in her thoughts.

Sólo por caridad Felipe la conservaba junto a él. No por
obligación. Porque Dios la había castigado al no permitirle tener hijos. (p. 174)

In addition to these attitudes presented with reference to particular Indian women we have the views of César Argüello who considers that his having fathered several children by Indian women has given those women certain status among their peers.

Les había hecho un favor. Las indias eran más codiciadas después. Podían casarse a su gusto. El indio siempre veía en la mujer la virtud que le había gustado al patrón. (p. 80)

In Ladino society we again encounter a view of the married woman as important for her ability to bear children. There is a further refinement of her reproductive worth, however; she must produce male offspring. The person of Zoraida Argüello is the prime example of this reproductive machine and also offers an example of the status conferred upon women by marriage, a status which she must maintain by procreation. As a child Zoraida experiences poverty, hunger, and the shame of debt and lying in order to keep up a façade. She consciously seeks to elevate her status by marriage to a wealthy landowner, César Argüello. Not only would César's wealth improve her lot in life, but the sheer importance of his name would wipe out her past and grant a new identity.

Por eso cuando César se fijó en mí y habló con mamá porque tenía buenas intenciones vi el cielo abierto. Zoraida de Argüello. El nombre me gusta, me queda bien. (p. 90)

The glory of this new married life soon tarnishes, though, since her mother regards her as a "gallina comprada" (p. 91) and because her in-laws regard her as less than themselves in social status. Two biological factors now come into play to complicate her situation. The first of these is a lack of sexual appetite ("No sé como hay mujeres tan
locas que se casan nomás por su necesidad de hombre" (p. 91)) which will tend to drive César away from her and to the Indian women. This she does not mind since César's relationship with Indian women does not threaten her status as wife. "No se casó más que conmigo" (p. 91).

The second factor is Zoraida's inability to successfully bear more than two children. This condition compromises her in several ways. First, she feels that her position of wife would be jeopardized if she had not produced these children, especially the son. "Pero yo sé que si no fuera por los que tenemos ya me habría dejado." (p. 92). If César should divorce her she would lack all social position, she would become unwanted baggage, an "arrimada." "No quiero ser una separada como Romelia. Se arrima uno a todas partes y no tiene cabida con nadie. (...) Gracias a Dios tengo mis dos hijos. Y uno es varón." (p. 92).

When the death of the all-important son at the end of the novel coincides with a protracted absence of César to attend to the distribution of lands, Zoraida is convinced that her fears of being abandoned have come true.

The status of the unmarried woman in Ladino society, unlike that alleged by César for Indian society, is not enhanced by the production of children. Castellanos offers two cases as illustrative of this. The first is Doña Nati, former lover to César Argüello's younger brother and mother of Ernesto. Doña Nati herself records the reaction of Ladino society to her pregnancy.

Cuando fracasé, mi nombre estaba en todas las bocas: era el tzite de la población. Se burlaban de mí, me tenían lástima, me insultaban" (p. 225)

The second case is that of Matilde, a young spinster cousin of
César Argüello who becomes pregnant by her illegitimate relative Ernesto. Rather than face the pregnancy as such, she employs a curandera to restore her health to normal. When this ruse fails, Matilde has an abortion. This is all kept secret from César until the return of Ernesto's body when Matilde confesses her actions with the words "Yo he deshonrado esta casa y el apellido de Argüello" (p. 216). The seriousness of her error is reflected in her question to César "¿No me vas a matar?" (p. 216). He banishes her with the words "—Vete." (p. 216).

We have indicated earlier that despite social oprobrium, some unmarried mothers equate their status as lover with that of wife, reinforcing our earlier statement that woman has no status of her own until given one by man, the natural outcome of which is usually children. Such is the case with Doña Nati, who soon turns what she has already declared to be a kind of social ostracism into an envied position. Concluding her remarks about having fallen from the grace of society she says:

Pero cuando al fin se supo que había yo fracasado con el difunto don Ernesto, había que ver la envidia que les amarilleaba la cara. No de balde era un Argüello. (p. 225)

We have considered thus far the importance of marriage and child-bearing in according social status to Ladina women. The author points out through several characters the status of women when not defined by association with men. These women fall into two categories: married women dissatisfied with their marriages and single women. Zoraida Argüello, as we have seen, fears losing her status as wife and mother because she would then become like Romelia, another Argüello cousin, who has left her husband allegedly to seek medical help for
chronic headaches. Zoraida rejects the possibility of leaving César and clings to the status guaranteed her by her position as wife and mother. Her reason is to avoid becoming an "arrimada" (an unattached woman who puts herself under the rule of her eldest male relative), since this condition is despised by the families to which one is "arrimada." "El muerto y el arrimado a los tres días apestan (...)" (p. 120). Romelia herself returns to her husband at the end of the novel upon the advice of doctors, thus adding social sanction to a woman's definition of herself in terms of a husband or lover. Like Zoraida and Romelia, Juana, wife of the Indian leader, flirts with the possibility of leaving her husband and seeking a life of her own. Like her Ladina counterparts, she too resolves to stay with her husband since, even childless, her position as wife guarantees some status.

The second group of women who face the problem of life without men is composed of spinster. All lead a life of little productivity and tend either to follow traditionally feminine lines of work in which the physical woman is denied or tend to seek a degree of fulfillment in the role of surrogate. One of these is Silvina, the school teacher whose entire life is devoted to a very rudimentary education for girls. Amalia, a friend of the Argüellos, has spent her life caring for an aged and sick mother. In a belated effort to alter her life as "un estorbo, (...) una piedra" (p. 251), she offers religious instruction to the Argüello children and prepares to aid persecuted priests, thus assuming the role, if not the title, of a religious.

The other two spinster of importance are Romelia's cousins, Matilde and Francisca. Matilde is early dubbed "sóterra" (p. 69) and is possessed of a deep-seated sensuality which is complicated by her ap-
pearance of innocence ("se ruboriza cuando saluda" (p. 69)) and a pro-
pensity to withdraw into virtual catatonic states of fantasy. Her ina-
bility to come to terms with her sensuality in a society which allows
little occasion for such outlets precipitates first her pregnancy, later
her abortion, and finally her disappearance into the forest. Like
Romelia, she too is an "arrimada."

Francisca has had to deny herself a personal life in order to
carry on her family tradition, here expressed in the running of the
ranch at Palo María and the rearing of her two younger cousins, Matilde
and Romelia. In her person she combines the roles of mother, father,
rancher, and witch, insuring her domination of both her family and the
Indians who work her land.

B. Woman and reality

Ladina women in Balún-Canán live according to a world view which
differs drastically from that of Ladino men. This different world view
has as its basis a very limited education for women. Education is lack-
ing in general. The elements of disorganization ("Nadie ha logrado des-
cubrir qué grado cursa cada una de nosotras." (p. 13)) and low standards
(a quickly-drawn world map is the graduate's only examination) keep most
young women in a general state of ignorance. Such instruction of women
as takes place outside the school is generally religious in nature:
"--Entonces es necesario que sepan lo más importante: hay infierno."
(p. 254). Curiosity in women is discouraged by relegating certain know-
ledge to the realm of men, to which women have no access. For tres-
passing into this forbidden world, the narrator is administered: "--No
juegues con estas cosas (...). Son la herencia de Mario. Del varón."
 Implicit in the discouraging of curiosity in women is the inculcation of passivity as the feminine mode of behavior, a mode of behavior which lends itself to fantasy as a substitute for the action or condition which the woman is admonished not to attempt to achieve.

Compounding the problem of poor and restricted education and haphazard religious education with its double emphasis on supernatural causes and proper conduct is the presence of Indian elements, particularly as they appear in brujos or spirits. We have noted earlier that the narrator accepts her nurse's explanation of the power of brujos to cause harm; she likewise accepts as real the spirit, known as dzulum, which is alleged to account for aberrant behavior in women. A similar credulity is evidenced by several Ladina women, who, lacking the education of the patrician Ladino men, fill their educational gaps with local superstition. This is apparent in Zoraida's and Amalia's belief in the power of brujos to destroy human life and by Francisca's explanation of Matilde'a disappearing from Chactajal without trace by suggesting that "[el] dzulum se la llevó" (p. 218).

The Ladina woman's sphere of mental activity is thus channeled away from that of her male counterpart by closing to her certain knowledge. At the same time woman is permitted certain types of mental activity, such as fantasy, trance, and hallucination, which are explainable by the acceptance by women of forces such as the dzulum, explanations which the education of Ladino men teaches them to reject as superstition.

As we have suggested, all Ladina women live by a reality which falls outside the rationalist, legalist reality of Ladino men. To this reality we shall give the name fantasy, following the example of Caste-
llanos as outlined in our Introduction, but with the understanding that the term implies difference only and not necessarily invalidity.

In her presentation of the different reality of women the author usually uses some physical condition as a device to indicate that the realities which these characters perceive are somehow different from what is accepted as normal. Thus Doña Nati is described on more than one occasion as blind. The envious position which she claims to have achieved by bearing a child for an Argüello is called into question as are her views of Ernesto as favored by his father (a view contradicted by César) and as self-sacrificing and devoid of egotism (also contradicted by Ernesto's ready susceptibility to flattery, his brutal treatment of his lover, Matilde, and the several fantasies in which he is engaged when shot.).

In elaborating the character of Matilde, Castellanos mentions several characteristics which cast Matilde's actions in a different light. Matilde is never able to see the portraits of her parents; instead she sees the blur produced by light on the glass frame. Further, she is given to retiring to dark places where she can shut herself away or to empty places where she can be alone. These two characteristics suggest an inability or an unwillingness to see the world.

Matilde's particular perspective is complicated further than that of any of the other women in that even in her fantasies she is unable to see the face of the ideal man who speaks to her or dances with her. This condition suggests isolation from men, a condition borne out by the isolation of Palo María, the ranch where she lives, and the virtual absence of men in her life until she meets Ernesto. To this isolation is added her condition as orphan and her association with the
wilds. "Esa niña se va a criar a la buena de Dios, igual que el zacate." (p. 117). This condition immediately associates her with Angélica, an orphan of earlier time who was carried away by the dzulum. It presages unusual behavior and a tendency to run away from the family as did Angélica.

Matilde's total ignorance of men dooms her relationship with Ernesto, the only man she ever knows. Unaware of the workings of her body she becomes pregnant. The unusual physical effects of early pregnancy and a gradual awareness of what this condition means causes her to disappear for long periods, to attempt to kill the child and to attempt suicide by drowning. Just before she walks away into the forest never to return, she reports seeing men everywhere.

At least two other characters are given to similar behavior, Zoraida and her daughter, the narrator. In the case of the narrator, the similarity of behavior lies in her occasional flight from home to get lost in the forest. Unfortunately this tendency is never elaborated. Zoraida's experience of fantasy is reported in quite a different manner than are the others. Here she deliberately alters a particular circumstance to one much more sensually tantalizing and at the same time more likely to shock her husband: she reports the presence of Indian children at the swimming hole as the presence of naked Indian adolescents.

IV. Conclusions

We have noted in this chapter the author's presentation of the Indian as a very human being, possessed of many of the same problems which beset his overlords. The conflict between Indian and Ladino is
shown to be deeper than that implied by class or race; the conflict is one of world views in which that of the Indian, especially regarding his attitudes towards the land and education, emerges victorious.

We have noted also the author's presentation of the dilemma of women as they attempt to deal with a society which views the production of children as the highest achievement of woman and yet places countless obstacles in the way of woman's achieving even this goal successfully and with dignity. Because of her different experience of life, woman, like the Indian, also possesses a view of reality which differs from that of her male overlord. Also like the Indian, woman in Balún-Canán is essentially an object possessed by Ladino men and is deprived of individuality.

Castellanos continues the portrayal of the conflicts between Ladino and Indian societies in her next work, Ciudad Real, elaborating the world view of the Indian through new techniques. It is to this concern, along with some attention to the portrayal of female characters, that we address ourselves in Chapter III.
Chapter III

CIUDAD REAL

In 1960 Castellanos published Ciudad Real, a collection of eight short stories and two novelettes set in the state of Chiapas and more specifically in and around the town of San Cristóbal Las Casas, formerly Ciudad Real, from which the collection takes its title. It was her second work of prose fiction and the first of three collections of short stories that she would write before her death in 1974.

In addition to the unity of locale implicit in the title, there is another reason for the title of Ciudad Real. The author's preference for the older name of this very conservative Ladino stronghold underlines the preference for an unchanging way of life among its inhabitants. The town, like its name, is a remnant of another age, having lived beyond its time, and is now only the shell of its former glory. This attitude is clear not only from a reading of the stories, but is succinctly stated in two of Castellanos' essays included in Juicios

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1We make a distinction here both on the grounds of length and of complexity of character development. Most stories have a length of from eight to twelve pages and elaborate one point in particular or develop only one aspect of a character's personality. These we class as "short stories." Two stories, however, exceed thirty pages in length and develop individual personalities to a more complex degree than in other narratives of the collection and thus have been classed as "novelettes." Rhoda Dybvig, q.v., is in agreement in the classification of the latter of these, "Arthur Smith salva su alma."
Both Ladino and Indian societies of the area are characterized as totally decadent in "Una tentativa de autocritica;" the feudal nature of San Cristóbal society is elaborated in "El idioma en San Cristóbal Las Casas," in which Castellanos also provides an enumeration of the several names which San Cristóbal has had over the centuries.

In Ciudad Real this decadent state of affairs is apparent in the general theme of failure of inter-personal communication and the resulting distrust, defensiveness, and abuse of the persons or groups involved, the Indian and Ladino communities of the area. These problems are addressed in terms of Ladino exploitation of the Indian in "La muerte del tigre," "La tregua," "Modesta Gomez," and "El advenimiento del águila." "La suerte de Teodoro Méndez Acubal" and "Cuarta vigilia" illustrate the unreasoned fear that pervades the local Ladino society and the Indians' suffering as a result of this fear. "Aceite guapo" treats communication breakdown within the Indian community, and the last three stories, "La rueda del hambriento," "El don rechazado" and "Arthur Smith salva su alma," deal with the naïve idealism of groups which would better the condition of the Indian communities. Since the events in "La muerte del tigre," "La tregua" and "Aceite guapo" depend for their understanding on the functioning of aspects of Mayan cosmology, we will treat these three stories separately and in their entirety, proceeding thence to a study of those aspects of Mayan cosmology which are not elaborated in the first three stories. This will in turn be followed by an examination of major aspects of Ladino society in all the stories.

Female characters are important in four of the stories in Ciudad

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2 Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, pp. 131-137, 430-434.
Real: "Modesta Gómez," "Cuarta vigilia," "La rueda del hambriento," and "El don rechazado." To a lesser extent they are important in "El advenimiento del águila." In "Modesta Gómez" and "El don rechazado" the female protagonists are the victims of exploitation both of social position and of sex. "La niña Nides" of "Cuarta vigilia" is a spinster who has never dared to question precepts taught her in earlier years and is thus given to inaction and superstition. The nameless protagonist of "La rueda del hambriento" appears to have been in a situation similar to that of "La niña Nides," but the death of her mother forces her to face realities whose very existence she had been unaware of previously. She is thus obliged to re-evaluate her ideals and her view of the world.

The women of "El advenimiento del águila" are catalysts in the evolution of the rapacious protagonist and represent in all cases passive victims of exploitation of wealth, sex, or social position.

In terms of narrative technique, there are basically two groups of stories: those which employ a fragmented or mytho-historic chronology ("La muerte del tigre," "La tregua," "Modesta Gómez" and "Cuarta vigilia") and those which follow a more traditional chronology ("Aceite guapo," "La suerte de Teodoro Méndez Acubal," "El advenimiento del águila," "La rueda del hambriento," "El don rechazado," and "Arthur Smith salva su alma"). Narrative point of view is usually that of the omniscient author, but there is considerable use of dialogue ("Modesta Gómez," "La rueda del hambriento," and "Arthur Smith salva su alma"); one story, "El don rechazado," is told almost exclusively in the first person singular.

Despite a lack of critical attention, Ciudad Real occupies an important position in the development of Castellanos' prose. Many of
these stories were composed while Castellanos was working for the Instituto Nacional Indigenista in Chiapas and therefore may reflect the knowledge and observations of a field anthropologist who, theoretically less fettered by conventional values and perspectives than many another writer, can bring to her work a keen awareness of the sense of time and reality that pervades not only Mayan Indian life but the entire world of Chiapas. These stories occupy a middle ground not only in technique but also in content between Balún-Canán and Oficio de tinieblas. They are in effect the sketches from which the complex canvas of Oficio de tinieblas was developed. Indeed, when "La muerte del tigre," the first story of the collection, was initially published separately\(^3\) it bore the footnote "Fragmento de la novela en preparación 'Oficio de tinieblas,'" indicating the author's intention as early as 1956 of developing in greater detail some of the themes present in these stories.

More specifically, Ciudad Real marks a major shift in Castellanos' technique of presenting the Indian reality. In Balún-Canán affinity with the Indian was established in two ways: the first was by the setting up of a past-present continuum via the use of material from ancient sacred books and contemporary stories and beliefs; the other was by means of the child narrator who, closer in her affection to her Indian nurse than to her parents, establishes the Indian as a real person.\(^4\) In Ciudad Real these devices are dropped and are replaced by adopting techniques which allow the Indian characters to function in

\(^3\)Castellanos, "La muerte del tigre," La palabra y el hombre, 1, 1 (enero-mayo 1957), pp. 79-88.

\(^4\)Franco, Spanish American Literature, p. 166.
terms of their own cosmological concepts. To keep these concepts within the reach of the reader, they are contrasted, usually by means of a figure who functions in both Ladino and Indian psychological worlds, but who is understood by each to have a different identity from that by which the other knows him. Such thematic contrasts in which the cultural syncretism of the area is brought vividly to life are central to the first three stories and appear in "La rueda del hambriento" and "Arthur Smith salva su alma."

I. Religion, Myth and the Supernatural

A. "La muerte del tigre" and the concepts of 'chulel' and 'waigel'

In "La muerte del tigre," the first of the stories, Castellanos narrates in epic proportion and in a seemingly timeless context the conquest, expulsion, and subsequent decimation of a community of Chamula Indians, the Bolometic or Jaguar People. Beaten in battle, this once proud people retreats to new land only to be expelled years later to inhospitable high ground from which the surviving male members of the community emigrate in search of work.  

5 Henning Siverts, (in Oxchuc, una tribu maya de México) (Mexico: Instituto Internacional Indigenista, 1969) supplies the historical background which Castellanos has mythologised here. On pages 26-28 he states the following:

Antes de la conquista española, tanto los pueblos mayances de habla tzotzil cuanto los de habla tzeltal, poseían un territorio de residencia muchísimo más grande y no estaban, como actualmente, concentrados en la Mesa Tzotzil y en la Mesa Tzeltal (...). Con otras palabras, toda 'la tierra caliente' (...) estaba habitada antes de la llegada de los españoles.

La conquista hizo que grandes masas humanas se refugiaron en las montañas, concentrándose alrededor [de] los viejos centros ceremoniales (cabeceras y refugios), donde estable-
chador in Ciudad Real to work in the tropical lowlands, the Chamulas never return home due to death or excessive indebtedness. With the exceptions of their pre-Conquest militarism and the encounter with the Spaniards, at no time during the rest of the story is there ever a suggestion of resistance or rebellion or of a possible return to former military prowess. Such a total change in attitude would seem to require an explanation.

In the Indian view there is no question of a choice between resistance and submission. For him the successive ills of the community are due not to the conditions imposed by generations of Ladinos, but are due instead to the mortal wounding of the communal waigel, animal-soul, which occurred at the time of the original defeat by the Spanish. The immediate effect of the Spanish victory on the waigel is not recorded in the story. Rather, the condition of the waigel and of the Bolometic is given us for a period pre-dating the clash of arms and for a period post-dating by a considerable time this conflict. These contrasting
cieron la resistencia permanente. Más tarde otros más fueron arrojados de las regiones más bajas y de los grandes valles, por los colonos españoles. (...) Esta Huida hacia las montañas afectó, en primer término, a los pueblos de habla tzotzil que estaban establecidos en la región que ocuparon los españoles.

His quotation from Aguirre Beltrán's Formas de gobierno indígena, page 27, would indicate that the process is presently unchecked:
La invasión de las tierras bajas por los nuevos pobladores desalojó y sigue desalojando a los indígenas de estos lugares obligándolos a retraerse al refugio que presentan las montañas (...).

Thus the myth as presented by Castellanos is seen to be pertinent still and would add further emphasis to the quotation which precedes the entire volume of stories: "¿En qué día? ¿En qué hora? ¿En qué año sucede lo que aquí se cuenta? Como en los sueños, como en las pesadillas, todo es simultáneo, todo está presente, todo existe hoy."
descriptions, with the account of the defeat of the Bolometic between them, leave room for interpreting the present condition of the jaguar waigel as related to the defeat. An awareness of the waigel's nature confirms this.

As we have suggested in Chapter II, the predominant world view of the Maya is animistic; that is, every entity in the cosmos is conceived of as being endowed with a life spirit sensitive to the actions and moods of every other entity about it. Thus stars, rocks, trees, rivers, animals, and even machinery that has been touched by man—to say nothing of man himself—are all considered animate and also capable of both causing and suffering harm. Man, unlike other animate forms, is endowed with two spirit forces which are generally rendered in Spanish and English by the imprecise terms almas and "souls." One of these "souls," the chulel, is immortal; the other "soul," usually called either chanul or waigel, is mortal and is usually considered to have an animal form. It may leave the body at times of fright or physical exertion or may be lured away by evil forces. When not in the human body, it may reside in a creature of the forest having the same animal form as itself. What is especially important for our story, though, is that the waigel is so tied to its owner that any action affecting the one also affects the other. Thus illness and death are not chance and do not proceed from outside causes, but are the result of harm done to the waigel. Likewise the death of an individual will cause that of his waigel. Too, the name and identity of the waigel are kept secret, be-

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6 There is some confusion of terms here since waigel and chanul refer to the animal soul but never appear in free variation in the anthropological literature. At least one author, Rocardo Pozas, regu-
cause the knowledge of either by someone outside the immediate family might expose the owner to harm. Were an enemy to find out either name or identity, he might easily kill the waigel and thus cause the death of its owner. Castellanos has modified this concept of the waigel, the animal-soul of an individual person, by making it the guardian spirit or totem of an entire community and by having the members of the community adopt the name of the animal as one of their two surnames, a situation at variance with the anthropological literature. The origin of the Indian surname is uncertain, but it is highly infrequent for it to refer to the known waigeles of the region.

larly confuses these terms with chulel, the immortal one of the two "souls." Our definition is based on a conversation with Victoria Bricker of Tulane University who has done extensive work in the Chiapas Highlands.


8 Guiteras-Holmes, p. 302: As for the possibility of the wayhel being connected with the animal surnames, I always received a negative answer to my question. I heard of only one case, related to me laughingly by his relatives, of a man who refused to kill the weasels that ate his poultry because his Indian surname was saben (weasel). He respected the life of the species because he did not know which saben might be his wayhel.

Evon Vogt, in The Zinacantecos of Mexico: A Modern Maya Way of Life (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 6, maintains that the origin of these names is uncertain. M. Esther Hermitte, in Poder sobrenatural y control social en un pueblo maya contemporáneo (Mexico: Instituto Internacional Indigenista, 1970), pp. 87-95, suggests that the names are remnants of formerly functional clans. It seems most likely, though, that Castellanos has sought the origin of these names in a common ancestor in the manner in which the Popol Vuh relates the origin of the Quiché Maya. In Part III, Chapter 2 of the Popol Vuh we read the following account of the first men:

These are the names of the first men who were created and formed: the first man was Balam-Quitze, the second, Balam-Acab, the third, Mahucutah, and the fourth was Iqui-Balam.
Returning now to the story, we find that in times past the Bolometric exhibited the characteristics of their jaguar waigel.

La comunidad de los Bolometric estaba integrada por familias de un mismo linaje. Su espíritu protector, su waigel, era el tigre, cuyo nombre fueron dignos de ostentar por su bravura y por su audacia. (p. 13)

Also like their communal spirit, they established themselves as a dominant, predatory people once they reached the highlands of Chiapas.

Después de las peregrinaciones inmemoriales (...), los hombres de aquella estirpe vinieron a establecerse en la región montañosa de Chiapas (...). Allí la prosperidad les alzó la frente, los hizo de ánimo soberbio y rapaz. Con frecuencia los Bolometric descendían a cebarse en las posesiones de las tribus próximas. (p. 13)

The relationship between jaguar waigel and the community of the Bolometric is thus made clear; tribal characteristics are accounted for and

These are the names of our first mothers and fathers. (Adrian Recinos, Trans., Popol Vuh (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 167.)

Three of the four names have the word balam (Tzotzil bolom) as one of their names. These original four men take four wives in Chapter 3 and create all the tribes, large and small.

They conceived the men, of the small tribes and of the large tribes, and were the origin of us; the people of the Quiché.

The names of each one were different when they multiplied there in the East, and there were many names of the people. (...)

Three groups of families existed, but they did not forget the name of their grandparents and father, those who propagated and multiplied there in the East. (Popul Vuh, pp. 170-171)

The descendants of the Fathers would logically be called the Bolometric, and thus the author equates the Bolometric with the Highland Maya. Hence to speak of the Bolometric and their plight is to speak of the Highland Maya and their plight.

Rosario Castellanos, Ciudad Real (1st ed., Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1960; 2d ed., Mexico: Editorial Novaro, 1974) All further quotations are from the second edition and only the pagination is given.
the basis is laid for the post-Conquest contrast of attitudes.

In recounting the conquest of the Bolometric there is no mention of the waigel; the waigel is implicit, however, in the characteristics which the Bolometric have exhibited previously and with which they now confront, unfortunately for them, the caxlanes or whites.

Cuando la llegada de los blancos, de los caxlanes, el ardor belicoso de los Bolometric se lanzó a la batalla con un ímpetu que—al estrellarse contra el hierro invasor—vino a caer desmoronado. Peor que vencidos, (...) los Bolometric resintieron en su propia carne el rigor de la derrota que antes jamás habían padecido. (p. 13)

There follows a long list of ills suffered by the Bolometric, which in turn is followed by the statement that

los hombres más valientes bajaban a los parajes vecinos (...) para visitar los santuarios, solicitando a las potencias superiores que cesaran de atormentar a su waigel, al tigre, que los brujos oían rugir, herido, en la espesura de los montes. (p. 14)

This reference to the wounded waigel, it seems to us, can only refer to the defeat suffered by the Bolometric at the hands of the caxlanes, and since man can affect his waigel as much as the waigel can affect man, the loss of face, pride, and land by the Bolometric is now reflected in the wounded condition of the jaguar waigel.

The petitions mentioned in the previous quotation prove in vain and we soon learn that "el tigre aún debía recibir muchas heridas más" (p. 14); that is, the community will suffer further deprivations in the form of sickness, poor crop yields, and the resultant emigration of men in search of work. The crumbling of the community implied in the use of "desmoronado" (p. 14) now becomes a reality as the Bolometric men make their way to the heart of the Ladino settlement in Chiapas, Ciudad Real,
in search of work. Here they encounter an enganchador who tells them to answer all questions truthfully, especially when giving their entire name, since his assistant is a brujo and can cause them harm if they lie. They respond out of fear and weakness, surrendering the sacred name of their protective spirit to the enemy, and thereby seal their doom.

Los Bolometic escucharon esta amonestación con cresciente angustia. ¿Cómo iban a poder seguir ocultando su nombre verdadero? Lo entregaron, pusieron a su waigel, al tigre herido, bajo la potestad de estas manos manchadas de tinta.

--Pablo Gómez Bolom. (...) (p. 22)

The process of destruction is continued as the Bolometic leave for the tropical lowlands. The descent from their highlands to sea level closes their ears. The roaring of their wounded waigel, if indeed he is not already dead at the hands of the caxlanes, is thus, like the roaring of the sea, never heard.

The death of the waigel must take place soon after the Bolometic leave Ciudad Real, for according to Ricardo Pozas, the waigel and its owner have little effect on one another if they wander at great distances from each other. Physical death and the spiritual death that is assimilation into Ladino society are the final results of the death of the jaguar waigel.

Los sobrevivientes de aquel largo verano no pudieron regresar. (...) En la cicatriz del timpano resonaba, cada vez más debilmente, la voz de las mujeres, llamándolos, la voz de sus hijos, extinguéndose. Del tigre en el monte nada se volvió a saber. (p. 24)

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We have discussed thus far the major role of the waigel in this story. However, there remains one point regarding the waigel and the fate of the Bolometric which bears elaboration. This concerns the defeat of the Bolometric by the Spanish. The real reason for the Bolometric defeat is not the "hierro invasor" (p. 13) but the fact that the jaguar has been mortally wounded. To have defeated a spirit, the Spanish themselves must have had their own supernatural forces with which to do battle against the jaguar. This victory, as well as the continued political and economic dominance of the Ladino, is explained also through the concept of the waigel.

Indian reasoning argues that since all waigeles are animals and some animals are larger and more powerful than others, it follows that some waigeles will be larger and more powerful than other waigeles. Now, according to Ricardo Pozas, the Ladino has as his waigeles both the jaguar and the lion,¹¹ thus enabling him to overcome the lone jaguar of the Bolometric and establish himself as the new dominant force in the area.

We find a similar situation involving the struggle between Indian and Ladino chuleles and waigeles in "Aceite guapo," the prime elements of which we shall treat presently and separately. Briefly though, in order to get the necessary cash to purchase his religious office (his cargo), Daniel Castellanos Lampoy, protagonist of the story, lies to Don Juvencio, the same enganchador who appears in "La muerte del tigre," saying that his two sons have volunteered to become contracted laborers and have asked him, as their father, to pick up their cash ad-

¹¹Pozas, p. 191.
vances. Juvencio reminds Daniel of the possible consequences of his lies and Daniel is momentarily afraid, for "sabía que don Juvencio estaba en poder de su nombre verdadero, de su chulel y del waigel de su tribu. Tembló un instante, (...)." (p. 41) He goes through with his lies, however in the belief that once he is safely in the sanctuary of the church in Chamula, no one will have the power to reach and harm him there. For although don Juvencio may have Daniel's chulel and the tribal waigel, this weakness will be compensated for by the aid of Santa Margarita, the saint to whom he will be caretaker (martoma), who, as a Ladina, is as powerful as don Juvencio. Since she is a saint, she is presumably endowed with even greater powers than the average Ladino. Her chulel or waigel will be strong enough to overcome that of don Juvencio.

B. "La tregua" and the figure of the 'dueño del monte'

The second story of the collection, "La tregua," recounts the brutal slaying of a lost Ladino at the hands of a community of Indians, and again the author provides a double perspective. We learn through flashbacks and fleeting thoughts that the community of Mukenjá has for some time experienced droughts and poor crops and, as a result, has resorted to the illegal making of alcohol for cash exchange to reduce its dependence upon high-priced Ladino-controlled liquor, a necessity for their religious activities. This illegal activity enrages the local Ladino government official, López, who, in a fit of passion, sets fire to homes, people and livestock at the site of the community. This action is followed by periodic harassment by other government agents. Relations between Indian and Ladino communities have not, obviously,
been the best, and the irate and frustrated community finally finds an outlet for its vengeance in the person of a lost Ladino whom they set upon and hack to pieces.

The Indian point of view presents much more of a struggle between man and the adverse forces of nature than the racially colored conflict which the previous paragraph would suggest. To the Indian community the drought and crop failure can only mean that the spirits which control the vital natural forces are malicious. In order to alter the course of the forces of nature the community may attempt to appease the malignant spirit; failing this, the alternative is to capture and destroy the malevolent spook.

Most prominent among these spirits is the figure of the dueño del monte, a pukuj (or demon) who is generally portrayed as a Ladino. The destructive activities of the government official López and of his subordinates causes him to be associated with the dueño del monte. Subsequently the figure of a tattered, unshaven, thirsty Ladino which first confronts the woman Rominka and later the entire community in a time of hardship is not taken to be a real Ladino, but is instead taken for the embodiment of the dueño del monte who has for so long harassed the community. To be rid of this demon would restore the fields to productivity, so the figure of the Ladino-dueño del monte is summarily cut and bludgeoned to death, after which there is much feasting to celebrate the "tregua" which has now been re-established with the forces of nature. The association of López with the dueño del monte and the later association of the lost Ladino with both of these figures provides the community with an excellent chance to be rid of their oppressors both natural and supernatural. This association of characters also allows
the author, while describing the lack of harmony between Ladino and Indian, to illustrate the development of a particular folk legend.

Before proceeding further with our analysis of the story, let us consider the nature of the dueño del monte as the author presents him. Castellanos' dueño del monte appears to be a composite of the characteristics of at least two demons. A black-skinned male spirit, ikal, endowed with a meter-long penis, combines with another spirit known as dueño del monte, a modern version of the Classic Mayan devil.12

Anthropological data suggest that the ikal is a generally devastating figure, since his chief prey is woman and hence fertility and continuity of the species. To him are attributed barrenness in women, abortion and miscarriage, rape and unexplained or unwanted pregnancy. A nocturnal flying spirit, he regularly carries off men, women, and children found outdoors after dark and is thus roughly comparable in this aspect of his personality with the bogey man. He is believed to prefer the taste of children, frequently plucking the fetus from the mother's womb, thus causing her to abort; or, should the child not be to his liking, he may plant it in another married woman. He has also been known to carry off men and women from inside locked houses; in these cases the men are never found, presumably eaten by the ikal, and the women are invariably raped and dead, giving credence to the meter-long penis.13

12Conversation with Victoria Bricker of Tulane University, February 3, 1978.
The figure of the *dueño del monte* is vital to the life of the Tzotzil Maya. According to Evon Vogt he ranks next in importance to the ancestral gods.\(^4\) He lives under hills and mountains and controls the clouds, which are believed to emerge from caves, which provide the needed rain for crops. He also owns all the waterholes. His key role in the order of things requires regular supplication and offering, but communication with the *dueño del monte* is generally regarded as dangerous because of the nature of the *dueño* himself and because of the nature of his abode and means of entrance there. The *dueño del monte* is usually pictured as a large, fat Ladino living under the ground amidst piles of wealth. To produce some of this money, he has been known to capture men and women and to force them to work in his underground enterprises until the iron soles of the sandals he provides wear out. Since he is an underground-dwelling spirit, communication with him may be had through any opening in the earth such as a cave, a limestone sink, or a waterhole; but the dark and confined nature of these openings gives the *dueño* the advantage over the petitioner, for "where the light of the sun cannot reach, man's soul can be taken from him" and "the door [the cave] can be closed" behind him, sealing any exit.\(^{15}\)

As Bricker suggests, the present-day *dueño del monte* appears to have assimilated several of the roles and characteristics of the separate and distinct Classical Mayan gods of the underworld and of rain.\(^{16}\) Life and death forces have been consolidated in one being, an apparently indolent, miserly, malicious figure who no longer even retains Mayan

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\(^{14}\) Vogt, p. 6.  
\(^{15}\) Guiteras-Holmes, p. 288.  
\(^{16}\) Conversation with Victoria Bricker.
features but instead is pictured as a Ladino whose wealth and obesity are achieved at the cost of Indian lives. This fusion of the forces of good and evil and their incorporation into one Ladino being is readily understandable given several factors: the economic and political dominance of the Ladinos in Chiapas (the Ladinos are in a very literal sense the dueños del monte); the insistence of the Roman Catholic Church on one God (usually pictured as a Ladino) in whom are found attributes of both wrath and mercy; and the tendency of the Maya to see evil personality as simply the reverse of an otherwise good personality, Mayan spirits and gods being frequently at least dual in nature. That the Mayan dueño del monte should lack mercy more often than not would seem to be explained, both anthropologically and in terms of Caste­llanos' fiction, by a similar lack of this quality in the Ladinos with whom the Indians usually come into contact.

Castellanos' fusion of characteristics of the anthropologically distinct dueño del monte and ikal into a single literary creation is apparent from the thoughts of the woman Rominka as she meets a figure on a path leading from a waterhole to her hut.

El que camina sobre una tierra prestada, ajena; el que respira está robando el aire. Porque las cosas (todas las cosas, las que vemos y también aquellas de que nos servimos) no nos pertenecen. Tienen otro dueño. ("")

El dueño (...), el pukuj, es un espíritu. Invisible, va y viene, escuchando los deseos en el corazón del hombre. Y cuando quiere hacer daño vuelve el corazón de unos contra otros, tuerce las amistades, enciende la guerra. O seca las entrañas de las paridoras, de las que crían. O dice hambre y no hay bocado que no se vuelva ceniza en la boca del ham­briento. (p. 28)

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The first paragraph of this quotation portrays the attitudes of the dueño del monte, lord of all things, whose permission must be asked appropriately before any action is taken. The second paragraph adds to the figure of the dueño del monte attributes which we have seen to be those of the ikal.

Having now created the figure of the dueño del monte, the author establishes a past-present continuum in which the dueño del monte, the secretario municipal López, and an unnamed Ladino are all seen as variations on the one malicious demon who has caused past hardships and who is believed to be the source of present tribulations. As the story of the community's hardships progresses, the reasons for conceiving of the dueño del monte as a Ladino become clear.

The oldest reference to the sufferings of the community which the author offers us takes the form of oral tradition passed down to the present generation and recalled now by the woman Rominka.

Antes, cuentan los ancianos memoriosos, unos hombres malcontentos con la sujeción a que el pukuj los sometía, idearon el modo de arrebatarle su fuerza. En una red juntaron los tributos: posol, semillas, huevos. Los depositaron a la entrada de la cueva donde el pukuj duerme. Y cerca de los bastimentos quedó un garrafón de posh, de aguardiente.

Cuando el pukuj cayó dormido, con los miembros flojos por la borrachera, los hombres se abalanzaron sobre él y lo ataron de pies y de manos con gruesas sogas. Los alaridos del prisionero hacían temblar la raíz de los montes. Amenazas, promesas, nada le consiguió la libertad. Hasta que uno de los guardianes (por temor, por respeto, ¿quién sabe?) cortó las ligaduras. (p. 28)

This attempt to keep and kill the pukuj only enrages him. To the trappings of dueño del monte mentioned in the first paragraph of the preceding quotation are now added acts of wanton destruction which we have characterized previously as attributes of the ikal.
Desde entonces el pukuj anda suelto y, ya en figura de animal, ya en vestido de ladino, se aparece. Ay de quien lo encuentra. Queda marcado ante la faz de la tribu y para siempre. En las manos temblorosas, incapaces de asir los objetos; en las mejillas exangües; en el extravío perpetuamente sobresaltado de los ojos conocen los demás su tremenda aventura. Se unen en torno suyo para defenderlo, sus familiares, sus amigos. Es inútil. A la vista de todos el señalado vuelve la espalda a la cordura, a la vida. Despojos del pukuj son los cadáveres de niños y jóvenes. (pp. 28–29)

Having enraged the pukuj, the members of the community now experience his wrath not only in the madness and death of those whom he has met on pathways as indicated above, but also in the form of poor harvests brought on by the lack of rain and through what appears to be the inability of the earth to give life. Although not mentioned, it is clear that it is the person of the dueño del monte who is active here, since it is he who controls the rains and the ability of the land to bear fruit.

El surco sobre el que se inclinaban era pobre. Agotado de dar todo lo que su pobre entraña tenía, ahora entregaba solo mazorcas despreciables, granos sin sustancia. (p. 30)

These "granos sin sustancia" serve better for the production of ritual alcohol than as foodstuffs. The community therefore turns to the illegal distilling of spirits for their own consumption. The several explosions of distilling equipment, with subsequent injuries to and disappearance of those involved in the process, follow a pattern similar to that previously outlined as the acts of wrath of the enraged pukuj. As in the case of the barren fields, the author, without mentioning the presence of the dueño del monte, allows catastrophe to exhibit characteristics or effects which she has previously attributed to the wrath of the malignant spirit.
Paso tiempo antes que las autoridades lo advirtieran. Nadie les daba cuenta de los accidentes que sufrían los destiladores al estallar al alambique dentro del jacal. Un silencio cómplice amortiguaba las catástrofes. Y los heridos se perdían, aullando de dolor, en el monte. (p. 30)

The next catastrophe which the community suffers is a punitive raid by the local Ladino authorities in response to the Indians' illegal distilling of spirits. This raid is as yet not part of the oral tradition but is fresh in the memory of the community. Here López, the secretario municipal, exhibits a rage and destruction which have heretofore been characteristic of the dueño del monte. Since we have already been told that the dueño del monte frequently appears in the guise of a Ladino, the author now furthers the association of López with the dueño del monte by the ghoulish description of López in the last lines of the following quotation.

Cuando al fin dio con los culpables, en Mukenjá, Rodolfo López temblaba de tal manera que no podía articular claramente la condena. Los subordinados creyeron haber entendido mal. (...) A las midías, pero insistentes preguntas de ella, el intruso respondía no con palabras, sino con un doloroso estertor, (p. 27)
Like the dueno del monte, the Ladino appears on a path to a waterhole and seems to have materialized from nowhere.

Rominka Pérez Taquibequet (...) ascendía la empinada vereda del arroyo al jacal (...). En un recodo, sin ruidos que anunciaren su presencia, apareció un hombre. (...) Por la blancura (...) de su rostro, bien se conocía que el extraño era un caxlán. ¿Pero por cuáles caminos llegó? ¿Qué buscaba en sitio tan remoto? (p. 27)

Shortly the figure demands via signs Rominka’s jar of water. Recalling that the dueno del monte frequently abducts and destroys those whom he meets on a pathway, Rominka interprets his gesture as a grasp at her person and flees uphill to her hut, where she falls headlong, breaking the water jar and spilling its precious contents. The Ladino follows in hot pursuit. His desperate attempts to slake his thirst suggest, in light of the dueno’s earlier miserliness concerning water, that the figure which Rominka has met is indeed the dueno del monte in Ladino guise.

A child is dispatched to alert the men in the fields to the new danger. Although the reaction of the men echoes the questions earlier raised by Rominka concerning the appearance of a Ladino in such a remote area as Mukenjá, it now becomes clear that the men distinguish between the dueno del monte (or pukuj) and the person of the secretario municipal.

Cuando el niño terminó de hablar (...), los varones de Mukenjá se miraron entre sí desconcertados. A cerros tan inaccesibles como éste, sólo podía llegar un ser dotado de los poderes sobrenaturales del pukuj o de la saña, de la precisión para caer sobre su presa de un fiscal. (p. 32)

This separation of the two figures of destruction in the minds of the men of Mukenjá points up the Indians’ conscious distinction be-
tween the two traditions concerning the troubles of the community: the oral tradition and the historic experience. López and his activities are thus seen to be parallel to those of the dueño del monte and do not, in the conscious mind of the Indians, represent the dueño del monte in Ladino guise. The author appears to suggest that Ladino activity reinforces old Indian superstitions which are in the long run injurious to the Ladinos themselves. She also prepares the reader for the eventual incorporation of these historic events into the general oral tradition of the dueño del monte through the Ladinos' constant reinforcing of that tradition.

With these separate traditions of suffering in mind, the men return to the village to face the inevitable rage of either the dueño del monte or the secretario municipal. What they find instead is a weakened Ladino slumped over near the remains of the water from Rominka's jar.

El caxlán estaba allí, de brúces aún, con la cara mojada. No dormía. Pero un ronquido de agonizante estrangulaba su respiración. Quiso ponerse de pie al advertir la proximidad de los indios, pero no pudo incorporarse más que a medias, ni pudo mantenerse en esta postura. Su mejilla chocó sordamente contra el lodo. (p. 33)

The condition of the Ladino, rendered virtually immobile from too much water and from exhaustion, is similar to that of the dueño del monte rendered immobile by liquor in the oral tradition. His inability to articulate recalls López's similar inability.

The frustration engendered by long years of suffering at the hands of dueño del monte and secretario municipal now finds an outlet as the men of the community, gradually whipped to a frenzy by the constant repetition of the work "pukuj" in Rominka's now incoherent story, decide
that this Ladino must in fact be the pukuj who has been the source of all the trouble. On an earlier occasion the pukuj was caught and tied but eventually got free and has roamed the hills causing harm to the community ever since. This time there must be no escape; the pukuj must be destroyed.

A woman now makes a circle over the inert body of the Ladino as a protection against the power of the pukuj and the butchering ensues. The excitement and celebration at the victory over the pukuj lasts way into the night and the community feels that there is now hope of a better future since a "tregua" has been established with the forces of oppression. The reader is aware of the folly that has just been committed, since the murder of a Ladino by a community of Indians already under surveillance by the local Ladino authorities cannot but bring reprisals from the Ladinos. He is also aware of the inefficacy of the actions of the Indians regarding their future crop yields, despite symbolic feeding of the dogs and buzzards with the dead Ladino. The story concludes on a note of foreboding, a foreboding of the inevitability of the repetition of the events of this story and their gradual incorporation into folk myth.

Pero la tregua no fue duradera. Nuevos espíritus malignos infestaron el aire. Y las cosechas de Mukenjá fueron ese año tan escasas como antes. Los brujos, comedores de bestias, comedores de hombres, exigían su alimento. Las enfermedades también los diezmaban. Era preciso volver a matar. (p. 34)

C. "Aceite guapo," the concept of 'pukuj,' and the institutions of the 'cargo system' and ritual drinking

The third story, "Aceite guapo," relates the end of Daniel Castellanos Lampoy, tenant farmer, and takes its name from the illegal
liqueur which causes Daniel's eventual downfall and death. The story is essentially that of the futile attempts of a lonely old man to end his days in comfort and to reacquire the affections of his community, from which he has become estranged. The story offers several glimpses of the Maya's relationship with the supernatural; these include the hierarchical system of ceremonial offices commonly called the "cargo system," the all-pervasive use of alcohol in religious ceremonies, and the concept of the waigel already discussed. Most important of the concepts elaborated here though is that of pukuj, for it is on this one concept that Daniel's fate hinges. His association with the "cargo system" and with ceremonial drinking are merely catalytic exercises which convince the community that Daniel is in fact pukuj.

We have already encountered the term pukuj in "La tregua," where the reference was to a demon. There such a demon as the dueño del monte was frequently referred to as a pukuj. The use of the term in "Aceite guapo" is amplified to include a person possessed of demonic powers or one in league with a demon (a pukuj) for some sinister end. The term as it is used in this story is adjectival, not nominal.

Alfonso Villa Rojas supplies the anthropological background for the events of the story. According to him it is commonly believed in the Indian communities that old people, and old men in particular, have a power for evil which is, like the waigel, frequently manifested in animal form. Outstanding men also are believed to have such a power, as are all present and former holders of offices in the ceremonial hierarchy. This particular power is that element which makes each of these people outstanding, which distinguishes him from his fellows. It is considered that persons such as members of the ceremonial hierarchy and
outstanding individuals will exercise their power for social control by punishing evil-doers and by restraining those who may be tempted to stray from accepted patterns of behavior. Villa Rojas does not elaborate on the attitudes of Indian society towards old men who may possess this power for evil. He does, however, provide sufficient information about other aspects of the supernatural to aid the reader in understanding why Daniel's actions are taken to be evil.

Castellanos first introduces the element of age and its burdens as she presents the figure of Daniel. With age have come other problems: his gradual estrangement from his two sons, the death of his wife, and, most important of all, an increasing ostracism from the society.

Pero tuvo que admitir que era viejo porque se lo probaron las miradas torvas de sospecha, rápidas de alarma, pesadas de desaprobación de los demás.

Daniel sabía lo que significaban esas miradas: él mismo, en épocas anteriores, había mirado así a otros. Significaban que un hombre, si a tal edad había sido respetado por la muerte, es porque ha hecho un pacto con las potencias oscuras, porque ha consentido en volverse el espía y el ejecutor de sus intenciones, cuando son malignas. (p. 37)

Castellanos further clarifies for the reader that the community's rejection of Daniel is not because of his association with occult powers, for the brujo, or shaman, is also connected with these powers. The difference is that the brujo uses his knowledge of the occult for the benefit of the society, whereas an old man is thought to use this same knowledge in the service of evil in order to insure his own longevity.

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Un anciano no es lo mismo que un brujo. No es un hombre que conoce cómo se producen y cómo se evitan los daños; no es una voluntad que se inclina al soborno de quienes la solicitan ni una ciencia que se vende a un precio convenido. Tampoco es un signo que se trueca a veces en su contrario y puede resultar beneficioso.

No, un anciano es el mal y nadie debe acercársele en busca de compasión porque es inútil. Basta que se sienta a la orilla de los caminos, a la puerta de una casa, para que lo que contempla se transforme en erial, en ruina, en muerte. (pp. 37-38)

The admonition not to approach an old man is now made even stronger as we learn that he is to be avoided at all costs, even destroyed.

Hay que alejarse de él, evitarlo; dejar que se consuma de hambre y necesidad, acechar en la sombra para poner fin a su vida con un machetazo, incitar a la multitud para su lapidación. (p. 38)

Even the family of the old man is anxious to be rid of him for its own protection. This is crucial information, for we know already that Daniel's wife has died and that he is estranged from his two sons.

La familia del anciano, si la tiene, no osa defenderlo. Ella misma está embargada de temor y ansia para acabar de una vez con las angustias y los riesgos que traen consigo el contacto con lo sobrenatural. (p. 38)

Daniel suddenly becomes aware of the full meaning of the looks of ostracism. His reaction to this sudden awareness is one of fear and desperation, one in which, by seeking to reinstate himself in the good graces of the community, he only succeeds in confirming the community's view of him as pukuj. His first action is to avoid crowds and public functions.

Insensiblemente, Daniel se apartó de todos; ya no asistía a la plaza en los días de mercado porque temía encontrarse con alguien que después atribuyera a ese encuentro un tropezón en el camino, un malestar súbito, la pérdida de un animal del rebaño. (p. 38)

But avoidance of these encounters only feeds further suspicions. Since
Daniel no longer follows his usual routine, what mischief might he not be up to? Daniel reacts by taking the initiative and goes about obtaining the position of mayordomo to one of the saints in the Church of San Juan de Chamula in the cabecera municipal of the township. That so old a man should seek service in the religious hierarchy of the community, and that he should do so in an ostentatious manner, especially since the community presumed him poor, once again raises suspicions in the minds of the community, a community where personal ambition is considered anti-social. "Los demás lo miraron con un destello de burla. ¿Cómo había crecido, en un hombre ya doblado por la edad, ambición tan extemporánea?" (p. 42) Having virtually no funds of his own with which to purchase the office, Daniel must find funds elsewhere. He obtains the post of mayordomo to Santa Margarita with money got from the indenture of his sons, an incident already elaborated. He is now more suspect than ever, since in addition to his lack of family, abuse of relatives, old age, and retiring manner he now adds the suspicion that comes with being a member of the ceremonial hierarchy.19

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19 Evon Z. Vogt provides some idea of the prestige gained by participation in the ceremonial hierarchy and supplies the information necessary to understand why Daniel needed to resort to indenturing his two sons in order to pay for the office of mayordomo. He offers the following comparison of expenses.

The ceremonies are expensive, some cargos costing the incumbents as much as 14,000 Mexican pesos for food, liquor, and ritual paraphernalia such as candles, incense, and fireworks. To provide some idea of what this means, my colleague Frank Cancian has calculated that it is equivalent to my having to take a leave-of-absence from Harvard without pay for a year and to spend some $18,000 U. S. during the year in ceremonial activity! (Vogt, pp. 19-20)

Although the prestige and cost described by Vogt are accurate for the highland region of Chiapas as a whole, the structure of the hierarchy which he describes does not pertain in Chamula, the site of "Aceite
As a member of the ceremonial hierarchy, Daniel initially shares both his ritual care of Santa Margarita and the liquor which accompanies these ceremonies with his fellow *mayordomos*.

A la ceremonia del cambio de ropa de la santa, Daniel invitó a los otros *mayordomos*. Asistieron y se sentaron enfrente del altar, en un espacio bien barrido. (...)

Con un respeto tembloroso Daniel desabrochó los alfileres que sujetaban la tela y empezó a desdoblarla. (...) Entonces los *mayordomos* llenaron de alcohol una jícara y bebieron. (...). Al fin la santa resplandeció de desnudez, pero ninguno fue capaz de contemplarla porque todos habían sido cegados por la borrachera. (p. 43)

However, through fear of losing this cargo at the end of the year and of then being once more left to the mercy of age and an intolerant society, Daniel first breaks the rule of social drinking, reserving the most potent liquor for his personal communications with the saint, an action which incurs the displeasure and suspicion of his fellow *mayordomos*. 20

He then begins a practice of keeping long and lonely vigils before his saint and of bringing her special gifts from the nearby Ladino shops of Ciudad Real, all of which is intended to win the protection of Santa Margarita for Daniel against the community. As we have suggested in our

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20 Alcohol may well be considered the cement that binds all social relationships in the Highland Maya communities, for it is consumed in great quantities on any occasion when people congregate. It is used in naming ceremonies, in ceremonies of ritual kinship, on market day visits to the ceremonial center, and in all ceremonies in which unseen spirits or powers are invoked. On all these occasions the alcohol (*aguardiente* made usually from cane) is shared with those participating in the particular ceremony. At no time is alcohol consumed for individual pleasure and alone. It is seen as a ritual element and its private consumption is considered a sign of anti-social behavior. (Laughlin, p. 185).
discussion of the waigel, Santa Margarita's protective powers lie not only in her condition as a saint, but also in her being a ladina, and thus able to overpower the Indians because of a superior waigel.

Daniel's long and solitary vigils before the saint are accompanied by constant pleas for help. These are over-heard by the sacristán of the church who points out that if Daniel wishes a favor from the saint he must learn to speak Spanish, since the saint, being a ladina, understands no Tzotzil. To overcome this language impediment in relatively short time the sacristán recommends that Daniel use aceite guapo, a powerful liquor adulterated with kerosene, in his ritual ceremonies. In effect the sacristán recommends that Daniel take poison and thus remove himself from the community.

Daniel's exclusive attentions to Santa Margarita continue to annoy the other mayordomos. This situation becomes intolerable for them after Daniel takes the sacristán's advice and begins to drink aceite guapo on a regular basis, for Daniel remains in a state of constant inebriation, gradually coming to feel that he has powers which the other mayordomos do not share.

Bajo el influjo de la droga Daniel comenzó a sentir que todo giraba a su alrededor. Un humor festivo iba apoderándose de él. Reía desatinadamente considerando ahora falsos, remotos, y sin consistencia, los peligros que lo amenazaban. Se burbujaba de todos porque se sentía más fuerte que ninguno y joven y libre y feliz. Allá en la nebulosa que rodeaba a Santa Margarita creía adivinar un guiño cómplice que lo enloquecía más. (p. 47)

Daniel's open admission of his belief that he possesses powers superior to those of the other mayordomos, coinciding as it does with his constant state of drunkenness and resultant inability to execute the functions of his office, provides the members of the hierarchy with the
opportunity to be rid of both an inefficient mayordomo and a man who has finally, under the effect of the liquor, confessed to being pukuj. On the charge of "mancillando así la dignidad de su cargo y el respeto debido a la iglesia" (p. 47) Daniel is cast into the street to spend his last night in disgrace; he never wakes up. What the villagers failed to do with their machetes, the sacristán has accomplished with aceite guapo: the pukuj is dead.

D. Religious syncretism and local superstition: minor references

There remain a few references to the spirit world to which we must address ourselves, but unlike the myths with which we have been dealing thus far, they are not vital to the full understanding of the stories in which they appear; rather their function is auxiliary, illustrative, even anecdotal. They generally take the form of local superstition and folk myth and continue to illustrate the syncretism which we have already noticed in a character such as the dueño del monte.

The eighth story, "La rueda del hambriento," introduces a short anecdote which seeks to explain the frequent heavy fog in the Indian communities around Ciudad Real. The incident occurs as Alicia, a volunteer nurse for the Misión de Ayuda a los Indios, threads her way by mule up the winding, mist-laden trails to the Tzeltal community of Oxchuc accompanied by a few muleteers who serve as guides and suppliers of food and medicine to the mission. The story is Alicia's introduction to the Maya spirit world, where spirits are held to be the cause of phenomena, and it foreshadows the problems which must be solved in getting the Indian population to understand and submit to Western theories and prac-
What we have here is apparently an old folk tale probably originating in pre-Columbian times, but the Indian god protagonists have assumed the names and roles of figures occupying similar positions in the Roman Catholic hierarchy of spirits. Thus Santo Tomás, who already has in Christian tradition a certain negative relationship with his lord, causes trouble for the Lord of Heaven, Christ. Although not developed further in this instance, the story of Santo Tomás and Christ does illustrate the particular difficulty in communication between two groups of people who use the same sets of symbols or myths but who assign differing values to them.

Just how a situation such as that illustrated by the above story of Santo Tomás came to be is offered in "Arthur Smith salva su alma," the last of the narratives in Ciudad Real. Here we observe the attempts of a group of modern Protestant missionaries to pass on their religious concepts to the Indians through a native interpreter who renders Christian concepts in what he feels are the closest Tzeltal concepts. A new mythology is created before our eyes as a result of
the lack of common reference.

In this instance Arthur, recently arrived from language training schools in the United States, is charged with the task of translating the Gospels to Tzeltal. Since Arthur's knowledge of Tzeltal is not one gained from practice with native speakers, he is assigned, as an aid in translating, a local Indian who is outstanding for his command of English, one Mariano Sántiz Nich. Despite Mariano's command of English, there remains a problem of conceptualization, of the ability to translate not only the words but also the cosmological content of these words to Tzeltal, a problem which the missionaries have failed to recognize. Not surprisingly, Mariano interprets the Gospels according to his own understanding and cosmological tradition.

Y si el texto decía Espíritu Santo, Mariano interpretaba Sol y principio vital que fecunda y azada que remueve la tierra y dedos que modelan el barro. Y si decía demonio, no pensaba en el mal, no temía ni rechazaba, sino que se inclinaba con sumisión, porque después de todo el demonio era solo la espalda de la otra potencia y había que rendirle actos propiciatorios y concertar alianzas convenientes. Lo que echaba de manos, porque no se mencionaba jamás, era la gran vagina paridora que opera en las tinieblas y que no descansa nunca. (p. 168)

This passage, in addition to its illustration of cross-cultural language and conceptual problems which occur in the presentation of new religious ideas, also offers us an elemental view of certain aspects of indigenous religion. The sun is the all-creating, all-fertilizing, male principle in nature; the supreme god has a creative, masculine aspect to his personality.

Mariano's reaction to the demonio is not the fear and trembling expected of him by his proselytizing tutors, for Mayan tradition paints the supreme creative forces as having a negative, destructive aspect to
their personalities in addition to the positive, creative one. Hence the reference to the "espalda de la otra potencia."

For Mariano the picture of the nature of the supreme deities offered by the Gospels is incomplete, for only two aspects—both masculine—are accounted for. What is missing for Mariano is the female principle—both in its positive and negative aspects—found in the Mayas' apparently hermaphroditic gods. It is this female principle, particularly the constructive aspect of it—"la gran vagina paridora"—, which Mariano finds lacking in the New Testament texts. This lack of a vital feminine element of the Indian world view might also very well explain the lack of success of the Protestant missionaries of this story (especially given the very masculine theological stance and Pauline anti-feminism so characteristic of Protestantism) and accounts perhaps for part of the clash later in the narrative of Roman Catholic and Protestant adherents and clerics in and around Ah-tún and Oxchuc.

"Arthur Smith salva su alma" also offers passing reference to three figures from local superstition: the Negro Cimarrón, the Yahualcìhuatl, and Quebrantahuesos. These figures are mentioned by the Roman Catholic clergy just as tensions begin to mount between Roman Catholic and Protestant sectors of the area. The figures as they appear in the narrative are obviously elements of social control, since the catastrophes which they may bring about happen only to those who stray from norms of local behavior or who lose their self-control: drunken people, adulterous persons of either sex, and persons who go out after dark. In the context of the entire story, invocation of these figures

\[21\] Thompson, pp. 198-199.
by the Roman Catholic hierarchy illustrates the advantageous position of
the Roman Church (in its toleration of local superstition) over the
Protestant missionaries who do not tolerate any beliefs other than those
strictly propounded by their missionaries. The reference is as fol­

Y en las tinieblas de la noche, el Negro Cimarrón arreba­
tando doncellas; la Yehualcíhuatl atrayendo a los varones a
la perdición y a la muerte; el esqueleto de la mujer adúlterla,
cuyos huesos entrechocaban lúgubrementemente, como un anuncio de
la desgracia. (p. 175)

The Negro Cimarrón is described here as "arrebataando doncellas," a
description which accords with that offered earlier for the ikal.
Anthropological data are at variance regarding the description of the
Negro Cimarrón of folk myth and offer figures, not called Cimarrón,
which fit the portrayal of that figure offered by Castellanos. It may
very well be, then, that as in the creation of the literary dueño del
monte in "La tregua," Castellanos has combined several figures from
popular superstition into a composite, literary figure to which she
gives the name of Negro Cimarrón. 22

The Yehualcíhuatl or Yeguatzíhuatl, "atrayendo a los hombres a
la perdición y a la muerte (...)" is, according to Susana Francis, a
beautiful woman who walks the fringes of town on nights of full moon,
her dark hair contrasting sharply with her very white clothing. She
lures those men who follow her to mud flats where they become bogged
down, unable to move. Yehualcíhuatl begins the already familiar
hysterical laughter at this point, and gives to "unos sus cigarros, y

22 See Susana Francis, Habla y literatura popular en la antigua
capital chiapaneca (Mexico: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1960),
pp.60-61.
unos sus nuégados—huesos y estiércol de animal."^{23}

Quebrantahuesos, the "esqueleto de la mujer adultera" referred to in the story, is said to be a flying skeleton which rubs its bones together as it flies, thus giving it the name and creating a maddening noise heard usually in the still of night. According to folk belief in Ciudad Real, it is the soul and bones of an adulteress who died a sudden and violent death and has thus never found rest. She is said to have been a rather promiscuous woman who regularly left her husband's bed at night to meet her lovers in the woods. In order not to arouse the husband's suspicion and jealousy, she regularly left her body in bed with the husband and floated or flew with just bones and spirit to her nocturnal trysts. Upon her return one morning she was discovered by her husband, who immediately cut her body to pieces and salted it, thus effectively preventing her from ever incorporating herself again into the world of mankind. Ever since, she has wandered aimlessly, rattling her bones as she flies.^[24]

II. Ladino Society

As we change our focus now from Castellanos' presentation of indigenous society to that of the Spanish-speaking, mestizo population of Ciudad Real, that is to say, to her presentation of Ladino society, one note in particular sounds clearer than any other: that this society is the lifeless remains of a formerly viable society. Amidst mention of conquistadores and encomenderos we learn that there was once a community of energetic people here.

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23 Francis, pp. 58-59. 24 Francis, p. 60.
Durante los siglos de la Colonia y los primeros lustros de la Independencia, Ciudad Real fue asiento de la gubernatura de la provincia. Detentó la opulencia y la abundancia del comercio; irradió el foco de la cultura. Pero sólo permaneció siendo la sede de una elevada jerarquía eclesiástica: el Obispado. (p. 17)

Having lost its vitality, the town is now only the shell of its former self and must seek to maintain this facade by a distortion of past values.

Porque el resplendor de Ciudad Real pertenecía a la memoria. La ruina le comió primero las entrañas. (...) Ciudad Real no era ya más que un presuntuoso y vacío cascarón, un espantajo eficaz tan sólo para el alma de los indios, tercamente apegada al terror. (p. 17)

The inhabitants of such a town reflect the condition of the town in their daily lives. Castellanos offers us two sketches of the sort of people who now live in Ciudad Real.

Gente sin audacia y sin iniciativa, pegada de sus blasones, sumida en la contemplación de su pasado, soltó el bastón del poder político, abandonó las riendas de las empresas mercantiles, cerró el libro de las disciplinas intelectuales. (p. 17)

This first description of the Ladino inhabitants of Ciudad Real is made particularly discomfiting when we realize that the decadence of the society is unperceived by the Indians of the surrounding communities who remember, not unlike their Ladino masters, only the past glory of the town and its people.

¿Y las personas? ¿Cómo veían a las personas los Bolometic? No advertían la insignificancia de estos hombrecitos, bajos, regordetes, rubicundos, bagazo de un estirpe energética y osada. Resplandecía únicamente ante sus ojos el rayo que, en otro tiempo, los aniquiló. (p. 18)

From the preceding quotations at least two conclusions may be drawn regarding the configuration of this society. The first is that
relations between Ladino and Indian are strained. We note the presence of words such as "Terror," "el rayo que (...) los aniquiló," denoting fear as a major characteristic of Ladino-Indian relations. This fear is mutual, and is the result of years of injustice, punctuated periodically by Indian rebellions.

Ciudad Real mantuvo siempre con ellas [las comunidades indígenas] una relación presidida por la injusticia. A la rapiña sistemática correspondía un estado latente de protesta que había culminado varias veces en cruentes sublevaciones. (p. 17)

The second is that, having lost political control of the state, Ciudad Real maintains the spiritual authority by retaining its position as an episcopal see. Given the tendency already noted of the town and its people to look back upon past glory from their present decadence, we may conclude with safety that the Church would reflect these attitudes and that the authority of the Church might be used to preserve such of past glory or tradition as remains. In the absence of a recognized political structure to defend the interests of Ladino society, the Church now assumes an importance far beyond its accepted limits for modern times and becomes the de facto preserver of Ladino traditions and of the status quo.

The elements of rule by fear and rule by theocracy combine to produce a society which is not open to change, a society that resists change at all costs, thus freezing and distorting pre-existing beliefs and social structures. This society, as suggested by the above quotations, is highly stratified. Castellanos herself pronounces the society feudal:

\[25\] "La organización económica y social [de Ciudad Real], aun la

\[25\] Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, p. 131.
traza urbana, pueden considerarse feudales." For Castellanos, and thus for the consideration of this collection, a feudal society is one which is ecclesiastical, inflexibly hierarchic, and one which prefers to live in the past. Such a society is an anachronism, an idea plainly stated by Rosario in referring to the customs of Ciudad Real as "anacrónicas."26

We suggested earlier that there was a particular reason for giving this collection of stories the title of Ciudad Real. In light of Castellanos' characterization of this town and of its people, it is not inappropriate that they should prefer the older name of the town, Ciudad Real, to the present name of San Cristóbal de Las Casas. From 1538 until after Independence and the creation of a new state capital at Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the town now known as San Cristóbal de Las Casas was officially known as Ciudad Real.27 That the people of this town should prefer a name which recalls Spain (The town was named after Ciudad Real in New Castille, birthplace of the founder of the Mexican town of the same name) and the Castillian hegemony of the past over against the name of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, named in part in honor of the former bishop of Chiapas and advocate of Indian liberties, Bartolomé de Las Casas, is not surprising given what we have already seen of Ladino-Indian relations. That the use of the older name should coincide with the faded glory of the town reinforces the author's preference for using the older form as the title.

We have already noted the stratification of this society along

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26 Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, pp. 132-133.
27 Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, pp. 131-132 and Francis, pp. 28-32.

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cultural and racial lines (i.e., that the defeated Indian is subservient to the dominant Ladino through "la rígida diferenciación de clases, la distancia entre los dos polos del mundo san cristobalense—el señor y el indio (...)").

The relationships between these strata of society are also determined to a great extent by "intereses"—here money and social position—which have replaced the values of an earlier time. Money and position were previously determined by a mentally and physically active society: "poder político," "empresas mercantiles," and "disciplinas intelectuales" mentioned earlier; but having lost or abandoned these pursuits, the society has replaced them with religious fanaticism and general intolerance of new ideas, a cult of noble ancestors ("apegados de sus blasones"), and the conscious exploitation of natural and human resources for quick financial or social gain, "la explotación sistemática de los que ocupan las escalas inferiores por los que detentan los puestos de privilegio. (...)" This is all done by a society of "hombrecitos, bajos, regordetes, rubicundos, bagazo de un estirpe enérgica y osada." Men of caliber are wanting and the society is filled with indolents, lacking both will and creativity. These distortions of previous values are represented in Ciudad Real by

oficios (tolerados algunos; respetados otros; recompensados los demás por buenas ganancias) en los que el despojo aparece como una forma íícita de comercio.

Our further consideration of Ladino society will elaborate Castellanos’

\[\text{28} \text{ Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, p. 134.} \]
\[\text{29} \text{ Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, p. 134.} \]
\[\text{30} \text{ Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, pp. 134-135.} \]
presentation of these oficios in the forms of the enganchador, the atajadora, the secretario municipal, and the priest, all products of this remnant society.

The 'enganchador.' The figure of the enganchador, already a familiar figure in Latin American literature, appears in two of the stories in Ciudad Real, "La muerte del tigre" and "Aceite guapo," in both of which he is the same Don Juvencio Ortiz. Castellanos offers the following definition of the enganchador: "El (...) enganchador (...) sirve de intermediario entre quienes solicitan el trabajo del indio y quienes lo prestan y (...) cobra por sus servicios la parte del león."  

The presentation of the enganchador in the stories of Ciudad Real reveals a system of exploitation which works as follows: Indians seeking to augment their income are contracted for general or particular work for a specified time on a large estate; for this they will be paid a stipulated amount. Theoretically, to insure that the contracted party does not stop work before the contracted period has ended, he is given a cash advance or anticipo. Unused to a money economy—and quite unused to large sums of money—the Indian has frequently spent the anticipo before arriving at his destination; he may then have to work for a period of time without pay to make up the difference. To further complicate matters, any personal needs or damage to crops is charged to the Indian's account, further reducing his pay. Two geographic elements also may cause hardship. The first of these is the Indian's having to go on

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31 See for example C. Alegria, El mundo es ancho y ajeno, and José Eustacio Rivera, La vorágine.

32 Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, p. 135.
foot to the estate, a journey of possibly several days which may expose him to the elements, accident, or assault and which will render him insufficiently energetic to begin work immediately upon arrival. The second factor is that of change of climate. Most of the concentrated Indian population is in the cool uplands, frequently above seven thousand feet. However, most of the estate land is located in the more tropical lowlands to which the Indian is unaccustomed. The many tropical fevers, overwork, and improper diet and dress frequently combine to reduce the force of laborers that will return to the highlands at the end of the contracted period. The enganchador is able to keep in business not only because of the steady supply of and demand for cheap labor ("siempre sobrarían indios" (p. 21)), but also through falsification of documents in which amounts of anticipos are inflated.

With this in mind, let us now consider the figure of Don Juvencio Ortíz. The first characteristics revealed are those of dishonesty and callousness. Don Juvencio lies to the Bolometic at the very beginning of their encounter when he says "Y tengo fama de equitativo." (p. 20). He is in fact not "equitativo" and is uninterested in being fair to them. It is characteristic of Juvencio, as of many of Casteñanos' representatives of the decadent Ladino society, that they make a great pretense at rightness of action and legality of position whenever faced with the possibility of reproach. Deceit masked as adherence to the letter of the law or tradition is the modus operandi of the exercisers of "oficios." Juvencio's callousness is revealed when his aide points out that the Indians are "con el zopilote en l'anca" (p. 22); to this Juvencio responds:
¿Es acaso responsabilidad nuestra que estos indios aguanten o no el clima? Nuestra obligación consiste en que comparezcan vivos ante el dueño de la finca. Lo que suceda después ya no nos incumbe. (p. 22)

The deception just mentioned is maintained by exploiting Indian beliefs, beliefs which the enganchador holds to be superstition, but useful superstition, since it inspires fear, already noted as a major controlling factor in Ladino-Indian relationships. In "La muerte del tigre" there is a reference to this use of superstition, when Juvencio’s aide warns the Bolometic to reveal their entire name, including their Indian surname, in this case the name of the waigel of the tribe. The fear which causes the Bolometic to obey is the power of the brujo (here Juvencio) over their waigel.

--A ver, chamulas, pónganse en fila. (...) sin decir mentira, chamulas, porque el señor es brujo y los puede dañar. ¿Saben para qué se pone esa visera? Para no lastimarlos con la fuerza de su vista. (p. 22)

A similar threat of coercion is employed by Juvencio in "Aceite guapo" when Daniel comes to request the anticipo for his two sons. Here Juvencio’s threat fails, however, since Daniel feels sure of the help of Santa Margarita.

--¿Sabes lo que te pasará si me estás echando mentira, chamulita? Daniel asintió; sabía que don Juvencio estaba en poder de su nombre verdadero, de su chulel y del waigel de su tribu. Tembló un instante, pero luego se repuso. Junto a los altares de San Juan ya no lo amenazaría ningún riesgo. (p. 41)

The 'atajadora.' This figure appears only once in Ciudad Real, in the fifth story, "Modesta Gómez," whose protagonist of the same name is driven to this extreme of behavior because of the pressures and demands exerted upon a widowed mother of humble origin who has been exploited by
the upper levels of society. The story also reveals some of the resentment felt by the lower class Ladinas towards the women of the Indian communities. Since the immediate causes of Modesta's condition are more the result of her sex than of any association with the Indians, we will consider these causes at a later time when considering Castellanos' portrayal of women. What concerns us here is Modesta as exploiter, not as exploited.

In "El idioma en San Cristobal Las Casas" Castellanos offers the following definition of the atajadora:

El oficio de atajadora (...) consiste en arrebatar a las indígenas los productos que van a vender a la ciudad y arrojarles después unas monedas que no representan un precio equitativo ni menos acordado por las dos partes.

The figure will reappear in Oficio de tinieblas, where it plays a key role in setting up the circumstances of that novel.

We first find Modesta on her way to meet the Indians as they come down from their hillside hamlets early in the fog-laden morning; but we are not quite sure of her reason for being there until we read that "y en cambio vino a parar en atajadora. ¡Qué vueltas da el mundo!" (p. 66) The constant use of associative flashback technique with momentary returns to the chill of this particular morning builds the tension which will shortly be released on the unsuspecting Indian and reveals the number of reasons which Modesta has for turning to the "oficio" of atajadora. Having suffered multiple abuse, both direct and indirect, at the hands of upper class Ladino society, in a final act of despair she turns on the one sector of society considered beneath her in

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33 Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, p. 135.
status—the Indians from the communities surrounding Ciudad Real—in the hope of robbing them of a few objects which she can sell at profit. All that she accomplishes, however, is a ventilation of pent-up feelings, for in the process of attacking an Indian girl, she is heedless of her merchandise, losing the woven goods to a more aggressive atajadora.

The other atajadoras are in a similar economic situation ("otras mujeres, descalzas y mal vestidas como ella." (p. 68)) and they resent the arrival of yet another body to share the meager spoils. One woman reminds Modesta that "la necesedad tiene cara de chucho, pero el oficio de atajadora es amolado. Y da pocas ganancias." (p. 70) But there is a voice for reason in the group which counsels: "—Déjenla (...) Es cristiana como cualquiera y tiene tres hijos que mantener." (p. 68) In effect, Modesta's condition as a poor Ladina with a family to feed entitles her to the despoliation of poor, non-Ladina mothers who have families to feed.

In the course of another flashback we see that the attitude of lower class Ladin as towards the despoliation and exploitation of the Indian is similar on other occasions.

(... para el indio se guardaba la carne podrida o con granos, la gran pesa de plomo que alteraba la balanza y alarido de indignación ante su más mínima protesta. (p. 71)

There being no sector of Ladino society any lower than or more destitute than that in which Modesta and her fellow creatures subsist, all resentment is directed toward the Indian, who, living apart from Ladino society and operating with a different set of values and concepts, is held in disesteem and is abused and exploited by this lowest level of Ladino society just as it in turn has been abused and exploited by high-
er levels of the society.

To the cry of "--Allí vienen ya!" (p. 71) the atajadoras watch the gradual descent of the Indians towards the town; then they move forward and into action.

Las atajadoras se lanzaron contra los indios desordenadamente. Forcejaban, sofocando gritos, por la posesión de un objeto que no debía sufrir deteriorio. Por último, cuando el chamarro de lana o la red de verduras o el utensilio de barro estaban ya en poder de la atajadora, ésta sacaba de entre su camisa unas monedas y, sin contarlas, las dejaba caer al suelo de donde el indio derribado las recogía. (p. 72)

To Modesta falls the task of catching a fleeing girl and relieving her of her merchandise. This she attempts with unexpected zeal, but she directs her feelings towards the girl, forgetting the goods which may help to feed the mouths at home.

Modesta se lanzó hacia la fugitiva. Al darle alcance la asió de la falda y ambas rodaron por tierra. Modesta luchó hasta quedar encima de la otra. Le jaló las trenzas, le golpeó las mejillas, le clavo las uñas en los ojos. ¡Más fuerte! ¡Más fuerte!

--India desgraciada, me lo tenés que pagar todo junto!

La india se retorció de dolor; diez hilillos de sangre le escurrieron de los lóbulos hasta la nuca.

--Ya no, marchanta, ya no....

Enardecida, acezante, Modesta se aferraba a su víctima. No quiso soltarla ni cuando le entregó el chamarro de lana que traía escondido. Tuvo que intervenir otra atajadora. (p. 72)

Modesta has lost today; but having now vented her feelings on the Indian girl, she is initiated into the "oficio de atajadora" and will operate with the head rather than with the heart on the following day.

These descriptions of the atajadora reveal two characteristics of the society of Ciudad Real in general. The first of these is an overbearing pride of culture. A major difference between the atajadora
and the Indian women is that the former belongs to a Europeanized culture, dressing and speaking in manners quite different from those of their Indian sisters. Along with European culture goes also a less-syncretized Catholicism. To these we must add the urban, commercial habitat of the atajadora over against the rural, agricultural setting of the Indian women. These "European" characteristics become exalted as virtues by a segment of the population which finds itself at the base of the social and economic pyramid, and needing to find some sense of self worth, these women compare themselves favorably with the Indian women. This process of exaltation of the European elements in society as the virtues of society is repeated at all levels of society.\footnote{The inhabitants of Ciudad Real are described as possessing "Orgullo de su apellido, de su raza, de su lengua, de su religión: (...)"," (Castellanos, Juicios sumarios, p. 131).} If we recall that Castellanos has described this society as having lived beyond its useful lifetime, the reasons for its search for a raison d'être among its European elements and its definition of self by them will become clear. The other characteristic of this group—and by extension of the society as a whole—is that it recognizes brute force and economic exploitation of those at lower economic or social levels as the sine qua non of life in this area. No attempt to justify this situation is made on legalistic grounds. Even the Church, as we shall see later, resorts to unmasked exploitation and brute force. It is perfectly acceptable that one woman should forcibly relieve another of her merchandise, pay her a sum far less than the value of the merchandise, and then herself resell it at a much higher price. The profit principle is shown here at its most exploitative and dehumanizing extreme.
The 'secretario municipal.' The figure of the secretario municipal appears in "La tregua" and in "El advenimiento del águila," in both of which he also has the role of marchante or expendedor, supplier of necessary goods to the community. Here political power and economic exploitation are combined in the same person, giving rise in "La tregua" to the association of the secretario-expendedor with the figure of the dueño del monte. The predatory nature of the dueño del monte is paralleled in "El advenimiento del águila" by the characterization of the protagonist as águila. The secretario of "La tregua" represents an older society (one pre-dating the reforms of the 1930's) which holds, as we have seen, the surrounding parajes in economic subjection to Ladino interests in the cabecera municipal. The reforms of the 1930's have removed to a great extent the Ladino population of the cabecera municipal of Chamula, theoretically reducing thereby the exploitation of the Chamulas. However, in "El advenimiento del águila" we have an instance of the failure of the agrarian reforms to achieve their desired end, for the community of Tenejapa is a creation of the reforms, but it has as its secretario municipal a ne'er-do-well scion of an old family of Ciudad Real whose prime characteristic in all his doings is unrestrained exploitation. Unused as is the newly created community to self-government, it becomes an easy prey for the new águila-secretario. In both stories the secretarios offer rationalizations for the legitimacy of their actions towards the Indians, in each case basing the rationale on concepts of personal revenge or racial/cultural superiority, characteristics already observable in the actions of the atajadoras and the reasons for these actions. Noticeably lacking in these stories, and for that matter in all of Ciudad Real, is the rape of Indian women,
so common in much indigenista fiction; the secretarios of these stories confine their exploitation to murder and extortion.

Our first acquaintance with Rodolfo López, secretario municipal of Chamula, is made after we have already been familiarized with the droughts, poor harvests, and sundry other ills of the paraje of Mokenjá. As is the case with much indigenista fiction, the introduction of a political figure at this time simply worsens the lot of the Indians. So it happens that López is revealed to us as a man of wrath, jealous of both his political authority and of his franchise on the sale of liquor to the Indians of the community, a callous man who regards the lives of those in his charge as of little worth except as they augment his own income. Castellanos introduces him in this doubly exploitative role.

Because of this "doble recelo," what masquerades as a punitive judiciary expedition is in reality personal vengeance cloaked in the safety of legality. This first becomes apparent in the attitude of López towards the implementation of the law, the imposition of a fine for the illegal distillation of alcohol.

Here we find not only the thirst for vengeance ("para que aprendan...") but a callousness based on feelings of racial superiority; the Indians are not "gente de razón" as the Ladinos are presumed to be. Since the law appears to apply only to rational beings, then the Indians
must be taught a lesson through physical punishment, in much the same way as one would punish a disobedient animal. Since the Indian is said not to be rational, the association with animals is made for us.

Shortly we are made aware of the extent of López' power and thirst for vengeance as he orders the huts of the village burned and then forces those caught inside the burning structures to remain and burn with them. Away from the reach of other Ladino authorities who might question this action, López is tempted to give full vent to his passions and exert his power to the fullest.

Cuando por fin dio con los culpables en Mukenjá, Rodolfo López temblaba de tal manera que no podía articular claramente la condena. (...) el Secretario hablaba no pensando en sus responsabilidades ni en el juicio de sus superiores; estaban demasiado lejos, no iban a fijarse en asuntos de tan poca importancia. La certeza de su impunidad había cebado a su venganza. Y ahora la venganza lo devoraba a él también. Su carne, su sangre, su ánimo, no eran suficientes ya para soportar el ansia de destrucción, de castigo. A señas repetía sus instrucciones a los subordinados. (pp. 31-32)

His thirst for vengeance is only slaked by the smell of burning Indian flesh; he is now satisfied of the efficacy of his lesson and leaves the community contentedly.

Y respiró, con el ansia del que ha estado a punto de asfixiarse, el humo de la carne achicharrada. (...) El Secretario Municipal se retiro de aquel paraje seguro de que el ejemplo trabajaría las consciencias. (p. 32)

Héctor Villafuerte, newly appointed secretario municipal of the community of Tenejapa, is uninterested in work but is in need of money. Accustomed to a life of debauchery among fellow Lados of Ciudad Real, the prospect of periodic isolation among the less cultured Lados and the less-than-human Indians of the community makes for a very negative
reaction in Héctor. This was not the type of position he had hoped his connections would acquire for him.

---¡Aquí te quería yo ver! ---se decía Héctor a sí mismo. Sin con quien hablar, solíngrimo, porque los ladinos de por estos rumbos son unos cualquieras y los indios no son personas. No entienden el cristiano. Agachan la cabeza para decir, sí, patrón; sí, marchante; sí ajwalil. No se alzan ni cuando se embolan. (p. 82)

In much the same tone as that of the atajadora, Héctor complains bitterly about his suffering lot in life. This is especially true with regard to the pay, which he feels in insufficient for having to deal with Indians.

---¡Qué pichicutería la de este Gobierno! ---se lamentaba Héctor---. Quieren que se sostenga uno de milagro. Nada le importa la dignidad del nombramiento. (...) ¡Qué fregar! (p. 83)

Héctor resolves to make the best of a bad bargain by exacting from the community of Tenejapa enormous sums of money for the presumed implementation of the law, in particular the purchase of the all-necessary stamp. Instead of purchasing the official seal, however, we soon learn that Héctor has set himself up as a merchant, from which position he is again able to demand unreasonable sums from the community for his services and goods. The community has been exploited twice over.

Así que en Ciudad Real Héctor compró grandes cantidades de mercancía: víveres, candelas y, especialmente, trago. (...) Ya en Tenejapa, Héctor Villafuerte consiguió un local para abrir su tienda. Aquellos cinco mil pesos (...) fueron la base de su fortuna. Héctor prosperó. (p. 88)

The irony of this story lies in the symbol of the eagle and its double meaning. As we have already mentioned, Héctor is himself characterized as águila:
In keeping with the tradition of oficios, he carries this physical description of himself into practice as the bird that preys upon the unsuspecting Indians of Tenejapa, one that preys on them from the safe heights of legality and their own necessity. But it is in this role of secretario municipal that the other meaning of the symbol of the eagle becomes apparent; for the águila which is inscribed on the seal of office of the secretario is the symbol not only of his office, but also of the Mexican government (the eagle of the coat of arms of Mexico). The government itself is seen to be ironically the force which has set the community of Tenejapa free only to prey upon it through one of its own servants. The high-minded reforms of the Revolution have only kept the Tenejapa Indians in submission; the difference is that the exploiter is no longer the local landlord, but the absentee landlord, the government, in the form of its local representative, the secretario municipal.

The cleric. The exploitative churchman is most properly considered in our study of Oficio de tinieblas, but he does appear in one of the stories of Ciudad Real, "Arthur Smith salva su alma," in which are mentioned the Roman Catholic bishop of Oxchuc, an unnamed Roman Catholic priest, and the Protestant missionaries from the United States established at the community of Ah-tún.

The Roman Catholic bishop is portrayed as interested only in preserving the status quo. To this end he is willing to compromise with "La organización," the American Protestant missionary group, on "zonas
de influencia" (pp. 192-193) in the Oxchuc area. As might be gathered from the use of terms such as "zones of influence," political, colonialist interests are determining factors here.

The other aspect of the Roman Catholic cleric shown to the reader is that in which he stirs up fear among his Indian followers in the hope of keeping their loyalty to the Roman Catholic tradition. This fear is aroused by appealing to native superstitions, the Negro Cimarrón, the flying skeleton, and the Yahualcihuatl, considered earlier. What is important here is the willingness of the Church to maintain its people in superstitious poverty and ignorance while its own hierarchy enjoys widespread wealth and influence. The church, like the rest of Ciudad Real, rules its Indian charges through fear.

Far more important for the story than the Roman Catholic clerics is "la Organización," an American Protestant missionary group which has established itself in the Tzeltal area and is, at the time of the story, challenging the traditional syncretized Catholicism of the local populace. Earmarks of the people of "la Organización" are unwillingness to assimilate, instruction in English, maintenance of traditionally extreme American sanitation standards, and an all-pervasive derision for Mexican and Indian traditions. The proselyte must first become culturally American before he is accepted as a member in full standing of the religious community. Deviation from the straight and narrow traditions of the American community is punished by the CIA, who consider that their role in Mexico is dual: to modernize a "backward" society and thus prevent the spread of Communism, and to save souls for the American religion, Protestantism. Like his Roman Catholic counterparts, the Protestant chief missionary is more than willing to settle for poli-
tical compromise and zones of influence. Also like his Roman Catholic colleagues, he brings to his relationships with Indians an overbearing pride of culture and a rule through fear, here the fear of the CIA rather than local superstition. The protestant missionary thus possesses all the traditional elements of control of the more established Roman Catholic Church, but is a foreign element out of its habitat bent on a doomed course of cultural coercion.

III. Portrayal of Female Characters

A. Woman as exploited resource

The figure of the exploited woman is developed in two stories of *Ciudad Real*: "Modesta Gómez, and "El advenimiento del águila." In both these stories the women are Ladinas.

The eponymous protagonist of "Modesta Gómez" is obliged to leave home at an early age and to take employment as a servant in the home of a wealthy mercantile family. From her entry into the Ochoa household until we find her as an atajadora at the end of the story, Modesta's inferior social status is constantly reiterated: her hair, alive with lice, signals poor living conditions prior to entering the Ochoa household; although of the same age as the son of the house (whose companion she is), hers is an inferior role ("era ella la cargadora, la que debía cuidarlo y entretenelo." (p. 64)) which precludes her addressing her companion as "vos;" she later works as a serving girl at a local meat market where she waits on "criadas de casa rica" who demand the finest cuts at the lowest prices and otherwise verbally abuse her; her presence at the bottom of the Ladino social scale among the atajadoras emphasizes her ultimate degradation and desperation.
As a social inferior Modesta is open to abuse and exploitation. The first evidence of this exploitation appears in her childhood relationship with Jorgito Ochoa. Initially Modesta is the object against which Jorgito turns his frustrations and against which his mother directs her own displeasure at her son's discomfiture. Modesta appears as an object to be used by her social superiors to remove blame from themselves or from their family. There is no regard for her person.

As a young woman Modesta is doubly exploitable, for in addition to her inferior social position, her woman's anatomy provides her young master with further opportunity for exploitation and abuse. Her sexuality when coupled with inferior social status, will prove her undoing and will precipitate her fall to the position of atajadora. As accustomed as is Jorgito to a readily submissive companion (who has previously experienced the wrath of both son and mother for non-compliance with Jorgito's wishes), he now relies on these former patterns of behavior to provide an equally readily submissive sexual partner. He asserts his virility in the knowledge that Modesta will not resist and Modesta once more becomes the object of her superior's satisfaction.
mujeres dormían a pierna suelta. En una cicatriz del hombro Modesta reconoció a Jorgito. No quiso defenderse más. Cerró los ojos y se sometió. (p. 66)

This late-night violation of Modesta is repeated several times and the mere frequency of the act causes Jorgito to attempt to avert the suspicions of his family by adopting an unusually abusive attitude towards Modesta in the presence of others. Modesta is thus sexually abused and then verbally abused as recompense for having provided Jorgito with an initiation into manhood. Whereas in the past she had been abused for not acceding to Jorgito's demands, she is now abused for just such an accession.

Gracias a la violación de Modesta, Jorgito pudo alardear de hombre hecho y derecho. (...) Lo único que le preocupaba era que su familia llegara a enterarse de sus relaciones. Para disimularlas trataba a Modesta, delante de todos, con despego y hasta con exagerada severidad. Pero en las noches buscaba otra vez ese cuerpo conocido por la costumbre y en el que se mezclaban olores domésticos y reminiscencias infantiles. (p. 67)

The attitude which condones this use of women of inferior social condition to educate men of higher class, is readily apparent in the thoughts of Jorgito's mother. She excuses Jorgito's behavior as natural to men and prefers that his sexual education take place at home rather than in the streets.

Doña Romelia sospechaba algo de los tejemanejes de su hijo y los chismes de la servidumbre acabaron de sacarla de dudas. Pero decidió hacerse la desentendida. Al fin y al cabo Jorgito era un hombre, no un santo; (...) Y de que se fuera con las gaviotas (...) era preferible que encontrara sosiego en su propia casa. (pp. 66-67)

Once it becomes clear that Modesta is pregnant, she again becomes the object of abuse, this time for having brought disgrace upon the Ochoa household. As on previous occasions, all blame is laid
squarely at Modesta's feet even though Jorgito initiated the act and his mother condoned it. For the sake of family honor Modesta is cast into the street.

Modesta's subsequent marriage to a poor carpenter in the hope of legitimizing Jorgito's child seems only to worsen her condition, for although she now has the status of a legitimate wife, this achievement is offset by the frequent beatings of a drunken husband who regularly reminds her of her disgrace at the hands of Jorgito Ochoa. With the death of the husband Modesta finds herself without status and with three mouths to feed.

Verdad que en sus borracheras el albañil le pegaba, echándole en cara el abuso de Jorgito, y verdad que su muerte fue la humillación más grande para su familia. Pero Alberto había valido a Modesta en la mejor ocasión: cuando todos le voltearon la cara para no ver su deshonra. Alberto le había dado su nombre y sus hijos legítimos, la había hecho una señora. ¡Cuántas de estas mendigas enlutadas, que ahora murmuraban a su costa, habrían vendido su alma al demonio por poder decir lo mismo! (p. 70)

Having been dismissed from one household in disgrace, the possibility of work as servant is closed to her. She takes work at a meat market where she is once more abused by "criadas de casa rica," who in effect continue the same abuse by upper classes which she suffered previously.

Since she cannot earn enough at the meat market, Modesta turns to the work of an atajadora to supplement her income. As we have seen, her position as atajadora finally allows her to vent her feelings on the one class which is perennially beneath her, the communal Indian women. Ironically, Modesta adopts an attitude which removes any individuality from the Indian girl whom she attacks; the Indian becomes, as Modesta has been, the object of exploitation, of the venting of per-
sonal frustrations of a social superior.

As we have mentioned earlier, the women of "El advenimiento del águila" are primarily catalysts in the development of the rapacious protagonist. They are the passive victims of exploitation of class, sex and wealth, an exploitation achieved in all cases by their adherence to outmoded or unrealistic female roles.

The first victim is the widowed mother of the protagonist. Having raised a spoiled child to believe that his ancient Castillian lineage precludes honest hard labor, Héctor's mother soon finds herself obliged to sell many family heirlooms in order to remove the dishonor to the family caused by gambling debts incurred by Héctor. The gradual depletion of family wealth eventually removes from Héctor's mother any will to live; she dies penniless, exploited to the end by her son.

La viuda luchó, hasta el fin, para defender a los santos del oratorio de los despilfarros de su hijo. Cuando el oratorio quedó vacío la anciana renunció a continuar viviendo. Su muerte fue cortés: sin un arrebato, sin un desmelenamiento. Parientes lejanos, señoras caritativas hicieron una colecta para pagar los gastos del funeral. (p. 79)

Since Héctor's source of money is finished, he now seeks any woman who can supply him with the necessary funds, in return for which he will keep her pregnant and "en su rincón" (p. 80). While most girls have sense enough to avoid a known lout, there is one, Emelina Tovar, whose isolation from men, partially due to her personality, makes her a vulnerable object, all the more so since she is reputed to be wealthy.

Hubo, sin embargo, una mujer sin parientes, sin perro que le ladrase; con sólo una señora de respeto para cuidar la casa y las apariencias, pero en lo demás, libre. Un poco tullidita, ya pasada de tueste. De ceño grave y un pliegue amargo en los labios. Jamás hombre alguno se había acercado a ella, pues, aunque tuviese fama de rica, la tenía más de avara. (p. 80)
The marriage to Emelina is fraught with troubles, particularly for the bride. That Héctor's interest in her is one of economic exploitation is clear from his absence from the marital bed and his frustration at not finding his wife's proverbial fortune.

Si Emelina no hubiese estado enamorada de Héctor acaso habría sido feliz. Pero su amor era una llaga siempre abierta, que el ademán más insignificante y la más insignificante acción del otro, hacían sangrar. Se revolcaba de celos y desesperación en su lecho frecuentemente abandonado. A un pájaro de la cuenta de Héctor no le basta el alpiste. Rompe la jaula y se va.

A todo esto el recién casado no lograba ver claro. ¿Y el dinero de su mujer? Revolvía cofres, levantaba colchones, excavaba agujeros en el sitio. Nada. La muy mañosa lo tenía bien escondido, si es que lo tenía. (pp. 81-82)

Accustomed to spending money without regard for its source or the possibility of its end, Héctor is unaware that he has already depleted such money as his wife may have had until it is all gone. Since his marriage has not brought him the money necessary to maintain his style of living, Héctor feels trapped in the marriage and experiences a great sense of relief when his wife dies in childbirth.

Se acabó. Emelina no pudo soportar un mal parto, que su edad hizo imposible. Y Héctor quedó solo, milagrosamente libre otra vez. Y en la calle. (p. 82)

It is then that Héctor acquires the position of secretario municipal and directs his exploitation at the Indians. When he does remarry, not only can he pick his girl for her traditionally submissive feminine characteristics, but he can also request a healthy dowry. Thus, in this second marriage, Héctor continues the exploitation of woman for financial gain, adding to this a great sense of power, power over both the Indians and an inexperienced wife.
B. Women and the feminine myth

"La niña Nides" of "Cuarta vigilia" reveals several characteristics of the feminine myth as outlined by Wolf. Her unyielding adherence to these principles produces a tortured and unproductive person totally out of touch with the reality which surrounds her. As such she is the continuation of a type introduced in Balún-Canán and elaborated in the stories of Los convidados de agosto and Albúm de familia. The story is related to others in Ciudad Real in that Nides' adherence to the feminine myth causes the senseless murder of an Indian worker.

The first characteristic of the myth which Nides reveals is innocence.

Porque la niña Nides, como le dijera desde que nació, era distinta de las otras. Ni fue traviesa de criatura, ni loca de muchacha. No andaba el día entero asomándose a los balcones, ni se rellenaba el busto con puñados de algodón, como sus primas, para ir a los bailes. Nunca se ocupó de disimular sus defectos. (p. 94)

She later reveals a great passivity and resignation, rejecting the usual attentions of young men and the possibility of marriage in favor of the constant company of her miserly grandmother who counsels her to wait until she inherits the grandmother's wealth before marrying.

In place of her social activities we find that Nides has a great fondness for playing with her grandmother's wealth. This fascination reveals the childlike quality of the adherent to the myth.

Sus diversiones eran otras. Cuando la abuela y ella se quedaban ingrías en el caserón, abrían los cofres para contar el dinero. ¡Con qué ruidito tan especial se rasgaba el papel de los cartuchos y se iban desparramando las monedas en su regazo! ¡Cómo pesaban allí! ¡Y qué olor agrio y penetrante emanaba de ellas! (p. 95)

To these characteristics Nides adds a lack of mental activity.
reflected first in her constant adherence to her grandmother's actions and counsel. Just how unthinking she becomes as a woman is revealed in her ritual murder and burial of a Chamula Indian as her grandmother had earlier done. This is done in order to hide a chest which at one time held gold and silver but which now contains only baubles, a fact known to Nides but apparently obliterated by the stronger urge to follow her grandmother's dictum to save the chest. Nides blindly follows her grandmother's every example, never thinking for herself and thus rejecting any authenticity of character.

Alicia, the protagonist of "La rueda del hambriento," represents an early attempt by Castellanos at a presentation of the "virgen fuer-te," that is, the woman who must choose marriage to a man or to the Church or remain a lonely, unmarried professional woman. We learn early that Alicia feels she has no chance at the first two options. "¡Como si fuera fácil! Para monja no tenía vocación y para casada le faltaba el novio." (p. 106) Her lack of a boyfriend she attributes to her less than beautiful looks.

Spoiled by her godmother, whose constant companion she is, Alicia postpones any decision on her future by putting her entire effort into caring for her godmother, especially after the latter begins to die from the ravages of cancer. Her role as nurse to her godmother at one and the same time illustrates her self-negating nature and provides her with an answer to the question of her future life: having tended her dying godmother, she has learned much about routine nursing; she will therefore go as a nurse to the jungles of Chiapas to help the unfortunate.

Alicia's introduction to the world of Chiapas shatters the sen-
timental and unrealistic world in which she has hitherto lived. This world of fantasy is first illustrated in a reference to her godmother's indulgences. "Para compensarla en algo, su madrina le compraba vestidos y alhajas de fantasía." (pp. 106-107) The element of fantasy is continued in Alicia's confident prayers for her godmother's recovery.

Pero Alicia tenía fe en los milagros y confió, hasta el fin, en que su madrina se aliviaría. Santa Rita de Casia, abogada de los imposibles, ¿qué no lograría hacer? (p. 107)

Upon arriving in Chiapas, Alicia discovers that the jungle is quite unlike the image she had of it, an image based on that of tropical, colonial settings projected in motion pictures.

Cuando le dijeron que iría a Chiapas pensó inmediatamente en la selva, los bungalows con ventiladores—como en las películas—, los grandes refrescos helados. En cambio ese frío, esta niebla, estas cabañas de tejamanil... ¡Qué lástima! La ropa que se había comprado no iba a servirle para nada. (p. 106)

Alicia gradually moves towards the adoption of values quite unlike those with which she was raised, a situation forced upon her by the often brutal realities of the Indian world of the Chiapas Highlands. Here, where different values pertain, she cannot rely only on precepts learned in childhood. Rather, she is obliged to make her own decisions, establish new priorities and values; she is obliged to develop her own personality, to articulate her own self instead of conforming to a predetermined mold. The story closes on an uncertain note as Alicia ponders a new set of values and a new sense of her own worth. She is offered a chance at authenticity.

IV. Conclusions

In Chapter Three we have illustrated Castellanos' use of Mayan
mythology and superstition to describe the present impasse in relations between Indian and Ladino. We have also noted the structure of Ladino society and its propensity for revering the past and exploiting present social conditions. Lastly, we have noted the exploited nature of Ladina women in these stories.

The Indians and the Ladino men and women of these stories share a common tendency to legitimize present social conditions by enshrining them in myth. This tendency assures that Ladino society will continue its control and exploitation of the Indians unchecked; similarly, Ladino men will continue their exploitation of their women with little fear of change. In the instance of Ladino-Indian relationships and in that of male-female relationships within Ladino society, to challenge the social system means challenging the supernatural order. To prevent this, fear and ignorance are the tools of control.

Having established that the stories of Ciudad Real are both in technique and in content the sketches from which Oficio de tinieblas would later emerge, we propose to examine in the next chapter the author's most successful presentation of individual Indian characters, of Ladino society, and the portrayal of women as they confront certain aspects of their culture's stereotype of femininity. We will note the presence in Oficio de tinieblas of some aspects of these elements which are absent from Ciudad Real but which were present in Balún-Canán.
Chapter IV

OFICIO DE TINIEBLAS

Oficio de tinieblas, Castellanos' second and last published novel appeared in 1962 and was immediately hailed both as a great improvement over the author's first novel, Balún-Canán, and as one of a new trend in Mexican fiction, the novel of the betrayed Revolution.¹ The novel closes the circle of Castellanos' Indianist fiction and elaborates the same basic themes found in Balún-Canán. These themes are approached in a much more sophisticated manner, using elements only hinted at in the first novel and techniques refined in the stories of Ciudad Real.

The novel takes its title from the Tenebrae Service, a traditional Good Friday office commemorating the crucifixion and death of Christ, and refers here to the crucifixion of an Indian boy by the Chamula Indians during the Cuscat revolt of the latter half of the nineteenth century. This revolt, slightly modified and made to coincide with the agrarian reforms of President Cárdenas, is the principal narrative thread of the novel.² The seed of the revolt in Oficio de tinieblas...
bias is present in the first novel in the recollections of Felipe Carranza Pech, to which we have referred.

The darkness mentioned in the title of the novel becomes a major leitmotiv of the work, often appearing at the end of a chapter. As the novel progresses, references to darkness increase and the entire work ends on the words "Faltaba mucho tiempo para que amaneciera."

(p. 368)\(^3\) Darkness takes many forms other than frequent references to night. It appears as a voluntary shutting of the eyes, as a deliberate turning from a lighted area to take refuge in darkened corners, as the drawing of curtains to keep out the light of day, all in order to avoid an unpleasant reality. Enhancing the theme of darkness is the retreat by Catalina and her followers to a cave shrine, an appropriate abode of the Tzotzil Maya, whose name, Castellanos informs us, means "murciélago" or bat. In light of Castellanos' use of "oficio" in our study of Ciudad Real, the title "oficio de tinieblas" is readily seen here to refer to the regular exercise of oppression of the Indians by the Ladino landholders. Two further readings of the title suggested by the content are 1) the Indians' feeble steps towards justice and decency and 2) the very real lack of communication between groups, the subsequent distortion of reality, and the failure to agree on a common truth.

There remain several constants from Balún-Canán: the rapacious Ladino landowner and his insecure wife; the young Ladina daughter tortured by divided loyalties; the justice-seeking Indian man who has met Cárdenas but who is oblivious to his wife's concerns; the barren Indian

\(^3\) Rosario Castellanos, Oficio de tinieblas (Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1962). All references are to the second edition and only pagination is given.
wife living in dread of repudiation. There are, however, two major departures from Balún-Canán: the Indian revolt and the agrarian reforms fail and the Ladino landlord remains victorious; the barren Indian wife breaks with the submissive role assigned to her and seeks authenticity of personality in her role of ilol or priestess and as the instigator of a rebellion to free her people from the Ladino yoke.

In presenting the Indian, Castellanos uses techniques already noted in the first three stories of Ciudad Real. That is to say, she abandons the use of the child narrator of Balún-Canán in favor of the use of cultural determinants and the free admixture of myth and historic fact to achieve a sense of timelessness and ambiguity. Indeed, the historically dated revolt of the Chamulas, the climax of the drama in the novel, is seen in the last chapters to pass into the realm of folk myth, achieving a great sense of the continuity of the past and present of the Indian.

The female characters of the novel are more numerous, more varied and more developed than those of the previous one, though they remain beset by essentially the same problems as before. The predominance of the personality of the barren Indian woman, Catalina Díaz Puiljá, brings together both Indianist and feminist polemics.

In terms of structure and narrative technique the novel is rich and varied. There is ample use of claroscuro technique involving contrasts of light and dark, innocence and depravity, myth and history, appearance and reality, hope and failure, spirituality and carnality, all of which enhances the basic conflicts of Ladino and Indian, and of men and women and whose net result is a deep sense of desengaño, of having been deceived and defrauded. This basic claroscuro construction
is enhanced by frequent interior monologue, flashback and the incorporation of folk myth. The extensive use of parallel and contrasting figures removes from situations of Ladino-Indian conflict the consideration of the Ladino as the only exploiter and the view of the Indian as the sole victim. The gradual blending of seemingly separate narrative threads into one complex design suggests a strong influence on Castellanos of the Russian novel. Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, especially the sense of timelessness achieved in that novel, hovers in the background of Castellanos' work. As mentioned in the Introduction, our author was familiar with both the Russian tradition in the novel and with Mann's work.

I. Presentation of the Indian

In *Oficio de tinieblas* Castellanos relies for her presentation of the Indian on two approaches previously employed in *Balún-Canán* and in *Ciudad Real*. In this second novel the author achieves such a level of perfection in the use of these two approaches that she virtually removes any sense of strangeness from the Indian characters and from their world view and achieves a considerably greater development of individual characters than was possible in her earlier works. The two approaches are 1) the presentation of what we have called the mystic sense of the Indian, and 2) the presentation of Indian characters in situations other than those of Ladino-Indian conflict.

A. The mystic sense of the Indian

The author establishes the world view of the Chamula Indians in the opening chapter of the novel through the recounting of the history of the church of San Juan, el Fiador, patron saint of Chamula. This
legend, told in language reminiscent of the Popol-Vuh and of modern oral tradition, is offered as verifiable truth:

Así como se cuentan sucedieron las cosas desde sus orígenes. No es mentira. Hay testimonios. Se leen en los tres arcos de la puerta de entrada del templo, desde donde se despe el sol. (p. 10)

The legend establishes a supernatural cause for all things, but of particular interest is that it provides a supernatural cause for the inferior social condition of the Indian with respect to the Ladino. The legend records "balbuceo confuso, párpados abiertos, brazos desmayados en temeroso ademan" (p. 9) as characteristic of the Indian; of his language it is said that "se dice (...) en sueños" (p. 9). This weak Indian, who uses only his hands, neglecting his mind, is unable to build the church for San Juan. To achieve this end "fue necesario que más tarde vinieran otros hombres" (p. 9), the Ladinos. These men are portrayed as brutal, metallic and assertive; their ability lies not in their hands but in their language, their speech: "Llevaban el sol en la cara y hablaban lengua altiva, lengua que sobrecoge el corazón de quien escucha." (p. 9) The Spanish language becomes "ferreo instrumento de señorío, arma de conquista, punta del látigo de la ley." (p. 9) Only in Spanish does one admonish, give sentence or reward. (p. 9)

Similarly, the supernatural authority of the legend accounts for the importance of the community of San Juan Chamula and for the hierarchy of ceremonial offices through which harmony is maintained between man and the supernatural.

Having established the veracity and authority of the supernatural, Castellanos is now free to introduce a wide range of elements whose validity and importance might otherwise not be accepted by the
reader. These elements include dreams, trances, premonitions, unusual coincidences and witchcraft. All but the last of these are common narrative techniques which an author uses as a technique for character development; in Castellanos' novel they cease to be mere techniques and become accepted manifestations of the supernatural. As such they lend credence to the two major elements of the supernatural which are vital to the narrative: 1) the acceptance by the Indians of Chamula of the supernatural powers of Catalina Díaz Puiljá, ilol or bruja, and 2) the need felt by Catalina and others to acquire supernatural help in carrying out their war of rebellion against the Ladinós.

Both Catalina's means to power and the nature of that power are offered directly by the author early in the narrative.

Así para Catalina fue nublándose la luz y quedó confinada en un mundo sombrío, regido por voluntades arbitrarias. Y aprendió a aplacar estas voluntades cuando eran adversas, a excitarlas cuando eran propicias, a trastocar sus signos. Repitió embrutecedoras letanías. Intacta y delirante atravesó corriendo entre las llamas. Era ya de las que se atreven a mirar de frente el misterio. Una "ilol" cuyo regazo es arcoño de los conjuros. Temblaba aquél a quien veía con mal ceño; iba reconfortado aquél a quien sonreía. (p. 13)

These powers, and the respect and position which they command, are shortly attested to by a group of women who accompany Catalina to Ciudad Real.

Aunque todas conocían el camino ninguna se atrevió a dar un paso que no fuera en seguimiento de la ilol. Se notaba en los gestos expectantes, rápidamente obedientes, ansiosamente solícitos, que aquellas mujeres la acataban como superior. No por el puesto que ocupaba su marido, (...) sino por la fama que transfiguraba a Catalina ante los ánimas temerosos, desdichados, ávidos de congraciarse con lo sobrenatural. (p. 14)

The occurrence of the unexpected lends credence to Catalina's
powers as an ilol. Two such occurrences are offered by a former religious official of the community. The first ascribes to Catalina powers sufficient to outwit her Ladino jailers:

---Es una ilol. Ni los mismos ladinos pudieron dominarla. Estaba en la cárcel y de repente ninguno de los guardianes pudo mantener cerradas las puertas. Y nuestra comadre Catalina y las otras mujeres que estaban presas salieron volando hasta su paraje. ¿Y así te la querías echar de enemiga? Tiene mucha fuerza de ilol. (p. 254)

The second bit of information raises her further in rank, ascribing to her the birth of stone statues which now adorn the shrine over which she presides.

---Dicen (...) que cuando los santos nacieron la ilol estaba sucia de barro y no de sangre, como las otras hembras. Y que los santos nacieron ya de la edad que tienen. (p. 254)

The need for acquiring supernatural help prior to launching the Indian rebellion against the Ladinós of Ciudad Real appears to be predicated on the Chamulas' view of Ladino society as organized in much the same fashion as their own, a fact not lost on the Ladinós. The Chamulas feel no need to protect themselves from any Ladino attack since their patron, San Juan, has made them invulnerable to bullets and similar mortal weapons.

---Las tropas van a llegar.
¡Cómo? En los caminos cada piedra se convertiría en un guardián, cada peña en un obstáculo, cada arboleda en un ejército. Tal es el poder de San Juan, cuyo doble está en el cielo y vigila cuando la imagen de Chamula descansa. (p. 305)

In addition to San Juan, security is offered by the Bolonchón, the jaguar-serpent who assures the perpetuation of the Chamulas.

(...)

---el Bolonchón, la danza del tigre y la culebra, las
metamorfosis del dios, de pronto reconocible en un animal al que los ojos están acostumbrados. En ese animal que preside los nacimientos, que acompaña y fortalece la vida, que despoja de su horror a la muerte. El Bolonchón, continuo, igual inacabable.

¿Qué puede, contra lo que los dioses han dispuesto, la voluntad humana? (p. 302)

Although the Ladinos by themselves are helpless against such well-protected Indians, they do have supernatural assistance in the form of the Virgen de la Caridad, who, when carried in procession, has always given the victory to the Ladinos. Thus, when the Chamulas learn that "La Virgen de la Caridad está en su camarín, dentro de la iglesia" (p. 305), their spirits are raised. Fear of her possible appearance in procession, however, prompts the Chamulas to seek greater power in the crucifixion of a young Indian boy in the belief that this living Christ (The boy's name is Domingo) will be stronger than the Virgen de la Caridad and the dead Christ which the Ladinos worship.

After the establishment of the validity of the supernatural, Castellanos' second means of portraying the mystic sense of the Indian is in the illustration of his concepts of time, of myth, and of history, all interrelated in the mind of the Chamulas.

For the Chamula Indians time past appears to be divided into two strains, one functional, the other mytho-historic. Throughout the novel the Indians readily distinguish yesterday from last summer and from the time of their childhood. However, when seeking to pass on that oral tradition which accounts for the present condition of the community and of its supernatural elements they rely on the eventual alteration of earlier tradition by the gradual incorporation of elements from subsequent events. The result, to non-Indian eyes, is the creation of a
highly syncretized mytho-history which is cyclical in nature and which, because of the ever repeating cycles, suggests a timeless constancy.

Castellanos, in order to achieve the Indian's sense of time and mytho-history, frames the entire novel in chapters which deal primarily with myth. In the initial chapter of the novel the author offers a mythic account of the origins and structure of the community of San Juan Chamula. The account moves from a general mytho-history to an outline of the socio-political organization of the community and then to the introduction of individual characters. In this account a supernatural being who still exhibits Indian attributes ("estuvo presente cuando aparecieron por primera vez los mundos; (...) dio el sí de la afirmación para que echara a caminar el siglo; uno de los pilares que sostienen firme lo que está firme, (...) (p. 9)) is known by his post-Conquest Spanish name of San Juan, Fiador. Likewise we learn of the presence in pre-Conquest Chamula of white sheep (which the deity turns to stone to build his church), an element introduced by the Spanish after the Conquest.

As we indicated earlier in our consideration of Castellanos' presentation of the supernatural, this myth also accounts for existing social relationships between Ladino and Indian. If we look closer at the nature of these relationships we note a cyclical pattern of effort and failure.

Y ellos [los caxlanes] con la cabeza y los indios con las manos, dieron principio a la construcción de un templo. De día cavaban la zanja para cimentar pero de noche la zanja volvía a rasarse. De día alzaban el muro y de noche el muro se derrumbaba. (p. 10)

Due to the repetitious nature of this cyclical concept of time, the
distinction among past effort and failure, present effort and failure and similar future patterns is blurred or lost. The condition is seen as one that has always existed in an eternal present.

[Los chamulas] han abolido el tiempo que los separaba de las edades pretéritas. No existe ni antes ni hoy. Es siempre. Siempre la derrota y la persecución. Siempre el amo que no se aplaca con la obediencia más abyecta ni con la humildad más servil. Siempre el látigo cayendo sobre la espalda sumisa. Siempre el cuchillo cercenando el ademán de insurrección. (p. 362)

By the end of the novel it becomes apparent that the events of the novel themselves have passed into folk myth and that the cycle has begun again. The Indian revolt led by Catalina Díaz Puiljá and by her husband Winiktón has ceased to exist in the memory of the Chamulas. However, the last portrayal of the Indians is one in which all are gathered in a cave reverencing an item left over from the Puiljá-Winiktón revolt, a scene which recalls similar gatherings in similar caves presided over by Catalina Díaz Puiljá prior to the revolt.

Following this account of the community of the Chamulas is a tale told by the Indian nurse Teresa, a tale which re-tells the prime elements of the novel in highly mythologized fashion and which begins:

——En otro tiempo——no habías nacido tú, criatura; acaso tampoco habría nacido yo——hubo en mi pueblo, según cuentan los ancianos, una ilol de gran virtud. (p. 366)

Here, events of the novel have been altered and brought into accord with the results of the Ladino victory over the rebels.

B. Multifaceted Indian Characters

Castellanos offers several Indian characters whose personality is relatively complex; even minor Indian characters tend to stand out in
some relief against the vague background of the community. A prime ingredient in achieving this complexity of character is the introduction of the feminist theme and its development here to a much greater degree than in the author's earlier works. Since it is the condition of woman which determines the character of many of the female characters, their development will be handled in our consideration of feminism. We will concentrate here only on the two outstanding Indian male characters, Pedro González Winiktón, the husband of the ilol Catalina, and the sacristan, Xaw Ramírez Paciencia. Winiktón is driven by a ceaseless desire to find justice. In the course of this search he takes the ceremonial post of juez, part of the function of which is the settling of disputes. The job is fraught with two problems: settling petty disputes is not what Winiktón seeks in the name of justice, and the cost of the position sets the family back at least a year economically. Winiktón does profit from his experience, however, for he discovers the need to better the lot of the community, a discovery reinforced by his meeting President Cárdenas and hearing him associate justice and land reform. What began as a personal search for justice and grew to service within the community now develops into service to the community by dealing with agents of the Mexican government.

As was the case with his prototype, Felipe Carranza Pech of Balún-Canán, Winiktón's all-absorbing search for justice leads him away from home and puts both economic and emotional strains on an already uneasy union. His tendency to silence has always left his wife in constant anticipation of repudiation for her childlessness; Winiktón's newly acquired interest and the economic strain from the time lost from cultivation drive the couple further apart. Not until towards the end
of the novel do the two unite in a common cause: leadership of the revolt against the Ladinos; Winiktōn to provide the temporal leadership and Catalina, the supernatural.

Again like his prototype of Balún-Canán, Winiktōn is an isolated individual. On the one hand he is suspect by his own community for spending too much time with non-Indians and for having acquired their ways. On the other hand, his Ladino associates are never sure that Winiktōn understands what has been said. Winiktōn's dilemma is seen most clearly in his role as interpreter between the government agents and the Chamulas. Winiktōn's knowledge of Spanish is poor; two phrases seem to dominate his vocabulary: "justicia" and "el papel que habla." Both concepts are not readily understood by the Indians; justice, because there is no such concept separate from the will of the gods and from vengeance; Ladino law, especially the agrarian reform laws ("el papel que habla") because written law is non-existent in Chamula society and because it is offered by a Ladino, a suspect being by nature.

Winiktōn is in the peculiar position of understanding many Ladino references but being unable to communicate these to his community in an acceptable form. In Chapter XXXI he attempts to speak about action being taken by the Governor of Chiapas to halt Ladino punitive raids on the Chamulas. The elders of the region, when they hear the work "governor," dismiss him as some strange Ladino to whom they have been forced to listen on occasion. The discomfort of the occasion blurs their idea of an already vague concept. Of the President of the Republic they know only that he is "algo más que el gobernador." (p. 303)

Even more of a problem than that of the conceptualization faced by Winiktōn as he moves from one language to another is the continuance
of Ladino harrassment of the community, for this discredits Winiktón's belief that there is really a positive aspect to Ladino law. Winiktón is unable to disassociate the terms "ley" and "látigo" in the minds of his fellow Chamulas. Finally yielding to the Indians' pressure to take their lands back by force, Winiktón eventually becomes a leader of the marauding bands. His solitude remains, however, since he now rejects his Ladino advisors as false and appears to blame them for his condition of nepantla.

Like Winiktón, Xaw Remírez Paciencia is isolated from both his own community and from the Ladino world. As sacristan to the church of San Juan Chamula he occupies a middle ground between the traditional ceremonial religious hierarchy of the community and the new Ladino priest, a religious purist possessed of a strong antipathy towards Indians. Xaw is disliked and distrusted by the priest, Manuel Mandujano, because he is an Indian and because of his tolerance of the local "additions" to church ritual. Xaw's willingness to be of service to the new priest isolates him from his traditional associates. Enhancing this sense of isolation is a sense of helplessness as Xaw watches the gradual collapse of the religious hierarchy which he has headed.

Xaw seeks solace in drink and in an even closer attachment to Mandujano, but when the latter and his followers are slain and sacrificed to Catalina's idols, Xaw once more finds himself alone. He now identifies with the Ladino authorities and is instrumental in destroying temporarily the cult and the power of Catalina Díaz Puiljú, a force which had been as great a challenge to the traditional religious hierarchy as Mandujano's callous reforms. By the end of the novel Xaw, having learned to distrust Ladinos, joins forces with Catalina and Winiktón and

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initiates the rebellion with the crucifixion of the young Domingo.

II. Ladino society

The society of Ciudad Real as Castellanos depicts it in *Oficio de tinieblas* shares many of the ills which beset the Indian community of San Juan Chamula. Ladino women feel isolated from their husbands and lovers; single-minded husbands and lovers are oblivious to their women's needs; young women are reduced to objects of use for personal gain.

There are also similarities in world view represented by the close relationship of the supernatural (the church) to the state in the Ladino mind.

What sets Ciudad Real apart from the Indian community is its dominant position as exploiter. Having achieved a position of superiority over the Indians of the area, this exploitation is institutionalized and now affects not only the communal Indians but also elements of Ladino society itself, most notably women.

The exploitative nature of the society of Ciudad Real and its agents of exploitation are revealed to us in the first chapter of the novel and contrast sharply with the passive nature of the Indians as revealed in the opening paragraphs of the narrative. Here, the *atajadora*, a group of ruffians familiar to us from Ciudad Real, attack the Indian women, forcing them to the ground and relieving them of their goods. In return the Indians are given a few coins, much less than the value of their merchandise. One survivor of this Indian group, Marcela Gómez Oso, is then confronted by a procuress, Mercedes Solórzano, who offers to buy her wares. Lured inside a house, Marcela meets the third exploiter, the *macho*, Leonardo Cifuentes, who rapes her, the rape being
the payment promised by Mercedes.

In these few scenes Castellanos introduces the despoliation of both Indians and women by a very virile, ruthless and pleasure-oriented representative of the ruling elite of Ciudad Real. The figure of Leonardo Cifuentes, the predatory male, continues the association of Indians and women as exploitable goods by frequently likening Indians to animals, particularly dull-witted draft animals who must be completely controlled by their patrón. The analogy is extended to women in Cifuentes' relationship with Julia Acevedo, "la Alazana" (the sorrel) whom he on occasion reduces to total submission through sexual exhaustion. On just such occasions Cifuentes returns to this theme of Indians as animals.

Ciudad Real is determined to resist change. To achieve this end it will consciously alter the reality of a given circumstance and in so doing it offers something of a parallel with Indian views of reality. Summarizing the potential of this activity is the local proverb which says that "Más vale creerlo que averiguarlo" (p. 276). The fate of the government land reform agent, Fernando Ulloa, and that of the Indian uprising will serve to illustrate this point.

Ulloa is resented for two reasons: his work with the Indians and his passive role with women. In effect, he challenges the two bases of Ciudad Real society. His stature as a man is questioned by Cifuentes' conquest of Julia, Ulloa's wife. His efforts at land reform are undermined by altering the reality that surrounds him. First his aide leaves due to "witchcraft." Ulloa himself is shortly deprived of a livelihood when he is dismissed from his teaching position on charges of immorality and sedition. The accusations rest only in rumor. He now
goes to live with the Chamulas, thus exposing himself to further charges of sedition. Even the circumstances of his death are altered for the protection of local interests. The official report offered to the Governor is that, while awaiting transportation to Mexico City, he tried to escape and was killed. This version contradicts Cifuentes' personal account in which the townspeople are allowed to tear Ulloa limb from limb.

Alteration of reality for the protection of the status quo is most clearly seen in responses to the Indian uprising. Father Manuel Mandujano is the first to react to activity in the Indian community. Here it is his position as religious leader which is challenged. Invoking the argument that a challenge to the supernatural order is a challenge to the social order, Mandujano brands the cult of the idols sedition. Several Indians are arrested but are later freed. This violence on the part of the Ladinos produces counter measures in the slaying of Mandujano and his escort. Ladino society has thus forced the first of its lies to become truth. The death of this group of Ladinos is now referred to as a major uprising. Ciudad Real reacts by dissolving the cabildo and selecting a defender, Cifuentes, who is given supernatural authority by the blessing of the bishop. For weeks rumors circulate that the Indians are on their way to attack the city, yet no Indians are seen. Sudden deaths, rapes and thefts are attributed to Indian raiders, but no Indians are brought to trial. Cifuentes himself confesses to Julia that the entire revolt, and most especially the "attack" on the city, has been a creation of his mind. Sufficient fear is instilled in the townspeople that they believe themselves to be defending their lands from Indian attack as they harry the remnants of Winik-
III. Feminism

We indicated in Chapter I that one of Castellanos' concerns in writing Indianist fiction was to destroy the stereotype of the Indian as eternal victim of a ceaselessly exploiting Ladino. In effect both exploit and both are exploited. We suggest that the same thesis may be applied to the author's presentation of female characters in Oficio de tinieblas, for with few exceptions there are no purely victimized women; each exploits and is exploited, be she Indian or Ladina. "There are no tender relationships, not even between mothers and daughters."^ They share one unifying constant: they are all subject to the will of men. As such, they are relegated to the realm of objects, possessions or adornments of their men. How each reacts to her condition will determine the degree to which she is exploited or the degree to which she exploits other women. Keeping in mind the conditions just mentioned, let us consider Castellanos' presentation of female characters in two broad groups: 1) Indian women and 2) Ladina women.

A. Indian women

The figure of the ilol Catalina Díaz Puiljá dominates the novel. In her desire to compensate for her childlessness, Catalina seeks and acquires supernatural power and resorts to the calculated exploitation of the misfortunes of family and neighbors in order to achieve her maternal and sacerdotal ends.

Catalina's infertility is the source of all her future activity.

^Peralta, "Images of Women," p. 69.
When we first meet her the question of infertility is one which she herself has raised. She feels herself different from other women and destined to leave no trace of her presence after her death.

(...), entonces Catalina palpó sus caderas baldías, maldijo la ligereza de su paso y, volviéndose repentinamente para mirar tras de sí, encontró que su paso no había dejado huella. (p. 12)

Catalina's condition is aggravated by her knowledge that her husband may at any time repudiate her for her lack of children and send her home, thus humiliating her and leaving her with no social status. That Winiktón, eternally quiet, doesn't leave her only perpetuates her anxiety. "¿Qué lo mantenía junto a ella? ¿El miedo? ¿El amor? La cara de Winiktón guardaba bien su secreto." (p. 13) Catalina's sense of being apart from other women and her fears of repudiation and humiliation by her husband are compounded by the supernatural meanings which the religious hierarchy attach to it. Here she is indeed set apart and marked as evil. "—Es mala, padrecito. Está señalada. Nunca ha tenido hijos." (p. 224)

Catalina's efforts to find a cure for her childlessness open to her another world and the means of keeping both her husband and the respect (if not the fear) of the community; she realizes that she is "una de las que se atreven a mirar de frente el misterio. Una 'ilol' (...)." (p. 13) The rape and subsequent pregnancy of the girl Marcela Gómez Oso affords Catalina first the opportunity of ridding herself of her demented brother through his marriage to Marcela and second the opportunity of acquiring that child which she has so long desired, Marcela's child. Marcela is reduced to the status of a purchasable good,
since she is effectively "bought" from her parents for a sum of money and some liquor, Catalina's fame as ílol being of considerable persuasive value in this undertaking. Marcela is deprived of a role as mother, since Catalina usurps this role, and is left to the care and feeding of Lorenzo, Catalina's brother, who is aware of virtually nothing.

Catalina's powers lead to her establishing a cult of allegedly ancient stone idols, an act which brings her into conflict with the local religious hierarchy represented by Xaw Ramírez Paciencia and with the Ladino priest. This clash of rival representatives of supernatural power leads eventually to violence and Ladino intervention. In a final test of strength with Xaw Ramírez Paciencia, Catalina once more reduces individuals to pawns in her scheme; she offers Domingo, Marcela's son whom she has raised as her own, to be crucified in order to assure supernatural support against the Ladinos.

The other Indian women lack the complexity of personality which we have noted in Catalina and they tend to fall into the victim category, unable or unwilling to act on their own. The first of these to appear in the novel is the young girl Marcela Gómez Oso. Marcela is marked early as an object. She is attacked by atajadoras who try to take her pottery; having escaped from them, she is lured into a house and raped; in return for this and for her pottery she is offered a few coins. Later beaten by her mother for having suffered this dishonor, Marcela becomes Catalina's possession. At no time does she resist or attempt to alter her circumstances. Only when, at the end of the novel, Catalina is temporarily discredited and Lorenzo is lost does Marcela feel free to act on her own, free to leave.

The last figure, caught in the tension between Ladino and Indian
cultures, is Teresa Entzín López, nurse to the daughter of the Cifuentes family of Ciudad Real. Teresa was forced by Isabel Zabadía (now Isabel Cifuentes) to give up her own child, to let it die, in order to raise Idolina, Isabel’s daughter by an earlier marriage. Despite her love for Idolina, Teresa never has forgotten the loss of her child at Ladino hands. As Idolina grows up, Teresa is forced into the background and eventually flees the house for a month to return to Chamula. Here she witnesses the spell of Catalina, but, realizing that her emotional attachments are still with Idolina, she returns to the Cifuentes home. Her world view remains essentially Indian though somewhat modified by her ties to Ladino society and it is she who closes the novel with an Indian "bedtime story," the mythologized retelling of the entire novel.

B. Ladino women

Ladino female characters are more abundant and offer a greater variety of types than is the case with Indian female characters. The most developed of these women is Julia Acevedo, "la Alazana," "wife" of the government land reform agent Ulloa. Until her arrival in Ciudad Real, Julia had led an essentially passive existence, having been caught up in student politics and then in a relationship with Ulloa. Throughout this period she has exhibited only one element of determination: to have no children and not to marry, thus avoiding putting herself under the control of men.

Her arrival in Ciudad Real with Ulloa precipitates several changes. Tired of being an outsider, she seeks acceptance into the local society by imitating "the manners and attitudes of the most important women. At first they keep this outsider at bay, excluding her from
Their common condition of attachments to man eventually helps to break the barriers, though never completely.

While in Ciudad Real, Julia becomes painfully aware of the boredom which has gradually overtaken her relationship with Ulloa, for here Ulloa devotes himself completely to the task of restoring Indian lands and is oblivious to his "wife's" condition. His protracted absences from Ciudad Real allow Julia to indulge in pure physical pleasure and attention. This she does by openly becoming the mistress of Leonardo Cifuentes, a landowner. Her role with Cifuentes is essentially that of decorative adornment; she is a prize which Cifuentes exhibits publically with great frequency. Unconsciously she is also Cifuentes' tool for hurting his wife Isabel and she becomes the means of restoring health to Isabel's psychosomatically ill daughter, Idolina.

Julia is sufficiently determined a woman not to allow her position as mistress to be controlled entirely by Cifuentes. Feeling herself lose control of the situation she makes two attempts to break away. The creature comforts and social position which are the benefits of association with Cifuentes lure her back once, but her second break is successful. She turns her back on the possibility of being totally at Cifuentes mercy, to be kept or discarded at will, and leaves town.

Isabel Zabadúa, now married to Leonardo Cifuentes, is a classic example of the victim-exploiter. Socially ambitious, she neglected her young daughter (and required the nurse, Teresa, to leave her own child in order to nurse Isabel's) for the attentions of Leonardo Cifuentes,

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5 Peralta, "Images of Women," pp. 70-71.
with whom she contrived the death of her first husband. At the time of
the novel she has lost her appeal for Cifuentes and has been discarded
as a sexual partner. Her fall from favor is recalled to her daily as
Cifuentes carries on a series of clandestine sexual contacts in the
family home with the aid of the procuress Mercedes Solórzano. Julia
Acevedo completes the job of isolating Isabel from Cifuentes. Rejected
by her husband, Isabel turns to Idolina, her daughter, for solace. She
finds that her earlier neglect of Idolina, her complicity in her hus­
band's murder, and Julia's ability to get Idolina to overcome her ill­
ness have all combined to isolate her. She has nowhere to turn.

Idolina's entire range of activity has as its basis a deep­
seated hatred of her mother. In terms of Idolina's physical condition,
this hate has deprived her of the use of her legs. This condition
places her in the role of an infant ever dependent on the attentions of
her nurse Teresa and is only alleviated when the hate is removed. Ido­
lina responds readily to Julia Acevedo since Julia, by becoming Cifuen­
tes' mistress, has allowed Idolina a secret vengeance on her mother.

Mercedes Solórzano appears to regard everything as salable; her
entire life is the exploitation of one group of people while in the
service of another. In this role she supplies Cifuentes with women for
his insatiable appetite. In the case of Marcela Gómez Oso, trickery and
outright monetary recompense were the approaches. With Julia Acevedo,
Mercedes is much more of a go-between, gradually weakening the woman's
resistance through promises of wealth and constant gifts. Later in the
story, as Cifuentes assumes command of the Ladino effort to halt the
Indian revolt, Mercedes procures information on the location of the
Indians, on their mood and on the specific Ladinos involved in stirring
up the Indians. Mercedes, merchant, typifies much of the attitude of Ciudad Real towards Indians and of the men of the city towards their women.

The last Ladina whom we shall treat is Benita, spinster sister of the zealous priest Manuel Mandujano. Benita has no life outside of her brother and is thus a very shy, frightened and inexperienced woman. Extremely devout, she encourages her brother to last out his assignment as priest to Chamula, recalling to him appropriate scriptural admonitions, though she herself lives in mortal dread of the Indians. Having taken the role of surrogate mother, Benita is stunned by the brutal death of Mandujano. Unable to achieve a sufficient degree of aid from Mandujano's superiors, she quickly goes mad. Her madness is turned against Ciudad Real for what Benita feels was its unwillingness to prevent her brother's death. She becomes an informant for the government of the state of Chiapas, contradicting the exaggerated rumors of Indian uprisings.

Conclusions

In portraying the Indian in Oficio de tinieblas Castellanos relies on traditional elements of Indianist fiction (land reform and Indian revolt) but avoids the polarity of exploiter/victim which characterized much earlier Indianist fiction. This she does through the introduction of the feminist element, the presentation of figures caught in a nepantla between Ladino and Indian worlds, extensive treatment of the dominant Ladino society, and the presentation of similar circumstances and world views in both societies. The presentation of elements of the Indian supernatural world is not much advanced over its presenta-
tion in Ciudad Real; but its juxtaposition with other techniques and themes affords it greater effectiveness.

Two aspects of the feminist theme set Oficio de tinieblas apart from earlier works and signal the direction of Castellanos future fiction. These are the overwhelming preoccupation with female characters (even when compared to Balún-Canán) and the introduction into the feminist theme of non-passive women who break with tradition to achieve some degree of personal fulfillment and what we have termed authenticity of personality.

In her next work, Los convidados de agosto, Castellanos abandons the Indianist element almost entirely to develop what has evolved as a major part of Oficio de tinieblas, i.e., the condition of woman in provincial Mexican society.
Chapter V

LOS CONVIDADOS DE AGOSTO

Los convidados de agosto, a collection of three short stories and a novelette published in 1964, closes the series of prose works dealing with Chiapas. Absent from these narratives are the latifundista and the Indian, both so much a part of Castellanos' earlier fiction. In their places we find respectively the men and women of the provincial towns of Chiapas, and more specifically, the men and women of the upper classes of the town of Comitán. The author's feminist concerns dominate these stories, a constant of which is the impossibility of feminine happiness within the traditional fabric of society, due in large part to the manipulation of and exploitation of women by the men of the society and by the adherence on the part of women to the feminine myth or archetypal pattern of feminine behavior prescribed by tradition.

Castellanos has stated that, as in earlier works, there are in Los convidados de agosto considerable elements of an autobiographical nature, but that the author never enters these stories as the protagonist. Rather, she says, she was very close to several people who lived what she terms "false moralities," i.e., who adhered to the feminine

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1Rosario Castellanos, Los convidados de agosto (Mexico: Era, 1964). All quotations are from the third edition of 1975 and only pagination is given.

2Cresta de Leguizamón, p. 10.
myth. She felt it necessary to capture in this work the essence of the myth in order to show her acquaintances the need for abandoning the standards which the myth requires.

Each of the three stories and the novelette portrays a particular facet of the myth and of the consequences of adherence to it. "Las amistades efímeras" offers the portrait of a character who adheres to the canon which prescribes passive waiting as the appropriate attitude in women. "Vals 'Capricho'" offers the reaction of an individual to the imposition of totally foreign and seemingly irrational and arbitrary rules and standards. "Los convidados de agosto," the title story of the collection, illustrates the sense of total frustration felt by women in a society which allows men the chance to learn from experience and at the same time denies women that very opportunity. The novelette "El viudo Román" has been called a twentieth century "comedia calderoniana." In it the values of a society of several centuries ago which are still in force today turn woman into the object of derision in order to pay an old debt.

In terms of technique the volume offers little new. Rather, the dual perspective (here contrasting narrated fact with allegation, appearance, and fantasy) and its product, irony, continue to dominate the mood of the stories. As in some of her earlier works, notably the novels and "El tigre" of Ciudad Real, the author once more achieves a sense of timelessness. This she does by her characters' exaltation of the past and of tradition, by the maintainance of the moment of affront to

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personal or family honor in such a way as to stop time, by the portrayal of cyclical patterns of behavior, and by the presentation of a style of life more appropriate to the age of the Conquest than to the twentieth century. Narrative point of view is that of the first person in "Las amistades efímeras" but shifts to that of the omniscient author in the other works.

_Las amistades efímeras_

"Las amistades efímeras," the first of the stories of the collection, relates the experiences of a bored young woman, Gertrudis, as told by an anonymous writer friend. The transitory nature of things alluded to in the title and in the fragment of the anonymous Nahuatl poem which serves as epigraph appears to have several references. Within the main context of the story it appears to refer to the superficial and short-lived relationships and experiences of Gertrudis and to the similar passing relationships of her father and of her lover. There is also an apparent reference to the narrator's realization that relationships are not of necessity lasting and that the mere remembrance of the past is not a sufficiently sound basis for the development of one's life or one's creative and articulate nature.

The prime concern of the story, though, is Gertrudis' adherence to certain aspects of the feminine myth, in particular to that aspect of the myth which recommends passivity as the appropriate attitude for woman. As we have seen in Virginia Wolf's characterization of the feminine ideal, a concomitant ingredient of passivity is the absence of will or thought in the woman and a corresponding readiness to follow and reflect the actions and ideas of others. As we shall see, both lack of
will and of mental activity characterize Gertrudis. In light of this knowledge, the title seems to suggest that one who adheres to the canons of the myth, since she can bring little of herself to any relationship, cannot hope to maintain any permanent relationship.

The narrator's tone in her initial presentation of Gertrudis is quite positive, suggesting that Gertrudis embodies characteristics of a respected standard of feminine behavior. She is portrayed as "la mejor amiga;" she endures her friend's constant chatter; she is well-mannered; she is experienced in the running of a household and the rearing of children; and she is preparing to marry an apparently hard-working and upstanding young man. Her virtually complete adherence to the feminine ideal is rounded out by the presentation of two further characteristics: passivity and lack of inclination towards mental activity, both continuing to be presented in positive tones as before. Her passivity first shows itself in her silence. "La mejor amiga de mi adolescencia era casi muda, lo que hizo posible nuestra intimidad." (p. 11) The second characteristic is illustrated not only by her lack of disposition for study, but also by reference to there being cause for alarm should such a disposition have manifested itself, thus exalting mental inactivity as something of a feminine virtue. "Por lo demás, nunca alarmó a nadie con la más mínima disposición para el estudio." (pp. 11-12)

We learn also that Gertrudis attends a girl's school run by nuns because her father "llevaba una vida que no era conveniente que presenciaran sus hijos." (p. 12) Details of the father's life indicate instability in associations with women and a tendency to passing relationships.
Necesitaba mujer que lo asistiera y tuvo una querida y otra y otra, sin que ninguna le acomodara. (p. 12)

It is thus clear that Gertrudis' life, for some considerable time at least, has been restricted and guarded. The ideals to which she adheres would appear to have been nurtured in the restricted environment of the convent school and not in the world in which her father lives.

After Gertrudis is called home upon her father's remarriage, there is a significant change from the initially positive tone of the story. This return to what we may call the "real world" signals the beginning of the failure of the feminine myth, for it will be tested and found wanting once outside the confines of school and cloister.

Expecting a brief stay before being called back to town to marry her fiancé, Gertrudis, apparently for the first time, experiences the routine and petty nuisances of life on her father's estates. These discomforts turn what was to have been a short waiting period into a seemingly much longer one.

¡Qué lentamente transcurre el tiempo cuando se espera! Y a Gertrudis le impacientaban, además, las disputas con su madrastra, los pleitos de sus hermanos. (pp. 12-13)

This negative tone is continued as the author illustrates other routines and their unquestioning acceptance as normal by the local populace. Here the populace is shown to evidence a lack of sensibility to suffering through its very acceptance of it as routine.

También se servían licores y Gertrudis gritó la primera vez que un parroquiano cayó redondo al suelo, con la copa vacía entre los dedos crispados. Ninguno de los asistentes se inmutó. Las autoridades llegaron con su parsimonia habitual, redactaron el acta y sometieron a interrogatorio a los testigos. (...) Si se trataba de una venganza privada nadie tenía derecho a intervenir. Si era efecto del aguardiente fabricado por el monopolio (...), no había a quien quejarse. (p. 13)
Gertrudis, in her adherence to prescribed norms of behavior, i.e., in her attempt to reflect perceived attitudes, soon falls in with the attitudes of those around her. "Gertrudis se aplacó al saber que un percance así era común." (p. 13)

The slowness of the passage of time already mentioned and the acceptance by Gertrudis of conditions labeled as normative produce in this young woman a great sense of boredom. The introduction of the element of boredom is linked to references to Gertrudis' development of a lack of sensitivity to an emotional situation. "Gertrudis comenzó a aburrirse desde el momento en que llevaron el cadáver. Los siguientes ya no podían sobresaltarla" (p. 13).

Her boredom increases and it is soon apparent that a major element in her experience of boredom is the insensitivity to human relationships which has been on the increase since her return to her father's estates. Lacking sensitivity, she cannot suffer nor can she act to alter that suffering; unaware that her boredom is unusual, she cannot very well take action to alter it.

There is now a direct reference to her boredom for the first time. Here a stranger points it out to her and her response reveals not only her abject passivity but also her lack of imagination or inclination to think.

"--Se ha de aburrir mucho--comentó observando a Gertrudis. Ella alzó los hombros con indiferencia. ¿Qué más daba? --¿Nunca ha pensado en irse? --¿Adónde? (p. 16)

A similar passivity shows itself in Gertrudis later that night as she and the stranger spend the night in a small pensión. In her attitude we note no strong feeling of any kind and no thought of the past,
the present, or the future.

Gertrudis no pensó en Oscar ni una sola vez. Ni siquiera pensaba en el desconocido que estaba poseyéndola y al que se abandonó sin resistencia y sin entusiasmo, sin sensualidad y sin remordimientos.

--¿No tienes miedo de que te haga yo un hijo?
Gertrudis negó con la cabeza. ¡Un hijo era algo tan remoto! (p. 19)

Gertrudis and her lover are discovered and are submitted to a shotgun marriage. Her response to this situation reveals her total adherence to the symbols of the myth: "Yo quisiera un anillo" (p. 23). Once more adhering to prescribed behavior, Gertrudis endures the boredom and hard work of life with her in-laws and the absence of her husband in jail until he suggests a divorce. His reasons are those of convenience and Gertrudis, programmed to reflect the ideas of others, again yields to his wishes. In her token resistance she again evidences her lack of imagination. She is more concerned about her father's image of her than about her own wishes or welfare. She also is concerned about her not having lived up to the ideal of a wife by producing children.

The separation from her husband causes Gertrudis to go to Mexico where her writer friend from boarding school now lives. Here work and lodging are found for her and she is able to renew acquaintances. However the friendship is not to last; it ends as soon as the writer becomes aware of Gertrudis' true nature.

The occasion of the death of Gertrudis' ex-husband offers the narrator a first real example of Gertrudis' lack of individual thought and her continuing acceptance of prescribed behavior. Since she was at one time the wife of the stranger now dead, Gertrudis believes it her duty to wear mourning and to feel emotion out of respect for the hus-
On finding Gertrudis thus attired and in such humor, the writer attempts to learn the cause and then to reason with her.

---¿Qué te pasa?
---Mataron a Juan Bautista. Mira, aquí lo dice el telegrama.
Yo sonreí, aliviada.
---Me asustaste. Creí que te había sucedido algo grave.
Gertrudis me miró interrogativamente.
---¿No es grave quedarse viuda?
---Pero tú no eres viuda. Ni siquiera te casaste.
Abatió la cabeza con resignación.
¿Necesitaría yo no tener corazón para no llorarlo! (…)
---¿Se casó, por fin?
---Sí, con su novia de siempre.
Gertrudis lo dijo con una especie de orgullo por la fidelidad y constancia de ambos. (pp. 27-28)

At the writer's suggestion Gertrudis changes from her mourning clothes and the two women prepare to go to the movies. Only then does the narrator realize Gertrudis' total adaptability, her total lack of true feeling, and her total passivity in the face of others' wishes; for with the removal of the mourning clothes at the writer's suggestion, all remembrance of her past life is removed and Gertrudis is ready for a new adventure. Aware of the meaninglessness of Gertrudis' life, the narrator makes an excuse to leave the theater and never returns, in effect rejecting any association with the aspects of the feminine myth represented by Gertrudis.

Vals 'Capricho'

In "Vals 'Capricho'" Castellanos utilizes the old theme of the education of the savage to illustrate the destructive power of the feminine myth and to demonstrate the arbitrary nature of canons of the myth. To this end the author introduces into the staid society of provincial
Comitán a spoiled child who has grown up in the high country and forests of Chiapas and whose standards of behavior (which may reflect mestizo or Indian values) differ greatly from those in force in Comitán, with which they now come into conflict. Though the story illustrates class differences in Ladino society and possibly differences between Ladino and Indian, these elements are essentially subordinated to the feminist concern.

Thrust into the traditional society of Comitán, the young protagonist, Reinerie, has imposed on her a set of standards totally foreign to those by which she has lived before. According to Castellanos, this situation leaves Reinerie in a state of nepantla, that is, in a state of being neither one thing nor the other. Eventually making a decision to accept the new standards and to attempt to blend with the new society, Reinerie finds herself forcibly rejected by that society because of her different behavior. Further efforts at acceptance through conformity only make her appear ridiculous. When she finally realizes the futility of her hopes for acceptance, she renounces all association with the world of the new standards through the ritual sacrifice of a chicken, a ritual learned from her mestiza or Indian mother. (Or, as Castellanos seems to imply, is the sacrifice of the chicken her existential "acte gratuite" as she breaks with tradition in search of personal authenticity?) Significantly, she departs barefooted, since shoes have been quite literally the most painful part of the new standards for her to accept.

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4 Cresta de Leguizamón, p. 10. 5 Cresta de Leguizamón, p. 10. 6 Cresta de Leguizamón, p. 10.
The story takes its title from that of a musical composition which is the highest achievement of Natalia Trujillo, one of Reinerie's aunts. The theme of caprice or arbitrariness in the title is elaborated in the actions of Comitán society towards Reinerie and of Reinerie towards that society.

The values of the society into which Reinerie is thrust are represented by two figures in particular, Natalia and Julia Trujillo, Reinerie's spinster aunts. Each of these values is elaborated in one or both of the aunts and is extended, through the figure of the bishop, to society in general. The values which these two women exemplify are some of those which Castellanos and Wolf have determined to be canons of the feminine myth; they include passivity, an unquestioning acceptance of tradition, insistence on proper outward form, naïveté concerning many aspects of life, the exaltation of mediocrity as feminine virtue, and the possession of certain physical or emotional qualities revered as particularly indicative of femininity.

Basic to the personalities of the two aunts is passivity. This canon of the myth is suggested by frequent references to the sisters' inability to act, by references to their silence (especially "silencio (...) sobre su estado civil." (p. 33)), by their frequent depiction in a seated posture (in which they recall the past activities of others), by their acceptance, as unalterable, of their declining economic situation, by a similarly fatalistic acceptance of the task of educating Reinerie ("Es nuestra cruz." (p. 37)), and by their constant deferring to the wishes and authority of their wastrel brother and of the local bishop.

The figure of the bishop is important for establishing the values which the Trujillo sisters exemplify as those approved by un-
questionable tradition, here the Church. Priests and bishops in Castellanos' works have already been established as elements synonymous with anachronism, fanaticism and arbitrary authority. Castellanos now equates the Trujillo sisters' unquestioning acceptance of a supernaturally ordained tradition with fanaticism. She first does this by making direct reference to fanaticism ("se apegaron con fanatismo a unas tradiciones (...)." (p. 31)). She later reinforces this equation by having the sisters defer to the advice of the bishop concerning Reinerie's activities: "—Habrá que preguntarle al Coadjutor." (p. 37)

With the acceptance of tradition goes the acceptance of certain outward forms or trappings, without which an individual has no recognizable place within society. In keeping with Castellanos' presentation of the arbitrary nature of tradition, the author now illustrates the equally subjective nature of the outward trappings of tradition. Most prominent of these trappings are possession of an appropriately traditional name, the experience of baptism and the use of clothing traditionally appropriate to one's social status and sex. The aunts and the voice of tradition, the bishop, reject the new charge's name of Reinerie ("...que nombre tan chistoso. ¿No te parece?"") (p. 36) in favor of one more in keeping with local tradition, i.e., in favor of Gladys, Claudia or "—María, de acuerdo con las costumbres de nuestra Santa Madre." (p. 40) Reinerie's baptism is seen not so much as necessary to her own soul's salvation but more importantly as a protection for society against the unknown foreign element now in its midst; baptism becomes exorcism of the unknown and feared. "...a esa criatura le falta un sacramento, tal vez hasta un exorcismo. Si parece que estuviera compatiada con el diablo." (p. 37)
The question of appropriate dress is the hardest of these three outward elements of conformity for Reinerie to accept, but is felt by her aunts and by the bishop to be of equal importance with baptism and use of a traditional name. Stiff-starched frilly dresses are uncomfortable and hard to keep free of dirt and grass stains; however, they are eventually accepted.

Shoes are a different matter. They are the hardest of the elements of tradition for Reinerie to accept. She rejects them as uncomfortable; they cause blisters and seem totally useless to one brought up barefoot in the wilds. The aunts see them as vital not only as symbols of femininity but also of social status. This view is shared by the bishop. When, at the end of the story, Reinerie departs, the first of the traditional trappings to go are the shoes, the most painful element of that tradition. The author has called attention to the symbolic value of the shoes not only in referring to this story, but also in her essays on feminism. Tight shoes, frequently with high heels, according to Castellanos are symbols of the pain inflicted by society (tradition) in its attempt to make women adhere to arbitrarily imposed standards and to curb the feared spirit of women through pain and immobility. In the eyes of the bishop of Comitán, removal of shoes in public by women is tantamount to a declaration of low moral and social status.

The restrictions upon women implicit in the symbol of the shoes is elaborated on an intellectual level again in the persons of the two sisters. Here mediocrity of intelligence and ability are exalted as feminine virtue. The possession of traditionally feminine physical traits is also exalted. We learn that "la pequeñez de unas manos que abarcaban, apenas, una octava del teclado" (p. 30) has destined Natalia
Trujillo to become a "renowned" pianist ("Por toda la Zona Fría andaba la fama de su virtuosismo..." (p. 30)). The author's irony in presenting the mediocrity of this woman, whom tradition has cast as pianist because of her fine hands, is greater yet when we learn of "la pieza suprema de su repertorio: el vals 'Capricho' de Ricardo Castro." (p. 31) The other sister, Julia Trujillo, "se dedicaba a un menester igualmente noble que la música: la costura." (p. 32) In her exalted mediocrity "Julia tuvo su hora de triunfo" (p. 32); that is, she altered foreign fashions by raising necklines, lowering sleeves and hems and weighting skirts against the high winds of Comitán. For having set fashions in Comitán with what the community considers imagination, Julia is held in high esteem.

Reinerie's greatest sin against society is her possession of knowledge of sexual reproduction in man and animals. This knowledge, gained from a life in the wilds, offers her a temporarily superior status. But if the colorful and abundant detail with which she imparts her knowledge fascinates her totally uninformed peers, it causes the families of Comitán to reject not only Reinerie, but also her family. Sexual knowledge is not a part of woman's education until her husband instructs her. Violation of this canon brings rejection of the family of the offending party and subsequent economic ruin. There are no more piano lessons and no more "fashionable" dresses are ordered.

The story of Reinerie and of the problems she brings to her family and to the society of Comitán bears elaboration on two further points. First we note that the two spinster aunts are essentially variants of the "arrimada" and the "virgen fuerte." They have chosen "noble careers" (music and dressmaking) and are thus barred from any
family of their own. Since they are women their "careers" are an extension of their own entertainment; there is little pecuniary reward. They are effectively prevented from acquiring the necessary cash with which to defer daily expenses and yet they are expected to spend all necessary monies on the education of their niece. These women are "arrimadas" in their own house and are virtually dependent on the whim of society and of their brother.

Secondly, Castellanos illustrates the restrictive force of the canons of the feminine myth through the condition of sexual ignorance. Regarding sexual knowledge Castellanos observes the following about Comitán society:

[Los hombres] en sus relaciones con las mujeres contaban, como con un ingrediente indispensable, con su ignorancia de la vida. De ellos dependía prolongarla o destruirla. En el primer caso tenían segura la sumisión. En el segundo, la gratitud. (pp. 43-44)

The attitude expressed here regarding sexual knowledge reveals again the attempt made by the men of this society to restrict a woman's access to knowledge in general and in so doing to reduce woman to an exploitable good. The "arrimada," deprived of general knowledge, knows no reality but that offered to her by her male superiors and other women already caught in the web of the myth of femininity. This knowledge is limited, is mediocre. Reinerie, in rejecting Comitán society, her aunts, and shoes, rejects the elements of the feminine myth which they represent. In much the same manner as the narrator of "Las amistades efímeras," she walks away from the incarnate myth.

Los convidados de agosto

In the title story of the collection Castellanos once again
illustrates canons of the feminine myth, and in particular those canons which require of woman a naiveté and lack of knowledge (especially lack of sexual knowledge) and those which advise an attitude of passivity. Here the chief character, Emelina, a listless but sensuous young woman, finally seizes the opportunity to expand her knowledge of life but is prevented from doing so by her male superiors, who themselves then proceed to indulge in sensual pleasures.

Amid the celebrations of the rompimiento, the feast of the town's patron saint, the author establishes a contrast between the noisy, vital world outside Emelina's home and the almost silent, non-vital world within the house. The noise of the fireworks, of the church bells, and of competing marimbas contrasts with a guarded silence within the house; the uninhibited laughter and general activity of the townspeople and of those visiting from other areas contrasts with a world of actions never taken, of fantasy and of dissatisfaction within the household. Indeed it is the knell of the funeral bell which wakes Emelina and sets the tone of a lack of vitality within the home. This sterile atmosphere is enhanced by the presence of an aged and infirm mother and of an elder sister, Ester, who has denied herself a life more viable than that of caring for her invalid mother and going to church. Emelina herself is beyond the age generally accepted as marriageable and fears that her elder sister's pattern of life is the only one remaining to her.

Important for the presentation of Emelina's total frustration at the conclusion of the story is the juxtaposing of fantasy and reality in a series of episodes, a technique enhanced by the occasional use of mirrors and the frequent contrast of unpleasant and sensual elements.
Emelina is introduced as she is awakened from a sensual dream by the "campanada fúnebre" (p. 59) from which sound she attempts to hide in order to remain with her lover, i.e., to remain in her fantasy.

Desde el principio de la algazara sintió amenazados sus ensueños y se aferró a ellos apretando los párpados, respirando con amplitud pausada. Sus labios balbucieron una palabra cariñosa: —Cutushito... mientras estrechaba entre sus brazos, con el abandono que sólo da la costumbre, su propia almohada. (p. 59)

The contrast implicit in the presentation of Emelina's waking is elaborated in further details from the dream/memory. The unpleasant, restrictive element represented by the funeral bell is now taken up by the incarnation of these elements, Ester, and the uncomfortable hotel room where she and Emelina once stayed "en el viaje memorable (pero único) que ambas emprendieron a la ciudad vecina." (p. 59) Here humidity, squeaky floors, sagging beds, peeling wallpaper and falling ceiling plaster combine with an almost hysterical Ester (as she examines the sheets for cleanliness and trembles in fear that the wallpaper and ceiling damage may be caused by rats and weasels) to produce a most disagreeable memory.

In Emelina's dream this dingy hotel room is transformed. Negative elements are replaced by much more pleasurable ones. Instead of her sister Ester in bed with her, Emelina's dream substitutes a man. Instead of Ester's histería she experiences "mas bien una especie de exaltación, de plenitud, de sangre caliente y rápida en las venas." (p. 60)

The element of fantasy on which Emelina relies to escape her dreary world is elaborated by two bits of information which make it clear that Emelina's fantasies are a substitute for actual experience.
The first reference is to "el viaje memorable (pero único)" which emphasizes Emelina's restricted knowledge of Chiapas in particular and of life in general. Apart from this trip, Emelina's "travels" have been mental. The second element which suggests fantasy as substitute for experience is the vagueness of the male form in bed in Emelina's dream. The figure is described in terms of its breathing, in terms of an indistinguishable face and a body that refuses to take form.

Fantasy, although providing Emelina with her only means of escape from the world which holds her prisoner, is nonetheless only painful deception, a fact which Emelina bitterly recognizes on several occasions. She first does so upon waking by throwing away her pillow and cursing it for having seemed to be a man; later that morning recollections of the many frustrated hopes and disappointed girls at last years' rompimiento elicit from her the words "decepción" and "burla." (p. 62)

Emelina rejects for herself the pattern of Ester, of the unknowing, sexless women who quote the parish priest and who se van encerrando, vistiendo de luto, apareciendo únicamente en las enfermedades y en los duelos, asistiendo como si fueran culpables—a misa primera y recibiendo con humillación el distintivo de alguna cofradía de mal agüero. (p. 65)

She is envious of those girls (always from a lower social class) who have left Comitán, usually on an occasion such as the present rompimiento, and who have experienced life for good or ill. However, like the pet canary which she sets free but which returns to its cage, Emelina is unwilling to leave the material comforts of home and to question the authority of the tradition which restricts her, here represented by her brother, who, as the only man in the house, has complete authority.
over all women, and who will not let her leave, since this would bring
disgrace on the family honor.

Unwilling to act, Emelina is condemned to a life of ever-repeating fantasy and disillusion. Thus as the story nears its conclusion we return to dream sequences similar to that at the beginning. The first of these is inspired by the satisfaction of food, by a review of her naked body as she bathes, and by a bit of alcohol and it replaces the image of Ester with that of a young bullfighter. The orgiastic exclamations and emotional excesses which precipitate and follow the collapse of some seats in the bull ring, enhanced by references to "dóncelles cuya pérdida se disculpaba con una explicación" and to "¡Cuántos desahogos permitidos!" (p. 80) leave Emelina sweating and suddenly awake, the dream broken by the entry of a man into the house.

The presence of this man in the house triggers in Emelina the recollection of other men she has met and leads to a series of fantasies about what might have been. Her sensuality having now reached an uncontainable level, Emelina dresses and leaves with a friend for the fair where, with the aid of a little alcohol and the sense of secure isolation provided by the crowd, she begins to rebel vocally against the restrictions imposed on her behavior. It is her last fantasy. The fantasy, which involves leaving with a strange man who has offered to take her away, is broken abruptly as Enrique, the same man who interrupted her dream of the bullfighter, intervenes and separates the prospective lovers. In Emelina's struggle with Enrique, the author tells us that she "tenía que luchar, no solo contra una fuerza superior a la suya, sino contra su propio desguanzamiento, contra la inercia que le paralizaba los miembros, contra la naúsea que le revolvía las entrañas,
contra el mareo que le hacía cerrar los ojos." (p. 94-95) She struggles against her own inability to act, but eventually falls victim to it and to superior masculine strength. As Emelina realizes that her one opportunity to act is now over, she weeps copiously and watches as Enrique enters the local brothel to escape the frustrations of preserving the honor of his friend's sister.

**El viudo Román**

"El viudo Román," the last work in this collection, has, as noted earlier, aptly been called a modern "comedia calderoniana," for two of its prime features are the cleansing of one's *honra* through retribution on the family of the perceived offender and the predominance of appearances over reality. This presence in contemporary Chiapas society of elements characteristic of seventeenth century Spanish society (especially as that society is reflected in the Baroque theater) offers a setting for exposing certain canons of the feminine myth in a context in which the myth is perceived as reality and for continuing to illustrate to what extent contemporary Chiapas society has not changed since the time of the Conquest.

A principal concern in the novelette is the perception, by Chiapas society, of woman as object possessed, as adornment to and extension of the personality of the man with whom she is associated. Such a view accords woman no individuality of self and limits the realm of her activity and society's perception of her to those which her male controller imposes on her. The author maintains this materialist view throughout the novel. She introduces it with an epigraph from Sartre which suggests that the past is a luxury affordable only by the landed.
That the two male participants in the defamation of Don Carlos' new bride are both men of property who rank their female associates with possessions suggests not only an element of the feminine myth but also the traditional exploitation of social inferiors already noted in Castellanos' earlier works.

Castellanos introduces the theme of woman as object in the first paragraph of the story. Here the question is one of the physical possession of woman; the occasion is the description of objects in the protagonist's office.

A later reference equates woman with disposable possessions by associating her with other means of gaining or losing money. Woman, like cards and dice, can be used to her owner's benefit or loss: "esos señores ricos que, en plena borrachera, (...) apostaban a una carta, a un dado, a la mujer o a la hija, cuando habían perdido ya todo lo demás." (p. 106)

Having now established the concept of woman as object, the author proceeds to the presentation of a concrete example within the context of the story, here the recollections of the protagonist's housekeeper. The servant, Cástula, having eloped with a young man years ago, is left by him in hospital while he goes to jail. When he is released, he does not bother to look for the former lover of whom he is now free. So free of her is he that he informs her family that he has buried her himself, an explanation accepted unquestioningly until Cástula returns months later.
Castellanos now proceeds to the major concern of the story, Don Carlos Román's defamation of the character of an innocent young woman as payment for her brother's assumed seduction of Don Carlos' late wife. The criteria used in the selection and acquisition of a bride suggest those which Don Carlos might use in selecting a new horse or other asset to his landed condition. The attitude is first elaborated in the figure of a priest who seeks to return Don Carlos to a married state. In selecting possible candidates as wife he carries out the following actions:

escuchó en secreto las confidencias acerca de las taras hereditarias de las familias; indagó discretamente el estado de las fortunas y el monto de las dotes y después de efectuar la selección más rigurosa don Evaristo se decidió (...) a mostrar a don Carlos sus cartas de triunfo. (p. 135)

Don Evaristo's use of the expression "trump card" harks back to the earlier association of women with playing cards and the relegation of both to the realm of useful objects. The occasional use of the word "negociaciones," common enough in the context of a traditional wedding arranged by the families involved, now acquires a particularly mercantile significance and reveals these traditional negotiations to be nothing more than business discussions concerning new merchandise. Don Carlos' return of his bride, on the ground that she is used goods for which he has paid a new good's price, climaxes the theme of woman as property, as possessed object.

Essential to the ultimate deception which climaxes this work and to the reduction of woman to the status of a pawn, to object possessed by man is the author's use of a series of images which deceive in appearing to be one thing while in reality being quite another. This is particularly poignant when the determination of reality is made along
sex lines. That is, what a man says or does is assumed to be the truth, reality; what a woman says or does is assumed to be fantasy or lie.

The first of these references are present in examples which we have already examined. Concerning the picture of the doctor and skeleton contesting the body of a woman, we note the words "sin ningún estigma visible de enfermedad," suggesting that although there is obviously nothing wrong with the woman, she is considered infirm, calling into question the real motives for the doctor's presence and suggesting that woman is caught between two equally destructive forces: death and traditional views of woman. This latter view seems most plausible in light of the fate of Don Carlos' bride: she is forced to live a life of shame, scorned by family and society, a life worse than death. In the case of Cástula's alleged death we note that her lover's word is accepted as truth, but that upon her arrival in carne she is regarded as a spirit, as untrue.

Don Carlos Román himself in his withdrawal into seclusion provides the next example of deceptive appearances. He appears to withdraw out of grief for the loss of his wife. To lend credence to this belief he always wears mourning dress and associates only with a local priest. This image of the proper grieving widower provides him with the perfect disguise, for the real reason for his withdrawal is to contemplate vengeance on the family of the alleged seducer of his late wife. His correct behavior allows his reputation as a man of honor and truth to reach such proportions that his word will not be questioned when he does lie.

In terms of the principal actions of the work, this attitude will pit the "palabra de honor" (p. 179) of Don Carlos Román against the
"disparates" (p. 182) of his newly returned wife and of her feminine relatives. To make matters worse it is the father of the defamed girl who distinguishes men and women according as the former are forthright, honorable, sensible, and responsible while women's nature is "débil, hipócrita y cobarde" (p. 183). Women "ruegan, juran que son inocentes, son capaces de recurrir a cualquier medio con tal de no arrastrar las consecuencias de sus actos." (p. 183); men will face the consequences of their actions unquestioningly and, in this case, will become unwitting accomplices in the entire deception and will carry out the work of character defamation which Don Carlos has begun.

Female characters in the work do not appear only as victims, nor are they devoid of the materialist view of the other sex which we have previously noted in male characters. The youngest of the Orantes sisters, who will shortly become the defamed bride, views her marriage to Don Carlos as the achievement of a goal which few of her friends will attain, the wife of a man of wealth and name. It is this condition which dominates her thoughts as she surveys the wedding guests from the sanctuary.

Si, en las bancas más próximas estaban sus amigas a las que mañana (y quizás siempre) les seguirían diciendo señoritas. Las que no iban a ser iniciadas, como ella esta noche, en los misterios de la vida. (p. 165)

Since, as we have seen, a woman's word is of little value in this society, marriage confers the right to rely on the husband's authority for anything from dismissing a servant to contracting debts. Romelia, the bride, believes that she has been selected to have life revealed to her in all its positive forms and she lauds this over her friends and sisters.
When Romelia is denounced as not a virgin the rivalry between women for the hand of any decent man shows itself in a sister's denunciation of Romelia as "una prostituta" (p. 181) who has, by bringing dishonor to her family, prevented the other sisters from ever marrying.

Romelia is, of course, neither the prostitute which her sister says she is nor the non-virgin which her husband claims she is. These conditions are fantasies which are offered to and are accepted by women in the story. The author offers them as the final illustration of the fantasies which women are offered in lieu of reality. The fantasies of the romantic encounter entertained so strongly by Romelia and of her exalted status as wife, both dashed by Don Carlos' materialism, are now replaced by another fantasy which destroys any meaningful life for Romelia or her sisters. The myth of femininity, created and enforced by male-dominated society claims yet another victim.

Conclusions

Female characters of the four stories of this work exhibit a common inability to recognize the feminine myth, or, when they do recognize certain aspects of it, to act. The women of "El viudo Román" are quite literally the victims of a lie; they are the victims of Don Carlos' lie, and of the lie of the feminine myth, both of which are accepted by society. "Los convidados de agosto" offers the figure of a woman who rejects certain elements of the myth but falls victim to male dominance and her own ingrained passivity. By contrast "Las amistades efímeras" and "Vals 'Capricho'" both offer characters who reject the myth by turning their backs and walking away from it.

Aspects of the feminine myth and alternatives to full acceptance

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of it have been presented here in the context of provincial Chiapas society, a society which Castellanos has shown in this and earlier works to have retained much of the world of the Conquest. In her next work, Album de familia, Castellanos abandons the provincial setting in favor of the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Mexico City in order to illustrate many of the same elements of the feminine myth.
Chapter VI

ALBUM DE FAMILIA

In the three stories and one novelette which comprise *Album de familia*¹ Castellanos continues the portrayal of feminine frustrations already present in her earlier works. In these stories, however, the scene is neither the provincial town nor the Indian community; rather, it is upper-middle-class Mexico City of the latter half of the present century. Those same basic issues of identity of self which were heretofore treated in an atmosphere replete with provincial and indigenous local color are now addressed in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the metropolis, thus achieving a greater degree of universality of feeling. The title suggests an affinity on the part of the author with the portraits of modern womankind, her family, presented in this collection or album.

If we place "Cabecita blanca," the third story of the collection, at the beginning of the collection and retain the arrangement of the other stories with respect to one another, then the collection offers a spectrum of views of the myth of femininity as understood by Castellanos. "Cabecita blanca" offers a personification of the myth; "Lección de cocina" illustrates a recognition of and confrontation with

the myth; "Domingo" offers an example of compromise with the myth; and
"Album de familia" presents all of the above as they react with one an­other and in the personalities of literary women. The last story also
treats the figure of the "virgen fuerte."

In the last two stories the place of the biological woman is ad­dressed and alternatives to traditional female patterns of behavior are
offered in varying degrees of acceptance of (or adjustment to) biologi­cal femininity. There is likewise a development of creative ability in
the characters from the destructive personality of "Cabecita blanca"
through the struggles of the protagonist of "Lección de cocina" to the
artistically creative women of "Domingo" and "Album de familia."

In terms of technique the works in this collection reveal ele­ments similar to those noted in previous works. Most prominent is the
creation of a dual or multiple perspective. Enhancing this multiplicity
of perspective is the author's use of a contrapuntal style which juxta­poses fantasy and reality, present and recollected past, and the events
as narrated and as interpreted by one or more of the characters. Narra­tive point of view is that of the author-protagonist in "Lección de co­cina," but it shifts to that of the omniscient author in the other three
works.

Although fantasy and reality are juxtaposed in all works of the
collection, the predominant atmosphere of each work differs greatly from
that of the others but appears to follow the same line of progression
earlier mentioned for the development of creativity in the female char­acters. That is, there is a great preponderance of fantasy in "Cabecita
blanca," in which story the protagonist is never aware of any reality
which does not reinforce her emotional need to conform to expected stan­
dards. In "Lección de cocina" both the mental and physical world around the author-protagonist are in a constant state of flux, a condition reflected in the very realistic scenes arranged in an associative, highly emotional pattern, thus effectively balancing fantasy and reality. The atmosphere of "Domingo" is predominantly realistic, supported as it is by the detailed description of objects and by a markedly strong sensuality. In "Album de familia" each of the five protagonists confronts her own fantasy in the light of the reality she observes in each of the others. Here realism is enhanced by the presence of two characters whose role appears to be primarily that of witness rather than participant.

"Lección de cocina"

In "Lección de cocina" Castellanos portrays the gradual recognition by a young housewife of the elements which compose the myth of femininity. What starts out as a required, if unwanted, time in the kitchen quickly becomes a lesson in self-awareness and maturity to a point at which woman may safely confront the elements of the feminine myth and, having done so, may elect a style of life which allows her new awareness to coexist with some elements of tradition.

This gradual awakening takes place as the young wife prepares some meat for her tradition-bound husband's dinner. As she prepares the meat she begins to reflect in an associative manner upon her life before and after marriage. Objects and qualities related to the preparation of the meat bring to the protagonist's mind recollections of past events or presagings of things to come. Similarly, particular elements of her recollections or musings about the future return her to a comparable element in her present reality. The total effect of this contrasting of
physical reality with fantasy or mental reality is an awareness of the brutal shattering of canons which the protagonist has in the past espoused as having been established by time and tradition as part of the myth of femininity. These canons are presented in the forms of idyllically romantic and sentimental situations, are referred to by the terms "mitos" and "hadas" and are presented at times in the form of proverbs. In all cases it is clear that the protagonist experiences a deep sense of having been defrauded or deceived.

The protagonist early establishes a radical difference between the established canons of femininity and her own negative perception and experience of these canons or of the reality behind them. This opposition is first made between the symbol of the spotless kitchen and the protagonist's own view of the symbol as representing sickness. This contrast is brought about by the initial use of several reverential verbs followed shortly by references to disease and death, suggesting thereby a deceptively destructive symbol.

La cocina resplandece de blancura. Es una lástima tener que mancillarla con el uso. Habría que sentarse a contemplarla, a cerrar los ojos, a evocarla. Fijándose bien esta nitidez, esta pulcritud carece del exceso deslumbrador que produce escalofríos en los sanitarios. ¿O es el halo de desinfectantes, los pasos de goma de las afanadoras, la presencia oculta de la enfermedad y de la muerte? (p. 7)

Despite this incipient awareness of the destructive nature of the ideal of femininity symbolized by the kitchen, the protagonist is still to some extent bound by tradition; as a result, she experiences both a sense of resignation in the face of tradition and a sense of guilt at not having lived up to the ideal.

Mi lugar está aquí. Desde el principio de los tiempos ha
estado aquí. En el proverbio alemán la mujer es sinónimo de Klüche, Kinder, Kirche. Yo anduve extraviada en aulas, en calles, en oficinas, en cafés; desperdiciada en destrezas que ahora he de olvidar para adquirir otras. Por ejemplo, elegir el menú. (p. 7)

What began as feelings of illness at ease in the kitchen now develops into an open confrontation between the protagonist and the traditional view of woman's place as limited to the home. By adopting a mocking tone, which immediately separates the protagonist's views from those of the traditions she opposes, she is able to present the mythification of woman's role in the kitchen. The hallowed nature of the cook is first suggested in the protagonist's need to invoke the help of time and tradition in undertaking so difficult a task as the preparation of a meal.

(... ) elegir el menú. ¿Cómo podría llevar al cabo labor tan improba sin la colaboración de la sociedad, de la historia entera? ( ... ) ¿Qué me aconseja usted para la comida de hoy, experimentada ama de casa, inspiración de las madres ausentes y presentes, voz de la tradición, secreto a voces de los supermercados? (pp. 7-8)

The element of the myth which exalts woman as cook is enhanced by the addition of a supernatural element, guardian angels, in the form of recipe books. This introduction of the spirit element suggests the "hada del hogar," a suggestion reinforced by the combination in both spirit forms of seemingly contradictory elements, a condition which we have already seen as characteristic of the "hada" in Wolf's definition.

En un estante especial, adecuada a mi estatura, se alinean mis espíritus protectores, esas aplaudidas equilibristas que concilian en las páginas de los recetarios las contradicciones más irreducibles: la esbeltez y la gula, el aspecto vistoso y la economía, la celeridad y la suculencia. Con sus combinaciones infinitas: la esbeltez y la economía, la celeridad y el aspecto vistoso, la suculencia y ... (p. 7)
The recipe books maintain the rapt attention and adherence of their followers by offering not only the seemingly impossible combinations and contradictions just mentioned but also by playing on the ignorance with an appearance of knowledge and exoticism. This deceptive approach produces a strong reaction in the protagonist, a woman accustomed to rational analysis, causing her to reject such dishes as "La cena de don Quijote," "Pajaritos de centro de cara," and "Bigos a la rumana." The first she rejects as a hoax, the second as vague, and the last because she feels that if she knew the technical terms involved in the recipe, she would not need the cookbook as a guide.

The protagonist rejects the slighting of her intelligence by the authors of the recipe books on the one hand and their assumption, on the other, that she has been initiated into the secrets of the "sect of the cook" through long and concentrated apprenticeship in the kitchen. She boldly sets herself apart from the experience of other women, but this conflict of roles leads once again to feelings of inadequacy and guilt and to the inevitability of failure in and consequent punishment for having attempted an undertaking for which she was ill qualified.

The protagonist now sets about preparing some meat for the evening meal and, using the redness and rawness of the meat as a point of departure, begins a series of flash-backs which reveal her experience of the shattering of several elements of the myth which concern marriage and the relationships of men and women, an experience made even ruder by its setting against the generally highly sentimentalized background of the honeymoon.

The first of these references is to the protagonist's first
experience of love-making and is replete with mythical references which yield a final image of woman as victim.

Woman is the victim of that canon which obliges the husband, regardless of circumstances, to act in accordance with the masculine stereotype of behavior. Strict adherence to prescribed patterns of behavior makes him oblivious to the real cause of his wife's cries. The protagonist, herself following a prescribed pattern of passivity and simulation, presents herself as the victim of brutal conquest by associating herself with the tortured Cuauhtémoc.

The falseness of the husband's interpretation of his wife's cries produces a feeling of deception in the wife, a feeling soon enhanced by direct reference to the fraudulent attempt of nylon trimmings to simulate real lace and by reference to other adornments which provide the appearance of femininity. As in earlier confrontations with the deceptions of the feminine myth, these feelings are accompanied by one of inadequacy in the fulfilling of the canon, an inadequacy here represented by her working woman's hands which do not live up to the canon of softness prescribed by the myth.

Bajo la yema de mis dedos—no muy sensibles por el prolongado contacto con las teclas de la máquina de escribir—el nylon de mi camison de desposada resbalaba en un fraudulento esfuerzo
The protagonist's final deceptions come after her husband has fallen asleep. The first of the canons which is dashed here is that which holds that the two shall become as one; for the husband falls asleep immediately after intercourse, leaving the protagonist with the only reminder of her premarital condition (now that her virginity is no more), a sleepless loneliness. Awareness of her loneliness leads quickly to an awareness of the falsity of the canon of romantic love which holds that lovers dream of one another. She rejects this canon violently with the words "Pero es una mentira. Yo no soy el sueño que sueña, que sueña, que sueña; yo no soy el reflejo de un imagen en un cristal (...)" (p. 10). Having discarded the canon of romantic encounter and continued infatuation, she proceeds, in her recollections, to a description of her chance meeting with her future husband and of the very ordinary and unromantic series of events which led ultimately to their marriage. This rejection of the canon of romantic love during the honeymoon leads her to a similar rejection of the canon in the context of daily life, here contrasting the canon as illustrated in the parting of Romeo and Juliette with her husband's daily morning good-by.

The protagonist now addresses herself directly to the feminine myth, revealing once again the contradictory components of the myth.
The first of these is the unique view of woman as servant.

He de mantener la casa impecable, la ropa lista, el ritmo de la alimentación infalible. Pero no se me paga ningún sueldo, no se me concede un día libre a la semana, no puedo cambiar de amo. (p. 15)

This role of obedient and efficient servant extends to her duties outside the house, thus making her the indirect servant of her husband's business interests.

Debo, por otra parte, contribuir al sostenimiento del hogar y he de desempeñar con eficacia un trabajo en el que el jefe exige y los compañeros conspiran y los subordinados odian. (p. 15)

Not unlike the Cinderella myth, this servant must transform herself into the lady of high society.

En mis ratos de ocio me transformo en una dama de sociedad (...) que se abona a la ópera, que controla su peso, que renueva su guardarropa, que cuida la lozanía de su cutis, que se conserva atractiva, que está al tanto de los chismes, (...) (p. 15)

At the same time that woman in the role of wife performs the two roles just discussed, she is expected to perform a host of other functions which appear to undermine her physical and mental health. She is also expected to possess a remarkable credulity and a willingness to avoid discovering the realities behind hers and her husband's lives. Such approximations of reality as she may attain are discounted as imagination.

As the protagonist enumerates the aspects of the myth just described, she returns to the use of certain vocabulary items which hark back to the original kitchen-hospital image at the beginning of the story. The outstanding vocabulary here is "padece alucinaciones" and
"convalesciente." The protagonist's equation of the traditional role and place of woman with illness enunciated at the beginning of the story is thus given substance as the myth gradually reveals its potential for destruction.

During the protagonist's musings and reflections, the unattended meat has begun to burn and eventually becomes inedible. This situation presents the protagonist with her first chance to test the lessons just learned in the kitchen. Her responses to the question of what to do with the burned meat are initially two, both conforming to the canons of the myth. The first option is to play the crafty scatter-brain and to distract the husband's attention and thus cover up the error; the second option is that of conforming to the image of the inept, mentally sluggish wife who seeks consolation in the knowledge that others have made the same mistake. That both options are aspects of the feminine myth is indicated by references to mythic elements in each: "doctora Corazon" in the former, and "los ogros de los cuentos" in the latter.

Both options are based on the desire to remove responsibility and censure for the action from the protagonist. In the first option this is accomplished through deception and adherence to a false image and avoids completely the husband's wrath.

Lo que precede ahora es abrir la ventana, conectar el purificador de aire para que no huela a nada cuando venga mi marido. Y yo saldría muy mona a recibirllo a la puerta, con mi mejor vestido, mi mejor sonrisa y mi más cordial invitación a comer fuera.

Es una posibilidad. (...) Yo me cuidaría mucho de no mencionar el incidente y sería considerada como una esposa un poco irresponsable, con proclividades a la frivolidad pero no como una tarada. Esta es la primera imagen pública que proyecto y he de mantenerme después consecuente con ella, aunque sea inexacta. (pp. 18-19)
In seeking to remove responsibility from the protagonist, the second option offers adherence to the image of the common, inept and inexperienced housewife, an image made all the more attractive, when offered as a palliative to the husband's wrath, by its regular use by his mother. In contrast to the first option, in the second adherence to the canons of the myth would mitigate the husband's wrath rather than avoid it completely.

Possible failure of these two options causes the protagonist to review what has in fact happened in the kitchen.

Recapitulemos. Aparece, primero el trozo de carne con un color, una forma, un tamaño. Luego cambia y se pone más bonita y se siente una muy contenta. Luego vuelve a cambiar y ya no está tan bonita. Y sigue cambiando y cambiando y cambiando y lo que uno no atina es cuándo pararlo el alto. Porque si yo dejo este trozo de carne indefinidamente expuesto al fuego, se consume hasta que no queden ni rastros de él. Y el trozo de carne que daba la impresión de ser algo tan sólido, tan real, ya no existe. (p. 20)

She now draws a parallel between the state of the meat and that of her marriage, catching herself short of accepting the parallel as inevitable in all its aspects.

¿Entonces? Mi marido también da la impresión de solidez y de realidad cuando estamos juntos, cuando lo toco, cuando lo veo. Seguramente cambia, y cambio yo también, aunque de manera tan lenta, tan morosa que ninguno de los dos lo advierte. Después se va y bruscamente se convierte en recuerdo y ... Ah, no, no voy a caer en esa trampa: (...) Además, no es la consecuencia que se deriva lícitamente del episodio de la carne. (p. 20)

The drawing of this parallel and rejection of its conclusions causes the protagonist to look beyond the immediate question of what to do about the burned dinner and to consider carefully options to her present style of life and the possible outcome of these options. She
considers first a style of behavior which places all authority with her, subordinating the husband to her will, a style of behavior which allows no quarter for either party since the new woman will be eternally disdainful and unconcerned for the wishes of her mate. Of particular importance here is the opening sentence with its emphasis on use of her will. "Yo seré, de hoy en adelante, lo que elija en este momento."

(p. 21) This departure from the norm of accepted feminine behavior is now contrasted with the traditional role, with the "caso típico," with the myth. Here the protagonist considers the matriarchs of the past who, through a feigned humility "lograron la obediencia ajena hasta al más irracional de sus caprichos." (p. 21) Both these options are rejected as unauthentic, as not corresponding to the true nature of the protagonist.

The protagonist has now come to a full appreciation of the existential dilemma which she faces as she decides what course of action to take in her future life. The symbolic implications of the burned meat and the recollections associated with it have brought her to an awareness that the myth of femininity or of the "hada del hogar" requires daily sacrifice of self and degradation for the most insignificant trifles.

Yo lo acepté al casarme y estaba dispuesta a llegar hasta el sacrificio en aras de la armonía conyugal. Pero yo contaba con que el sacrificio (...) no se me demandaría más que en la Ocasión Sublime (...). No con lo que me he topado hoy que es algo muy insignificante, muy ridículo. (p. 22)

To avert this condition will not be easy, for she must first convince her husband that there is need for a change, a prospect which presents particular problems.

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Nuestra convivencia no podrá ser más problemática. Y él no quiere conflictos de ninguna índole. Menos aún conflictos tan abstractos, tan absurdos, tan metafísicos como los que yo le plantearía. (p. 22)

The story ends on an uncertain note: "Y sin embargo...."

(p. 22) The protagonist has passed through the conditions of nausea (references to sickness and verbs such as "repugnar") and fear (the confrontation of her husband with her error and her own confrontation with her concerns about self-worth) and has become aware of the need for authenticity in her life. To achieve this authenticity she rejects the patterned solutions offered by the myth and opts for a course of action which she herself must chart. Given the traditional and unsympathetic nature of her husband, the uncertainty lies in her ability to make the existentially appropriate decisions regularly in future circumstances.

Domingo

In "Domingo" the author offers us the portrait of a woman who has broken with certain aspects of traditionally prescribed female behavior and has come to know aspects of herself of which she was previously unaware. Having found outlets for creative ability and for a deep-seated sensuality (that is, for the articulation of her authentic personality), she has arrived at an accommodation with tradition. From her standpoint of contented adjustment she watches her husband and her guests as they act out traditional patterns of male-female behavior at an "open house" one Sunday.

The title suggests a resurrection of sorts, a rejuvenation, a suggestion borne out by a later reference to a new beginning after a long entombment in a very traditional marriage. The author's usual irony contrasts this view of "domingo" with that of the day of visita-
tion in which we are shown a variety of characters whose adherence to
cliches of tradition and routine precludes any serious improvement of
color or knowledge of self. The irony is made even greater when
we realize that on what is traditionally a day of resurrection the pro-
tagonist voluntarily sacrifice her gains (the discovery of her body
and of her new ability to express herself) "en aras del hogar" and re-
turns for one day to the world of stereotyped roles which she has re-
jected for herself.

Unlike the couple in the previous story, Edith and Carlos ex-
perience no shattering of ideals early in their marriage. Rather,
their marriage would appear to be based on sound emotional, physical
and economic grounds. We learn that each tried to be considerate of
the other and that each supported the other in their early days of mar-
rried life.

At the beginning of their marriage mutual physical attraction
was very strong and Edith enjoyed her experience of physical love.
Thus we hear of "la gran pasión que, a su hora, fue Carlos." (p. 29)
Edith informs us briefly of her husband's sexual prowess and notes that
the relationship of husband and wife has been based on friendship and
loyalty in addition to physical passion: "Pero en la cama se comportaba
mejor que muchos y era un buen compañero y un amigo leal." (p. 29)

Two elements now interrupt the felicity of this seemingly well-
grounded marriage, the first of which is the appearance of routine.

El primer automóvil, la primera estola de mink, el primer
collar de diamantes fueron acontecimientos memorables. Lo
demás se volvió rutina, aunque nunca llegara al grado del
hastío. (p. 40)

Routine establishes itself not only with respect to the economic side of
the marriage but also affects the once passionate physical basis. Thus it is that we hear of her later discovery of her body's potential for feeling and expression after years of marital routine: "el descubrimiento de su propio cuerpo, sepultado bajo largos años de rutina conyugal." (p. 24)

The second intrusive element is an extreme of exclusivity on Edith's part towards her husband's friends.

Edith recordó, no sin cierta vergüenza, los esfuerzos que hizo de recién casada para separarlos [a Jorge y a Carlos]. No es que estuviera celosa de Jorge; es que quería a Carlos como una propiedad exclusiva suya. ¡Qué tonta, qué egoísta, qué joven había sido! (p. 31)

The immaturity and naivete of these past actions of Edith's are soon compared with a similar present attitude on the part of the homosexual couple at the party, a comparison which leads to the following conclusion.

La intransigencia es propia de los jóvenes, la espontaneidad y la manía de dar un valor absoluto a las palabras, a los gestos, a las actitudes. (p. 39)

Edith's recognition of the naivete of accepting an achieved condition as permanent is offered us at a point considerably later in her life and after the onset of routine and its consequences. That Edith was so naíve is evident in the shock which she experiences when she learns of her husband's first infidelity. "¿No estuvo Edith a punto de morir la primera vez que supo que Carlos la engañaba?" (p. 27)

Further comparison of her own actions with those of the homosexual couple Jorge and Luis (who personify one of the many caricatures of male-female relationships at Edith's "open house") reveals that Edith's first reaction was to reject the relationship by repudiating her
husband and thus refusing to face up to the problem. "Antes también Edith hubiera hecho lo mismo que Luis y Jorge: separarse, irse."

(p. 26) Her own course of action is otherwise; she becomes herself involved in a love affair with an artist friend, Rafael. There develops with Rafael such an intense passion that Edith feels completely shattered when Rafael, unable to keep up any relationship for long, leaves and the affair breaks off.

The affair with Rafael, although it is the cause of an emotional collapse for Edith, provides her with the means by which she will now cope with her future life. One thing that Edith has learned from the experience with Rafael is the nature of her real self ("su ser más verdadero, tal como la había conocido, tal como la había amado Rafael.") (p. 23). This self is a very sensuous self and Rafael provides the means for its articulation. That means is art.

(...) a Rafael le debía (...) la revelación de esa otra forma de existencia que era la pintura. De espectadora apasionada pasó a modelo complaciente y en los últimos meses de su relación, a aprendiz aplicada. Había acabado por improvisar un pequeño estudio en el fondo del jardín. (p. 24)

This quotation offers us a brief account of the transformation of Edith from a state of passive observation to one of consciousness of other realities and finally to an active life of expressing the newly discovered realities.

Edith's newly articulated personality allows her to return to her family and to perform all the usual routine duties of wife and mother. The situation is made possible by a daily escape from the demands of the home into a world in which she can give her sensuality full rein: escape to her art studio in the back yard.
Here in the studio she is able, through her painting, to capture the essence of sensuality in sundry experiences over the past years. That her nature is a truly sensual one and not simply one limited to sexual delights (as the references to Rafael and to her husband might suggest if taken alone) is revealed in the following account of her experiences in the studio.

(... se encerraba en esa habitación luminosa, buscando más allá de la tela tensada en el caballete, más allá de ese tejido que era como un obstáculo, esa sensación de felicidad y de plenitud que había conocido algunas veces: al final de un parto laborioso; tendida a la sombra, frente al mar; saboreando pequeños trozos de queso camembert untados sobre pan moreno y áspero; cuidando los brotes de los crisantemos amarillos que alguien le regaló en unas navidades; pasando la mano sobre la superficie pulida de la madera; sí, haciendo el amor con Rafael y, antes, muy al principio del matrimonio, con su marido. (pp. 24-25)

This figure of contented self knowledge, this figure which has learned to express an authentic self amidst the myriad routines and conventions of life, contrasts sharply with the other characters mentioned in the story. Edith's husband, her former lover Rafael, and all the guests invited to her "open house" appear to act out roles in the hope of avoiding the realities of their individual selves. Without exception they reveal an inability to maintain a relationship, suggesting irresponsibility and unwillingness to move beyond the stereotype in relationships.

Of these characters the first to be delineated is Edith's former lover Rafael. Apart from his role in the evolution of Edith's personality, all other references to him suggest inadequacies. His unwillingness to come to terms with his surroundings and responsibilities is suggested by a vocabulary which records lack of direction, quick departures
and constant fleeing. Prime among these references are the words "vagabundear," "huir" and "viajes."

Several men at the party appear to live a life of stereotypes. Among these, Hugo Jiménez and Vicente Weston are primarily sexual beings, the former deriving his image (and identity) from association with flashy women. That Hugo's relationship with women is that of owner with object is suggested in the use of the words "ostentar" and "hallazgos" in presenting his former mistress: "Porque, a veces eran verdaderos hallazgos como aquella modelo francesa despampanante que ostentó fugazmente Hugo Jiménez." (p. 28)

Vicente Weston envisions life as a routine sequence of associations with whores, a situation which becomes ever worse. "Carajo ¡estoy harto de putas!" (p. 32) and "Vendra otra y será peor" (p. 32). He thus adopts the role of the martyr, laying full responsibility for his condition at the feet of others.

The French model, as the only other female figure about whom much information is given us, appears as the complete opposite of Edith. She is introduced as an adornment to Hugo's person and is reputed to choose her male associates for their ability to advance her apparently unrealistic goal of film star. This use of men for her own aims causes her to avoid developing deep relationships, thus relegating her to the non-sensitive world of objects which bounce off one another only to continue this reaction ad infinitum. The atmosphere in which this interplay of stereotyped roles is presented is one which emphasizes appearances rather than reality. Thus it is that at the beginning of the story Edith checks the condition of her living room to make sure that, on the one day in which she returns
to the world of appearances, everything is in its proper place.

Edith lanzó en torno suyo una mirada crítica, escrutadora. En vano se mantuvo al acecho de la aparición de esa mota de polvo que se esconde siempre a los ojos de la más suspicaz ama de casa y se hace evidente en cuanto llega la primera visita. Nada. La alfombra impecable, los muebles en su sitio, el piano abierto y encima de él, dispuestos en un cuidadoso desorden, los papeles pautados con los que su marido trabajaba. (p. 23)

The rigid conformation of objects to an appropriate place, the apparent all-importance of form, suggests a restricting of the imagination and of the self. One might almost say that it requires a sacrifice of self to an expected form. This non-vital world dominated by form is the world which Edith has rejected in favor of the vitality of her art studio. The story ends as she withdraws mentally from the stereotypes around her and thinks of Monday and a return to that sensual, vital world in the back yard.

Pero recordó la tela comenzada en su estudio, el roce peculiar del pantalón de pana contra sus piernas; el sweater viejo, tan natural como una segunda piel. Lunes. Ahora recordaba, además, que había citado al jardinero. Inspeccionarían juntos ese macizo de hortensias que no se quería dar bien. (p. 46)

Cabacita blanca

In "Cabecita blanca" Castellanos offers the reader the portrait of a woman who unwittingly brings about the destruction and estrangement of her family and insures her perpetual isolation. Two attitudes which the protagonist consistently exhibits are the causes of these final conditions. The first attitude is a refusal to face the reality of her daily existence. She is possessed of a Candidesque naïveté which precludes any objective view of reality. She prefers instead adherence to the idealized realities offered by her own sheltered youth, by clichés,
by films, and by the full-color pictures of women's magazines.

The second attitude which seals her fate and that of her family is a steadfast refusal to act; rather, she reacts. Things happen to her in her life; she seeks out nothing and takes the responsibility for nothing. Thus she views her marriage, the birth of her children, her husband's philandering, and the collapse of her family simply as events in which she took only a passive role and for which she is not to blame.

The protagonist, Castellanos seems to say, represents the product of a society which has for so long insisted on woman's passive acceptance of and adherence to an idealized, if unattainable, reality. This has been achieved at the cost of the development of the female intellect and the ossification of woman in an immature, irresponsible, non-rational, purely sensory and passive state.

In existential terms, Justina, the protagonist, is object; she is inert, passive, reacting only to outside stimuli, taking no action of her own. With any action taken or not taken goes also responsibility for that action. Thus the collapse of her family is laid squarely at her feet, but she refuses to acknowledge the responsibility and shifts the blame to outside factors. Justina is, for all intents, the incarnation of the feminine myth, a condition reinforced by a world view expressed in endless clichés and contradictions.

Castellanos introduces Justina as a creature of stimulus and response at the very beginning of the story, where we find her poring over a full-color picture which illustrates a recipe in a woman's magazine.

La señora Justina miraba, como hipnotizada el retrato de ese postre, con merengue y fresas, que ilustraba (a todo color)
la receta que daba la revista. (p. 47)

Of importance here is that Justina is spellbound by a device which we have previously noted as a symbol of woman as mentally inept, namely the full-color picture accompanying the recipe. Justina's response to color and to food stimuli relegate her to the uncritical, purely responsive realm of the immature.

Justina finds it necessary to alter the reality around her so that it will reinforce the emotional needs which are critical to the definition of her personality. Prime among these needs is the appearance of innocence. It is a response to a view of herself as innocent which is the earliest chronological reference to her character in the story.

Cuando la señora Justina era una muchacha se suponía que era tan inocente que no podía ser dejada sola con un hombre sin que él se sintiera tentado de mostrárle las realidades de la vida subiéndole las faldas o algo. (p. 50)

From this quotation we may infer a further relationship which will affect Justina's character. That is, innocence appears as good when contrasted with a knowledge of reality, here seen as the evil of sexual knowledge. This association is reinforced by the image of sexuality as the attacks of the Devil. "La señora Justina resistía siempre con arañazos y mordiscos las asechanzas del demonio." (p. 50)

When faced with the possibility of yielding to sexual overtures, Justina alters her reality by fainting, thus relieving herself of any conscious awareness of having lost her innocence. She attributes the absence of her lover, upon her awakening, to his flight in shame for having brought innocence so near to ruin, a view which contrasts sharply with the lover's interpretation of what happened.
Pero una vez sintió que estaba a punto de desfallecimiento. Se acomodó en el sofá, cerró los ojos...y cuando volvió a abrirlos estaba sola. Su tentador había huido, avergonzado de su conducta que estuvo a punto de llevar a una joven honrada al borde del precipicio. Jamás procuró volver a encontrárla pero cuando el azar los reunió él la miraba con extremo desprecio y si permanecían lo suficientemente próximos como para poder hablarle al oído sin ser escuchado más que por ella, le decía:
--¡Piruja! (pp. 50-51)

Reacting to what she terms near loss of innocence, Justina considers entering a convent, again following prescribed female options of behavior. In this she is frustrated by the cost of a dowry. She settles for membership in a lay order where she meets the man who will be her husband, and purity and innocence appear to triumph. "Se amaron, desde el primer momento, en Cristo y se regalaban, semanalmente, rami-

lletes espirituales" (p. 51).

Unable to compete with the fiancé's verses in both art and originality, due especially to her inability to read Scripture with any degree of comprehension, she grasps at material in the Gospels which promises that those who humble themselves shall be exalted. Having now reinforced her innocence and inability with scriptural backing, she more than ever assumes an attitude of unknowing and credits this lack of imagination, of comprehension, and of ability to compete with her fiancé with being the reasons for his having chosen her as wife. The terms in which Justina describes her winning of her husband present her as the victorious incarnation of unimaginative naïveté and inability before whom Juan Carlos, both imaginative and able, falls victim. "Gracias a su falta de imaginación, a su imposibilidad de competir con Juan Carlos, Juan Carlos cayó redondo a sus pies." (p. 52) Victorious in her innocence and naïveté, she praises herself for having continued these
attitudes throughout her marriage.

The wedding night, as we might expect, introduced her to some of those realities of life from which she had been hidden in earlier times. We first hear of her candid shock at finding her husband naked and excited before her.

(...), la sorpresa horrorizada (...) cuando vio por primera vez, desnudo frente a ella y frenético, quién sabe por qué, a un hombre al que no había visto más que con la corbata y el saco puestos y hablando unciosamente del patronazgo de San Luis Gonzaga (...). (p. 52)

With the realities of marriage come several further developments, the first of which we have just seen intimated. That is, Justina regards her husband as a stereotype. Before her marriage she saw him as a male stereotype, the middle-class individual with coat and tie. When the husband removes these stereotypic trappings, Justina loses her point of reference temporarily but shortly stereotypes him anew in his role as husband.

Un marido en la casa es como un colchón en el suelo. No lo puedes pisar porque no es propio; ni saltar porque es ancho. No te queda más que ponerlo en su sitio. Y el sitio de un hombre es su trabajo, la cantina, o la casa chica. (p. 49)

Having accepted this stereotype, she experiences neither shock nor bother when she hears some time later that "Juan Carlos había puesto casa a su secretaria." (p. 56), since this action of his, if true, only fits the stereotype.

The second development is a renewal of Justina's earlier equation of conscious sexuality with evil. After marriage, she views sexual activity as a disease. There are several direct references to this. The first occurs as a rationalization of her increasing ability as a
sexual partner.

¿No estaría contribuyendo al empeoramiento de una enfermedad que quizás era curable cediendo a los caprichos nocturnos de Juan Carlos en vez de llevarlo a consultar con un médico?)

(p. 53)

Uncertain of her temporary conclusions, however, Justina consults with a priest who in his response uses language which reinforces Justina's reference to disease.

Juan Carlos' "infirmity" finally shows signs of abating with the birth of the first child, a son, and Juan Carlos returns to the stereotyped place of the husband, in this case to work and to a mistress.

A partir del nacimiento de su primer hijo Juan Carlos comenzó a dar síntomas de alivio. Y gracias a Dios, porque con la salud casi recuperada por completo podía dedicar más tiempo al trabajo en el que ya no se daba abasto y tuvieron que conseguirle una secretaria. (p. 53)

The effect of Justina's machinations to have the world conform to her ideal of sexless unknowing is readily visible in her manipulation of her son's character, for she creates in him a replacement for her sexually-active husband, a replacement who is offered female standards of dress and behavior and whose affections are directed exclusively towards his mother. The resultant creation is a combination of male authority figure and female adherence to expected norms. Castellanos once more offers the figure of the male homosexual as a caricature of adherence to prescribed behavior.

Justina makes a deliberate attempt to have "el varoncito" be different from other boys. There is first an association of Luisito with the Christ Child, an association originally made because of his beauty, traditionally a female virtue. "Luisito (...) era tan lindo
que lo alquilaban como niño Dios en la época de los nacimientos." (p. 54) This is followed shortly by descriptions of Luisito dressed in lace and wearing long curls, again conditions traditionally associated with female standards of dress. "Se veía hecho un cromo con su ropón de encaje y con sus caireles rubios que no le cortaron hasta los doce años." (p. 54) Having prepared the reader with these non-traditional presentations of a male figure, the author now makes an explicit contrast between Luisito's behavior and that of boys in general.

Era muy seriecito y muy formal. No andaba, como todos los otros muchachos de su edad, buscando los charcos para chapotear en ellos ni trepándose a los árboles ni revolcándose en la tierra. No, él no. La ropa le dejaba de venir, y era una lástima, sin un remiendo, sin una mancha, sin que pareciera haber sido usada. Le dejaba de venir porque había crecido. Y era un modelo de conducta. Comulgaba cada primer viernes, cantaba en el coro de la Iglesia con su voz de soprano, tan limpia y tan bien educada que, por fortuna, conservó siempre. Leía, sin que nadie se lo mandara, libros de edificación. (pp. 54-55)

Luisito (always referred to in the diminutive) continues his exercise of feminine roles and, in a seemingly unwitting repetition of Justina's adherence to a child's role, he now requests nightly a return to the close physical relationship which he enjoyed with his mother as an infant. In this role as child Luisito and his mother enjoy a relationship which essentially replaces the husband and his association with active sexuality with a seemingly asexual relationship which none the less is exclusivist and offensive to the other members of the family.

La señora Justina no hubiera pedido más pero Dios le hizo el favor de que, aparte de todo, Luisito fuera muy cariñoso con ella. En vez de andar de parranda (...) se quedaba en la casa platicando con ella, deteniéndole la madeja de estambre mientras la señora Justina la enrollaba, preguntándole cuál era su secreto para que la sopa de arroz le saliera siempre tan rica. Y a la hora de dormirse Luisito le pedía, todas las
The author continues the elaboration of Luisito's homosexual tendencies through references to "un negocio de decoración" (p. 56), acquisition of a male servant since no woman could replace his mother, possession of a cat as pet in a well-decorated apartment, a promise not to marry without his mother's consent, and a continual repudiation of his sisters in favor of his mother. In the end it is Luisito alone who comes to see his "cabecita blanca" after both daughters have rejected her.

We have dealt thus far with the development of Justina's character and have established her as a woman whose basic emotional needs are an aura of innocence (or naïveté), self-negating compliance (martyrdom), and a reliance on stereotyped behavior. These three elements continue to form the basis for Justina's destruction of her family, but the destruction is achieved only through the addition of another characteristic: a view of all other women as potential rivals and thus in need of elimination.

This view of other woman appears early in the narrative and juxtaposes the images of the husband's mother, his mistress and his daughter.

No, la receta era para las grandes ocasiones: la invitación formal al Jefe al que se pensaba pedir un aumento de sueldo o de categoría; la puntilla al prestigio culinario y legendario de la suegra; la batalla de la reconquista de un esposo que empieza a descarríarse y quiere probar su fuerza de seducción en la jovencita que podía ser la compañera de estudios de su hija.

---Hola, mamá. Ya llegué.
La señora Justina (...) examinó (...) a su hija Lupe.
(p. 47)
In the narrative part of the above quotation it is clear that Justina feels she must outdo her mother-in-law, an effect accomplished through the fantasy of preparing a more exotic dessert, the reference of "la receta" here.

The mistress poses a slightly different problem since she is a much younger woman and has lured Justina's husband away. Unable to compete with a younger rival, Justina appears to mark all young women, including her daughters, as being of the same category. This behavior she first exhibits towards her daughter Lupe, whose arrival coincides with Justina's thoughts about her battle to recover her husband from his mistress. Justina's reproof of Lupe is all the more obviously a defense mechanism since Lupe has not been out with male companions but has come home quite early after a long day of work followed by a dull evening with some female friends.

Unable to find substantial fault with Lupe, Justina wishes to reprove her daughter for failure to adhere to the expected dating behavior of young women. Since the reality of Lupe's non-romantic life is unacceptable, Justina creates a stereotyped pattern for her daughter so that she, Justina, may have a conventional reason for reproving Lupe. Lupe is thus placed in a position in which she would be reproved whether or not she conforms to expected patterns of behavior.

Similarly, Justina fails to understand that Lupe's need for attention may cause occasional outbursts in the hope of sharing some of the attention which Justina reserves for her son alone. Justina responds by stereotyping her daughter as an hysterical and allows Luisito, the son, to slap Lupe as his father would have done, a patterned reaction to stereotyped behavior.
Carmela, Justina's other daughter, removes herself from the scene as quickly as possible. She seeks the traditional route to happiness by marrying early. The marriage lasts long enough to produce two children. Then the father departs under very hackneyed circumstances: "(...) acabó por abandonarla y aceptar un empleo como agente viajero en el que nadie supo ya cómo localizarlo." (p. 61). Carmela now becomes the classic disoriented divorcée, but as an unmarried woman she is apparently still under the moral authority of the eldest male in the household, her brother Luisito, who exercises an emotional whip over her through her children.

Justina's adherence to the role of "cabacita blanca" (the symbol of the perfect mother) drives her husband to take a mistress and creates three distorted types in her children, all of them caricatures of feminine behavior: Luisito, the homosexual son; Carmela, an irresponsible and exploitable divorcée; and Lupe, a frustrated and apparently sexless prototype of the "virgen fuerte" who has not been able to break the ties of childhood which bind her to a house in which she is both uncomfortable and unwanted.

Castellanos seems to suggest that the continual advocacy of aspects of the feminine myth embodied in Justina brings distress not only to the individual who follows these precepts, but also that the myth is self propagating, visiting misfortune and discontent on the next generation. The ultimate sterility which is the effect of the myth is clear in the loss of the husband to a mistress, the non-reproductive lives of Luisito and Lupe, and the failure of Carmela's marriage.

*Album de familia*
The title story of the collection addresses a number of elements of the feminine myth but most especially that of the "virgen fuerte," thus continuing the concerns expressed by Castellanos in her thesis regarding the position of the intellectual or artistic woman in society and the need for authenticity of character among women. The occasion of the narrative is the return to Mexico of its first recipient of the "Premio de las Naciones," Matilde Casanova, poet and former professor of literature at the National Preparatory School, who has agreed to meet with some of her former pupils and with two present literature students from the National University. The meeting offers ample opportunity for discussion of that form of the feminine myth known as the "virgen fuerte" and for finally admitting to the inherent sterility of this canon of behavior. Matilde herself is revealed as the sterile product of an inability to reconcile biological needs and intellectual drive.

Each of the other women has had to come to some accommodation with this form of the myth. Thus, Elvira Robledo, now divorced, teaches literature at the UNAM. Aminta Jordan, a novelist and versatile journalist, leads a free-wheeling life of clandestine sexual encounters. Victoria Benavides, Matilde's secretary, writes her mistress' correspondence and seeks her further fulfillment in helping to create and maintain Matilde's image. Josefa Cândara, in addition to her work for radio and the film industry, writes poetry, raises a family and has a reputation as a flower arranger; she considers herself as the only one of the group to have fulfilled her entire potential as a woman.

To establish perspective for the discussion of the myth the author adds three additional characters. Two of these, Cecilia and Susana, presently studying at the UNAM, appear to function as witnesses.
for the reader. The third, a female journalist seeking an interview with Matilde, establishes the story as an exposé of a national myth and betrays its origin in Tablero de damas, a drama in the Usigli tradition published by Castellanos some twenty years previous.

Early in the work, the author presents certain contradictions which raise questions in the mind of the reader regarding the protagonist's character and the quality of her poetry. We learn first that Matilde Casanova is "(...) la poetisa mexicana recientemente agraciada con el Premio de las Naciones (...)" (p. 66). Later the reporter mentions her investigation into the background of the prize, of Matilde and of Matilde's colleagues. She summarizes her findings about the prize as follows:

Pero había un punto en el cual todos estaban de acuerdo: que lograrlo para México había sido una obra maestra de nuestra diplomacia. Antes de que Chile pudiera empezar a vangloriarse de Gabriela Mistral y su Nobel se le dio machetazo al caballo de espadas. (p. 69)

Matilde's having earned the prize on the merit of her works alone thus becomes suspect. This suspicion is confirmed when we learn shortly that her poetry is one of "temas (...) inocuos" (p. 71), that is, a poetry of neutral content, of vague scenes and non-specific references and lacking totally in ideology.

Matilde now makes her appearance in the story and Castellanos alludes for the first time to that element which lies at the root of Matilde's mediocrity, her inability to resolve the conflict of biological fulfillment with intellectual aspiration inherent in her image as "virgen fuerte."

Su rostro, cuyas facciones resultaban siempre borrosas en las
fotografías (...), había acabado por obedecer a una representación tan tenazmente reproduci da, desdibujando los rasgos hasta no dejar sino una superficie disponible, una especie de tierra de nadie, un sitio en el que les estaba prohibido entablar batalla a los antagonistas encarnizados, irreductibles que convivían en la persona de Matilde. (pp. 80-81)

The author follows this description shortly with references to her "neutralidad facial," (p. 81) "Parálisis," (p. 81) and finally "el gesto hierático de los indios," (p. 81) suggesting that Matilde is not merely neutral in her expression both verbal and facial, but in addition has become fixed in this state, unable to act or change or even unaware that an alternative exists. The reference to the stony-faced look of the Indian suggests, in the light of Castellanos' own works, resignation in the face of fate.

Having established that Matilde's neutrality of expression is due to the conflict of internal forces, Castellanos reinforces the conflict on three separate levels, gradually revealing the nature of the conflicting forces. On the most superficial level the conflict appears in contradictory orders for lunch which Matilde issues to her secretary. She first orders: "—Arroz a la mexicana, Victoria. Hace siglos que tengo el antojo." (p. 99) Later when lunch is announced, Matilde is distressed that it is "arroz a la mexicana."

—¿Arroz a la mexicana? ¿Cómo se te ocurre? Es un platillo que aborrezco, qué me produce alergia, que me han prohibido los médicos. ¿Qué es lo que te propones? ¿Envenenarme? (...)
—¡No estoy loca para encargar semejante incoherencia! (p. 117)

On an emotional level, the incoherence of her actions finds amplification in the drastic changes of mood which Matilde experiences. These moods range from one of self-deprecation and rejection of associa-
tion with the outside world to a desire to reject a cloistered existence for that of the open air and then a return to a rejection of her friends as "unas desconocidas" against whose prying questions she needs protection.

On a conscious level, the ultimate source of these contradictory states and actions is revealed as the unresolved conflict within Matilde between her desires for maternity and for a literary career, the latter of which she regards as her true and undeniable vocation. The poet's own admission of this problem appears in a brief interchange with one of the former students, who comments on Matilde's having spoken of her youth and the beginnings of her poetry "como si una cosa se contrapusiera con la otra." (p. 111). Matilde, in a succinct confession replies that "—No se contraponen, se anulan." (p. 111).

One of the two forces which devastate Matilde is the pressure of her vocation, her career as poet. Her attitude towards this vocation is that of one whose destiny is predetermined: the vocation is irresistible. "(...) yo sostengo que es [la poesía] una fatalidad, un destino que se nos impone y que hemos de cumplir o perecer." (pp. 104-105) The irresistible fatality implicit in these words is even further enhanced as Matilde describes the initiation into knowledge of her vocation, an experience fraught with pain and resignation.

(...) un descubrimiento de tal índole es algo tan fulminante, tan turbador, tan irrevocable como el diagnóstico de una enfermedad mortal. (p. 101)

The language which Matilde uses to describe her experience of the vocation which she feels she must follow recalls similar language in "Lección de cocina" which described the protagonist's experience of her
role as wife. Both women associate the inevitability of suffering with
the roles in which they presently find themselves. Unlike the protago­
nist of "Lección de cocina," however, Matilde is resigned to her lot:
the "enfermedad mortal" which is her poet's vocation. She appears to
assume that her "fatal illness" precludes any close association with
family or any others who could witness her infirm condition. Thus we
learn of her ever-increasing isolation from close associates as her
poetic production increases.

Cada poema me arrebataba (...) hasta unas regiones que me
volvían inaccesible aun para las criaturas que estuvieron
más próximas a mí. Para no tener testigos (...) yo me aislé
por completo. (p. 111)

This resignation to the inevitable separation of the poet from
what we may call the exercise of her feminine sexuality leads to a great
sense of guilt. Her guilt is expressed as "mi esterilidad" (p. 82) in
references to the figure of an unborn child which haunts her. It also
appears in expressions such as "...si lo hubiera visto," (p. 111) in
references to the memory, real or imagined, of a child whom she saw
die.

Guilt for her inability to create or maintain life causes the
poet to attempt to compensate through service to the unfortunate. She
seeks to do this through avenues traditionally reserved for women, and
more especially, for women who have rejected family life for a career;
she seeks her atonement first as a nurse and then as a schoolteacher.
At both she is a failure, lacking the aptitude for the former and, more
significantly for a poet, lacking the ability to communicate with the
Indian children whom she is expected to teach.

Unable to rid the poet in herself of her dissatisfaction as

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sexual woman and unable to alter this dissatisfaction through her belief in the restrictive nature of her vocation as poet, Matilde retreats from open defeat to become "el mascarón de proa de un navío que la empuja, que la orienta que la hace arribar a puertos felices" (p. 138). That is, faced with the total collapse of the role of the "virgen fuerte" which she so long advocated, Matilde loses all will. The disoriented instructor is subsequently given direction by Victoria Benavides, one of her former students, who assumes the task of perpetuating the role of the "virgen fuerte" out of fear of having to face a world for which she herself feels ill-prepared and poorly instructed.

Victoria thus finds compensation for her own lack of biological fulfillment in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the mothers of Unamuno; that is, her maternal needs are satisfied through her controlling someone else's life.

The other former students present at the soirée have rejected the role of the "virgen fuerte" and have, each in her own way, reached an accommodation between their biological needs as women and their vocation as writers. Significantly, full discussion of these accommodations takes place in the absence of Matilde, the incarnation of the rejected role.

The accommodations which each achieves are not, however, devoid of at least partial adherence to other stereotypic roles. Thus each woman is stereotyped by herself or by her classmates: Josefa is "la perfecta casada de Fray Luis" (p. 130); Aminta is "la Sunamita comuni-
cando su calor a algún David moribundo" (p. 129); Elvira is the husband-slaying Danaide (p. 135).

By the end of the afternoon's discussion each of Matilde's former students has come to the realization that the direction in which she has guided her life has not allowed her to achieve the total freedom from the feminine myth which she had hoped to achieve in rejecting the role of "virgen fuerte." All the former students recognize as a common failing in themselves and in each other a deep need to play the victim to a dominant partner, a feeling which they have noted in Matilde.

In these portraits of her fellow women Castellanos appears to offer several variations on the theme of the self-sacrificing woman. Of these the most sterile and devastating is that of the "virgen fuerte," for the total negation of the physical woman precludes the viability of the intellectual woman. Having rejected this model because of its destructive nature, what alternatives are there for woman? Can she achieve full independence of the feminine myth or must she continually sacrifice either her intellectuality or her biological needs? The author seems to answer the first half of the question in the negative. Aminta is dependent on constant physical contact with men to renew her self-esteem, as a consequence of which her intellectuality is sacrificed; Josefa, in her role as perfect housewife, must sacrifice time and energy to that role, time and energy which might otherwise be devoted to poetry; Elvira, having sought the role of the submissive wife and having found instead the role of husband slayer, returns to the seeming protection of the purely intellectual life, thus sacrificing her physical needs; Victoria, having sought the protection offered by the role of
surrogate mother to Matilde to whom she also becomes a servant, sacri­fices such intellect as she may have had. Castellanos suggests that at the root of the dilemma is the socialization of woman so that she echoes Victoria's words: "yo nunca he querido ser más que eso: una víctima." (p. 140). If woman can be conditioned to desire for herself more than the role of victim, then perhaps there is hope.

Conclusions

In the four works included in Album de familia the author ad­dresses several archetypal forms of what she considers to be the myth of femininity. Two forms which the myth can take she has shown to be destructive. At the extreme of domesticity is the archetype of the "cabecita blanca," illustrated by Justina; at the extreme which rejects any degree of domesticity as detrimental to non-biological feminine achievements is the archetype of the "virgen fuerte," here illustrated by the person of Matilde Casanova of "Album de familia." The obvious­ness of the destructive nature of these two myths is illustrated by their almost universal rejection by other women characters of the two stories which deal with these extremes of behavior.

The other major female characters of all the stories find them­selves in a greater or lesser degree of conflict with the forces which each of these extremes exerts. This is illustrated by a spectrum of other stereotyped roles which are open to women. These pre-established models appear in the options which the protagonist of "Lección de cocina" reviews in the course of her reflections; they are present to a less-conscious degree in actions considered or taken by Edith of "Domingo" and appear in the French model and her unattainable ideals; in
"Cabecita blanca" they appear in the attitudes and actions of the two
daughters; and in "Album de familia" each of the former students illus-
trates at least one patterned option to the extremes of "cabecita
blanca" and "virgen fuerte."

Adherence to any single stereotype is detrimental to the women
involved. Hence the undeveloped characters of Justina's daughters and
some of Edith's guests. Each woman individually must seek among the
variety of roles which society offers (i.e., among the several aspects
of the myth), adhering to none slavishly, selecting those patterns of
behavior, those activities and roles which help her to achieve a harmony
of authentic inner being and outward actions and appearances. Only
when this is done can a degree of contentment or happiness be reached.

We now turn our attention to a summary of Castellanos' develop-
ment of the Indianist and feminist themes in the works studied in this
analysis, paying particular attention to the similarities of both
themes.
CONCLUSIONS

We will consider three points in our conclusions: the evolution of Castellanos' presentation of the Indian; the evolution of her presentation of female characters; and the relationships between Indianist and feminist themes, particularly as these relationships illustrate the exploitation of other human beings and the coexistence of different world views.

Castellanos establishes differences between Indian and Ladino as conceptual rather than physical. That is, Indians and Ladinos are defined as such primarily because of the manner in which they view the world. Only secondarily are they defined by differences in skin color, social condition, and material culture. The author presents the Indian's world view in a plausible fashion which avoids the exotic and the stereotypic. She establishes it as authentic and makes it understandable to the non-Indian reader by relying on one overriding technique.

This presentation is made through characters or concepts which are viable in both Indian and Ladino societies. In Balún-Canán the Indian nurse of the Ladina author-protagonist attempts to fill this role. Through conversations and story-telling, and through the travels of the child narrator through the city with her nurse (making a physical transit that parallels the conceptual one) the author introduces elements of Indian belief. However, the presentation of Indian reality is
fragmentary and falls short of establishing a cohesive world view. It therefore becomes necessary for the author to rely on additional means of presenting the Indian reality, means which reduce this reality to a consciously evoked mood and deprive it of a separate existence.

These means include the use of a child narrator who establishes sympathetic emotional ties with the nurse as a person and as a representative of Indian values. The child is an individual for whom the Indian reality is plausible, since the distinctions between the supernatural and reality have not yet been learned. Other means include the extensive use of written documents and oral tradition. However, all are introduced without apparent regard for the viability of the world which they represent.

Castellanos uses figures and concepts which function in both realities as the chief technical device of three stories in *Ciudad Real*. In keeping with the drastic change in tone from *Balún-Canán*, these figures and concepts themselves have a different function. Here each figure or concept functions in the two realities but is seen by Ladino and Indian as something different from that which the other understands it to be. The result is misunderstanding and fear.

To point up specific areas of misunderstanding between the two realities Castellanos attempts the presentation of anthropological approximations of specific attitudes or concepts within the Indian culture which direct the actions of the community. This detaches the Indian from his author and lends him a separate existence. When the Indian community comes into conflict with Ladino society (or with individual ambition as in "Aceite guapo") it does so as the result of a lack of understanding and indeed may not even be aware that a conflict exists.
Achievement of a separate existence determined by different cultural values allows in *Ciudad Real* the introduction of folk legend within a specific cultural context which the additional material now enhances. This contrasts sharply with the author's multiple forms of introducing folk legend in *Balún-Canán* which we have just noted.

In *Oficio de tinieblas* the Indian world view is established as valid from the beginning. Individual characters follow rules within a separately existing world order and act in accordance with their own cultural norms. As these characters move back and forth between Indian and Ladino worlds, they point up the sharp differences which separate the two. Because we are offered a more detailed account of Ladino society than in any previous work, these same characters also serve to emphasize the number of similarities which exist in both worlds despite drastic differences in world view.

Those characters who point up cultural differences by moving between the two cultures in *Oficio de tinieblas* acquire an added psychological dimension by becoming conscious themselves of these differences. Theirs is an anguished existence which raises the Indian character from the role of symbol in *Balún-Canán*, through that of unknowing victim of his own cosmology in *Ciudad Real*, to that of a conscious, multidimensional personality faced with a situation which he attempts to alter but which is beyond his control. He becomes a twentieth-century man faced with existential choices. His only difference from other novelistic characters is that his decisions must be made in terms of Indian reality.

Castellanos' presentation of female characters establishes the differences between men and women as essentially two-fold. The first of
these is the existence of a relationship of possessor and object between men and women. The second is the existence of separate male and female realities or world views. The male world view is considered to be based on action and fact; the female, on inaction and fantasy. The separate female world view is termed the feminine myth.

In Balún-Canán Castellanos offers a variety of female characters whose lives have meaning only as men choose to give them meaning; that is, these women are viewed as objects for male use. None of these women is content with an existence only tangential to that of men, but fear and ignorance prevent any one from acting to alter the situation. All are thus consigned permanently to the realm of objects; all are victims of the myth.

In Ciudad Real Castellanos offers new dimensions to the inert, object women of Balún-Canán. In "Modesta Gómez" she presents woman as equally the exploiter and the exploited. In "La rueda del hambriento" she offers the first hints of woman's coming to a realization of the myth which governs her life.

The women of Oficio de tinieblas and of the later works illustrate a variety of degrees of realization of the controlling power of the feminine myth, a myth imposed on women by men regardless of ethnic or social condition. Most women of Oficio de tinieblas are seen to be as much victimizer as victim and only two, Catalina and Julia, ever take meaningful steps to alter the condition of their lives. In Los convi-dados de agosto and Album de familia the author develops to a greater degree particular manifestations of the feminine myth. Oficio de tinieblas and Album de familia point up, more than the other works, the universality of the feminine myth.
Women who are either in the process of recognition of the myth or in the process of adjusting to a newly discovered reality develop a greater depth of character than do their less perceptive sisters. The existence of the former is an anguished existence fraught with perpetual existential choices.

Throughout Castellanos prose fiction the Indian and woman are perceived by Ladino society and by men, respectively, as objects to be possessed or exploited. Both are viewed as cheap labor, as source of easy revenue and merchandise. In addition woman is the source of sexual pleasure and is the repository of family honor. As objects, abject passivity is required of both the Indian and woman. To enforce this passivity both are restricted in their spheres of activity and knowledge. Brute force and fear help to reinforce these restrictions.

Restrictions on the Indian's and woman's knowledge gives each a world view quite unlike that of Ladinos and men, a world view (or myth) to which the force of tradition lends supernatural authority. To challenge the social order thus means challenging the supernatural order and that carries heavy penalties. The mythology of the Indian and the feminine myth are constantly changing to allow for the incorporation of new elements, thus perpetuating themselves as controlling agent of the Indian and woman.

Castellanos indicates that no change in the condition as object of either the Indian or woman is possible until there is a recognition of the controlling forces as myth. This recognition is achieved by the Indian in Balún-Canán in the person of Felipe Carranza Pech, but in future works it remains ever out of the grasp of the most diligent seekers.
This recognition is lacking in the women of Balún-Canán. Only in one story of Ciudad Real do we see the beginnings of this recognition by women, beginnings which are only slightly elaborated in Oficio de tinieblas. Castellanos had to abandon the Indian milieu in order to create female characters who could actually come to terms with the myth of femininity.

Even in those individuals who have recognized the myth and who have come to terms with it, there is no total destruction of the myth. Rather there is rejection of the more damaging elements of the myth and an accommodation with others. Since coming to terms with the myth is an individual achievement, each individual is ever faced with aspects of the myth in others, a fact which must be reckoned with. Castellanos seems to suggest that the myth is so deeply ingrained in the formation of the Indian and the female personality by prevailing cultural determinants that there can be no eradication of the myth, only an eternal individual struggle replete with its possibilities for achievement and failure.


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VITA

The writer was born 11th November 1943 in Belize, British Honduras (now Belize City, Belize). He lived in the Republic of Nicaragua from 1946 to 1952, at which time he entered the United States as a Permanent Resident. He was educated in the public schools of New Orleans until 1959. He then entered St. Andrew's School, St. Andrews, Tennessee, from where he was graduated in 1962. He attended both Tulane University and Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, receiving the Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from LSU in 1966. In 1970 he was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Spanish from LSU, where he is now a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

The writer has taught at the college level for nine years in the states of Washington and Virginia and with overseas programs in Mexico and Spain. He has held the following awards: NDEA Title IV Fellowship and the Faculty Growth Award of the American Lutheran Church.
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[Signatures of Major Professor and Chairman, Dean of the Graduate School]

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