MYTH AND ARCHETYPE IN THE NEW SPANISH NOVEL (1956-1970): A STUDY IN CHANGING NOVELISTIC TECHNIQUES

by

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INTRODUCTION

The principal critics of the Spanish Post-Civil War Novel have offered varied and conflicting assessments of the genre's total trajectory. Gonzalo Sobejano discusses the development of the Spanish novel since the Civil War in terms of the "novela existencial" in the decade of the '40s, and the "novela social" in the '50s and '60s.[1] Eugenio G. de Nora, while agreeing with the presence of an existentialist trend in the '40s, describes the '50s as a stylistic duality: the "nueva oleada . . . entre el relato lírico y el testimonio objetivo," the latter arriving at its culmination in El Jarama in 1956.[2] José Corrales Egea, referring to de Nora's term "la nueva oleada," adds yet another division to Sobejano's general scheme for the novel of the '60s, the "contraola" or "la liquidación del realismo."[3] Santos Sanz Villanueva has developed an elaborate categorization of the major "tendencias de la novela española actual." Sanz Villanueva sees the main trends as having representative authors: "Realismo de grupos," in which he places Cela; "Behaviorismo," which includes Sánchez Ferlosio; "Realismo mágico," in which he places Cunqueiro; "Alienación," which includes Martín Santos; "Superación del realismo social," of which Goytisolo is a part; and finally "Otros autores," which include Matute and Benet.[4]

Even though individual studies of both major and minor novels published in the period have suggested a definite mythical content in a large number of these works, no critic to date has correctly identified and accurately traced one of the most important trends occurring in the Spanish novel from 1956 to 1970, the tendency toward myth and myth-making.[5] Properly illuminated, myth is a fundamental key to understanding the trajectory, experience, and direction of major novels in the 1956-1970 period. The treatment of myth by each work elucidates how novelistic techniques of this period evolve. My approach here will be directed at myth, but will also fuse the consideration of theme and technique with each analysis, a method which other critics have failed to use. The novels which, to my mind, best illustrate the idea of a mythic trend are, according to the aforementioned critics, the most important works of the period: El Jarama (Nadal 1955, published 1956), by Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio; Primera memoria (Nadal 1959, published 1960), by Ana María Matute; Tiempo de silencio (1962), by Luis Martín Santos; Volverás a Región (1967), by Juan Benet Goitia; Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes (Nadal 1968, published 1969), by Alvaro Cunqueiro; and Reivindicación del Conde don Julián (1970), by Juan Goytisolo.[6]

Before attempting a more detailed explanation of individual novels, I shall briefly define myth as I plan to

apply it to the novel of the period, and shall further define four related terms, all of which are necessary to the reader's complete understanding of procedure in the close analyses of individual novels. I have isolated for these purposes four types of myth, or four different ways in which the term will be used here: explicative myth, epic myth, classical literary myth, and socio-cultural myth. The four related terms are: demythification, archetype, ritual, and rite of initiation.

Explicative myth. Primitive man, even though widely dispersed by tribes and geography, felt the need to explain in detail the irrational forces of his world; he had no science or similar knowledge to accomplish this task for him. As all reality was, at first, foreign to man, the explicative powers of myth assisted him in bringing his reality under his spiritual control. To achieve this end, he animated and personified the irrational forces of nature, creating in the process a special group of gods or deities. The sun, for example, might be interpreted as a fiery beast, racing across the sky. To prevent the sun from sweeping down upon a particular tribe, the latter would offer a blood sacrifice to the "beast" or to whatever other deity they felt the need to propitiate.[7] Irrational feelings were, on the other hand, mentally objectified or embodied into tangible and visible realities. Hunger pangs would be explained as a "wild animal" locked

up inside and eating the entrails of the man suffering them.

In early Greek culture, explicative myths originated in the Helladic periods and the Mycenean Age from 3000 B.C. to 1100 B.C. For the Greeks, anything irrational, non-visible, or otherwise difficult to explain could be explained through explicative myth. Feeling the pangs of love could be compared to arrows through the heart. The personification in this case was Eros; the process consists not only of personification but also of making tangible and visible that which was previously intangible and invisible. Bartch defines myth as the "expression of unobservable realities in terms of observable phenomena."[8] When a modern writer personifies or animates nature, or when he objectifies irrational and intangible reality, he is participating in the most basic of primitive mythic processes. Therefore, when the writer personifies or objectifies to the point that the reader perceives the creation of a visible deity which collaborates with the forces of death, time, or nature, that writer is engaging in the stylistic creation of a modern explicative myth.

Epic myth. The Geometric period of Greek culture, from 750 to 700 B.C., reveals a second and more sophisticated stage of mythological development: epic or hero myth.[9] The essence of this type of myth may be described as the adventures or wanderings in a mythical or

supernatural environment in which the "hero" unrelentingly searches for a lost ideal. In the process of the hero's quest, he often passes through a rite of initiation or purification by death and rebirth, confronting and defeating gods and supernatural obstacles, so that he may return to his people, better able to lead them.[10] The hero-protagonist of epic myth is as much a cultural ideal as a well-rounded fictional character. Edith Hamilton accepts both explicative myth and epic myth, but draws an important distinction between the two: "Myths are early science, the result of men's first trying to explain what they saw around them. But there are many so-called myths which explain nothing at all. These tales are pure entertainment, the sort of thing people would tell each other on a long winter's evening."[11]

Classical literary myth. Following Hamilton's distinction, epic myth is an early form of the even more sophisticated dramatic or "story" myths developed by dramatists in the Greek Classical period from 500 B.C. to 300 B.C., in which Aeschylus, Sophocles, Herodotus, and Euripides flourished. From the Classical period emerge such myths as those of Oedipus, Orestes, Electra, and Phaedra. These myths are much less active in plot than epic myths, and tend to be more introspective in their method of presenting principal characters; they are more concerned with the workings of the human mind and with

exploring complex and powerful human relationships. Dramas from the Classical period have been termed "myths" because they make a fundamental statement about man's psychological make-up and have, for this reason, attracted the interest of a number of distinguished psychoanalysts who see them as dynamic and archetypal in nature, easily adaptable to the literature and psyche of any culture.[12]

Socio-cultural myth. This type of myth is less universal and more closely tied to a specific culture. Socio-cultural myths are products of a nation's history, society, and culture, finding their roots in the national unconscious.[13] The types of myth related to ancient Greece thus far described could to a certain extent be considered a part of that country's socio-cultural mythology. Some socio-cultural myths are of a positive nature and reflect and embody national ideals; others may be interpreted as negative, but all are concepts or personages which serve to define (1) long-standing cultural realities, (2) some aspect of cultural uniqueness not normally considered universal in substance, and (3) the group of beliefs or the institutions which a specific culture holds sacred. Some examples of Spanish or Hispanic socio-cultural myths are: the stoic philosophy of Seneca, honor, the bullfight, duende, machismo, abulia, the Cid, Don Juan, and the Celestina. Whatever their specific nature, all serve the definition of national character.[14]

Demythification. Demythification or "myth-exploding" is common to literature and, in itself, can be helpful in understanding the nature of the various types of myth. Explicative myth is normally exploded not by literature, but by the advent of science and its empirical explanations of the universe. Science, unlike explicative myth, explains natural phenomena, the emotions, and the irrational, in a non-spiritual, laboratory fashion with soundly based documentation. Epic myth is demythified by mockery of its ideals. Every element in the original myth is brought down to a literal, everyday reality. The hero becomes the anti-hero; his quest becomes vain and absurd; and he often fails miserably in surmounting the obstacles he meets. The message of such demythifications is that there are no real god-like heroes; that no one has to live up to the impossible standard which the hero suggests; and that quests and battles of any type are folly and can only lead to failure and self-destruction. Classical literary myths are similarly demythified. Their "fundamental truths" about human nature are exposed as falsehoods. The process of demythification gives nuance and feeling to cold and rigid Classical models; the process may thrust the old Classical model into a new and modern context, filling its framework with modern character and action.[15] Socio-cultural myths, in the process of demythification, are also exposed for their inapplicability, their

shortcomings, and their falseness; the "uniqueness" they reveal is ridiculed. Rather than positive forces, they are exposed as limiting forces, damaging rather than defining the national character.

Archetype. Jung defines "archetype" as a universal parallelism, a product of the "collective unconscious." Archetypes reflect the inner disposition of man, regardless of his specific culture, that leads him to create certain parallel images and motifs that are "to be found at all times and wherever human beings have lived, thought, and acted."[16] Archetype may be generally defined, apart from Jung's theories, as any universally recurring entity or pattern, one which appears in almost all epochs and in a majority of cultures without regard to cultural or temporal context. Many archetypes have been found to be so essential and so vital to the human condition that they have often been regarded as myths in themselves. The studies of Joseph Campbell, for example, have revealed that the archetypal passage of the hero may be in itself termed a "monomyth" for all mankind.[17] Examples of archetypes are in the writings of Campbell, Jung, Maud Bodkin, and others. Some examples are: the descent into Hell; the interrupted quest (as in epic myth); the Devil; the "Great Mother"; rebirth, whether real or symbolic; and many more.[18]

Ritual. Ritual is a culture's celebration of its

mythology. Types of rituals may range from the primitive blood sacrifice to the more passive but regimented ceremonial worship of deities. Ritual, due to its repetitive nature, gives man comfort and reassurance by linking him to observable natural rhythms, by placing him in harmony with his "gods," i.e., the changes in the seasons, the day-night cycle, etc. Man gains reassurance through constant repetition of the ritual and that repetition breeds familiarity with both the gods and their actions. Ritual is similar to explicative myth in that it involves the entire community in its processes and contributes to a strong cultural bond by means of a single group act. Repetition, dancing, music, and other rhythms are important in ritual to give a sense of order and continuum to those practicing it. Herbert Weisinger observes in this respect that with rituals "both the individual and the community are assured their victory over the forces of chaos which are thereby kept under control."[19]

Rite of initiation. Although performed on a less regular basis than ritual, the rite of initiation is essential to the construction of a total mythology. Basically, the rite implies, in primitive tribes, a significant ceremony in which the final growth to maturity of the initiates is officially recognized by tribal elders or in modern times by adult society. Specific rites vary in detail, but Mircea Eliade, the distinguished anthropologist

and historian of religion, has isolated a series of aspects which he sees as common to the majority: (1) separation from the mother and entrustment of the initiate to tribal elders; (2) education of the initiate in the tribe's history, mythology, and adult "secrets"; (3) a temporary separation from the tribe, perhaps part of a test, in which the initiate is placed in a state of darkness —a cave, a forest, the "belly of the monster"— for his symbolic death or contact with death; (4) physical changes in the initiate, e.g., menstruation or circumcision, and fundamental character and personality changes, e.g., different behavioral patterns and adult responsibilities, for instance, in the hunt; (5) the collaboration in the rite of supernatural beings or deities; (6) a binding ceremony, crucial incident or test indicating the symbolic rebirth of the initiate, the final step in the passage to adulthood and to acceptance into the tribe.[20]

Myth and archetype, as I have defined them here, fuse with novelistic techniques from 1956 to 1970 either to universalize a limited or very specific experience (i.e., archetype), or to serve as objects of social protest (i.e., harmful or worn socio-cultural myths). The novel of the late '50s (as represented by El Jarama and Primera memoria), not normally thought of as "mythic," implicitly reveals the creation of "deities," personifications of the forces controlling the characters' lives, and changing and

reshaping their destinies. The deities and characters involved participate in primitive rites and rituals which form the essential structures of their respective narrations. In Tiempo de silencio (1962), some evidence exists of "rituals" and "deities," but the focus shifts from implicit explicative myth and ritual to epic myth, explicit allusions to the Odyssey and archetypal structures related to the passage of the hero. Tiempo de silencio, however, does not reflect the normally positive visions of epic myth and the passage of the hero. The novel mocks and distorts these patterns as a part of a creation of a pessimistic modern myth in which the hero is destroyed almost as quickly as he is created. We move to the corresponding "classical stage" of Greek mythology with Alvaro Cunqueiro's Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes in 1969. This novel humanizes and revitalizes its classical model by communicating to the reader the innermost thoughts, fears, limitations, and doubts of its characters. Continuing the process of interiorization into the human mind but focusing more heavily on socio-cultural rather than classical myths, Goytisolo's Reivindicación del Conde don Julián (1970) moves totally into the mind of its protagonist as he attacks the fabric of his country's socio-cultural mythology in the course of a modern "Spanish Odyssey." Volverás a Región (1967) creates a unique vision of Post-Civil War Spain, a mythless society, one which has

forgotten its cultural past, but which is paradoxically controlled by powerful mythic forces. In studying this group of novels for mythic content, however, we should also be aware of a gradual fragmentation and disintegration of the mythic process. The first evidence of fragmentation is found in Primera memoria, in which the archetypal rite of initiation undergoes some serious modifications. Tiempo de silencio also modifies the rite of initiation pattern and the passage of the hero as well. Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes reworks its model to the point that the entire experience is changed from what it was in the original, i.e., Orestes never carries out his vengeance. In the last two novels, we see the greatest fragmentation and chaos. These two, Reivindicación del Conde don Julián and Volverás a Región, show a progression toward a fierce social protest which uses myth to demonstrate in two very different ways the decadence of modern Spain.

NOTES

[1]Gonzalo Sobejano, Novela española de nuestro tiempo (en busca del pueblo perdido) (Madrid: Prensa Española, 1970), pp. 75-442.

[2]Eugenio G. de Nora, La novela española contemporánea (1939-1967), Vol. III (Madrid: Gredos, 1970), 259-328.

[3]José Corrales Egea, La novela española actual (Ensayo de ordenación) (Madrid: Edicusa, 1971), p. 191.

[4]Santos Sanz Villanueva, Tendencias de la novela española actual (1950-1970) (Madrid: Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1972), pp. 55-56.

[5]For El Jarama, see in my bibliography the studies of Darío Villanueva and Edward C. Riley; for Primera memoria the essay by James Stevens; on Tiempo de silencio see the studies by Palley, Anderson, Villegas, and Curutchet; for Reivindicación del Conde don Julián, consult the study by Héctor Romero. The second edition of Pablo Gil Casado's La novela social española (Barcelona: Seix-Barral, 1974) lists as the most recent novelistic current "la desmitificación," which he sees as beginning with Tiempo de silencio in 1962. Gil Casado sees the trend as a part of theme and social content and not as a part of technique.

[6]There are several important novels which I will not analyze in detail: Señas de identidad (1966) by Goytisolo, Una meditación (1970) by Juan Benet, Cinco horas con Mario

(1966) and _Parábola del náufrago_ (1969) both by Miguel Delibes. I have elected to delay discussion of these novels until my concluding remarks, where I shall attempt to place them in the trajectory I have described.

[7]These and other ideas on primitive explicative myth may be found in the following sources: Edward B. Tylor, _The Origins of Culture_ (New York: Harper Bros., 1958), p. 297; James Weigel, Jr., _Mythology for the Modern Reader_ (Lincoln, Nebraska: The Centennial Press, 1973); W.H.R. Rivers, "The Sociological Significance of Myth," _Folklore_, 23 (1912), 307-331; Philip Wheelwright, "On the Verge of Myth," _Metaphor and Reality_ (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 129-152. More theory on explicative myth and ritual sacrifice is available in Adolf E. Jensen, "Deity, Sacrifice, and Ethos," _Myth and Cult Among Primitive Peoples_, trans. Marianna Tax Choldin and Wolfgang Weissleder. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 83-206.

[8]Quoted in E. R. Leach, "Genesis as Myth," _Myth and Cosmos_, ed. John Middleton. (New York: The Natural History Press, 1967), p. 1.

[9]In this respect Ernst Cassirer observes "the progress of the mythical consciousness from mere nature myths to culture myths. Here the question of origins shifts more and more from the sphere of _things_ to the specifically human sphere; the form of mythical causality serves to

explain the origin not so much of the world or particular objects in it as of human cultural achievements." _The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Vol. II: Mythical Thought_, trans. Ralph Manheim. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1965), 204.

[10]Comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell, in _The Hero with a Thousand Faces_ (New York: World Publications, 1949), p. 30, explains that the basic pattern of the mythic passage of the hero consists of three parts: Separation, Initiation, and Return: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

[11]Edith Hamilton, _Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes_ (New York: The New American Library, 1942), p. 19.

[12]To name only a few: Mark Kanzer, "The Oedipus Trilogy," _The Psychoanalytic Quarterly_, XIX, #4 (Oct., 1950), and "On Interpreting the Oedipus Plays," _The Psychoanalytic Study of Society_, ed. Muensterberger and Axelrad. (New York; 1967); J.A. Arlow, "Ego Psychology and the Study of Mythology," _Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association_, IX (1961), 383-403; and Patrick Mullaby, _Oedipus: Myth and Complex_ (New York: Hermitage Press, 1952).

[13]For fascinating reading on the concept of the national unconscious, see Roland Barthes, Mythologies (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), especially pp. 109-159.

[14]Further information on this type of myth may be found in Emilio Sosa López, "Mito y literatura," Cuadernos Americanos (México), 18 (julio-agosto, 1959), 86-114; Germán Bleiberg's definition of "mito" in his Diccionario de literatura española (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1972), pp. 603-604; and Julio Caro Baroja, Algunos mitos españoles y otros ensayos (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1944).

[15]See Luis Díez del Corral, La función del mito clásico en la literatura contemporánea (Madrid: Gredos, 1957), for a more detailed explanation of how classical models are thrust into modern contexts.

[16]Aniela Jaffé, The Myth of Meaning: Jung and the Expansion of Consciousness (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 15. More information on archetypes as seen by Jung is contained in Jung's work, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R.F.C. Hull. (Princeton University Press, 1956); and in Jolande Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung, trans. Ralph Manheim. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959).

[17]Campbell, prologue.

[18]See Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); Mircea Eliade,

Cosmos and History: The Myth of Eternal Return, trans. Willard B. Trask. (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); Northrop Frye, "Archetypal Criticism: The Theory of Myths," Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton University Press, 1957); C. Kerényi, Prometheus: Archetypal Image of Human Existence, trans. Ralph Manheim. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963); Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype (Princeton University Press, 1955); Otto Rank, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, trans. F. Robbins and S. E. Jellife. (New York: Random House, 1964); and Edward C. Whitmont, The Symbolic Quest: Basic Concepts of Analytical Psychology (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969).

[19]Herbert Weisinger, The Agony and the Triumph: Papers on the Use and Abuse of Myth (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1964), p. 97. Other information on ritual and myth may be found in the following sources: Joseph E. Fronterose, The Ritual Theory of Myth. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1966); Alan Watts, Myth and Ritual in Christianity (New York: Hudson, 1953); Samuel Hooke, Myth and Ritual (London: Oxford University Press, 1933); William Bascom, "The Myth-Ritual Theory," Journal of American Folklore, 70 (1957), 103-115; and Clyde Kluckhohn, "Myths and Rituals: A General Theory," Harvard Theological Review, XXXV, #2 (1942), 85-122.

[20]I am indebted for these ideas not only to Eliade's landmark study, Rites and Symbols of Initiation: Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth, trans. Willard B. Trask. (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), but also to the studies of anthropologists Margaret Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (New York: Dell, 1963); and Arnold Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960).

CHAPTER ONE:
PRIMITIVE MYTH AND RITE STRUCTURES IN THE NOVEL OF THE LATE '50S

From 1956 to 1960, the Spanish novel is in a period of transition. El Jarama represents the culmination of the neo-realistic trend begun early in the decade by novels such as El camino, La colmena, La noria, and Los bravos. Matute's novels, including Fiesta al noroeste and Primera memoria, have traditionally been viewed simply as pertaining to the "relato lírico," generally out of touch with the "testimonio objetivo" then in vogue.[1]

All four types of myth defined above exist and are perpetuated in the minds and spirits of all men in a given society. Most myths seem to fall in the general realm of the subjective imagination and cannot be grouped with objective realism in literature or the empirical sciences. Wallace Douglas has stated that myth "can be a sanctifying word . . . because its content or form is said to originate in passionate, poetic, or intuitional views of reality."[2] It is not unusual to group Primera memoria in a mythic trend, especially since the experience of Matute's novel has been compared to that of a "rite of initiation."[3] It may, however, seem most unusual to include in a study of myth a novel such as El Jarama, famed for its objective, camera-like technique. Juan Luis Alborg has stated that

the novel represents "el realismo más fotográfico."[4] José Corrales Egea speaks of the work's objective tone and believes it "repulsa de toda intervención emotiva."[5] J. L. Cano characterizes the narration as "realista cien por cien."[6]

Notwithstanding such statements, other critics have pointed out the presence of certain poetic, magical, and mythical descriptions which play a key role in a full understanding of the experience the work creates. Edward C. Riley characterizes the book as a blend of "poesía y realismo."[7] Pedro Carrero Eras has studied the magical elements, including the "animación del río,"[8] and Darío Villanueva, in the only book written to date exclusively on El Jarama, has observed both "mito y poesía."[9] José Schraibman categorically rejects the novel's "social realism" and illuminates what he calls the "estructura simbólica."[10] No one in this latter group, however, has systematically studied the function of myth in El Jarama, but, rather, all recognize isolated passages that are not objective or realistic.

A detailed analysis of the subjective and mythical elements in El Jarama as well as those in Primera memoria will show that the former is a transitional work which links the neo-realism of the '50s to the subjective myth-making of the '60s and, moreover, that the latter is not "out of touch" and does not represent an abrupt shift in novelistic

techniques (i.e., third-person objective to first-person subjective), but clearly continues the mythic trend begun in El Jarama; in short, these two novels form the basis for the mythic trend that characterizes the Spanish Post-Civil War Novel.

In El Jarama we observe a duality of structure. On the one hand, we participate in the anecdote, the narration of a typical Sunday outing on the banks of the Jarama river, an outing which is suddenly turned into tragedy when a young girl drowns in the river. On the other hand, the reader simultaneously participates in a structural progression of three stages: In the first stage, he sees a contrast between the objective presentation of dialogues and the extremely subjective manner in which the narrator describes nature, i.e., as a living force. Many of the poetic techniques which the narrator uses strongly resemble the basic processes of primitive explicative myth. Natural elements, by means of their animation and personification, create a constant tension between man and nature, and gradually intensify the emotional impact of the narration as it moves us to the account of a death in the Jarama river. In the second stage of the progression, those elements which before only resembled the processes of explicative myth have been intensified as images and now appear to foreshadow and conspire with death; they resemble deities and mythological beasts which play a mysterious role in

Luci's drowning. The book's characters are, amazingly enough, totally oblivious to all stages in the progression. They depend on an empty and lifeless "cinema myth," a myth which has the form of workable explanations of reality, but is sadly lacking in viable results. The third stage of the progression begins with Luci's drowning in the river. Although not unaware of what has happened, the characters neither understand nor seem to care sincerely about the tragic death. Luci's friends react egotistically and the patrons of the tavern impersonally; all go on about their lives, unchanged. The reader, however, sees that the gradually building tempo and intensification in imagery has led to the creation of deities collaborating in a primitive ritual sacrifice, one perceived in style and technique, but never explicitly stated. This particular ritual sacrifice, unlike primitive and ancient varieties builds to a climax without the knowledge of its participants. It is a modern ritual which provides no spiritual comfort whatsoever to those who unknowingly practice it. The people who swim in the Jarama are unwittingly drawn into an intricate web of imagery which ties them helplessly to the ritual, to nature, and to death.

Before analyzing the nature of the mythic progression in imagery and style, it will be helpful to elaborate on the novel's anecdotal progression. The action of El Jarama transpires in only one day. Novelistic space is limited

to basically two locations: by the banks of the river and in a nearby tavern. A group of eleven young madrileños arrive at the tavern on an August Sunday to relax, drink, bask in the river, and bathe in the sun. After leaving their bicycles in the charge of Mauricio, the owner of the tavern, they descend to the river and begin to try to overcome boredom. Back at the tavern, an older group of local patrons has gathered to sip wine and engage in empty conversation. When night falls, some of the young people go up to the tavern to join in the games, singing, and conversation, leaving a small, inebriated group below. Luci, drunk amidst confusion and darkness, drowns in the river. Her companions return to Madrid, only temporarily anguished over her death, and the people in the tavern, still discussing the fact that nearly every year the river takes a similar toll, begin to disperse and return home, and eventually the scene is returned to darkness and quiet.

To avoid unnecessary confusion, I have elected to begin my study with the first two stages of the structural progression of imagery so that the reader may see how subjective description gradually becomes mythic imagery. To accomplish this, I will begin with a discussion of general subjectivity, animation, and mythification of nature, and then move to the individual analysis of one mechanized and three natural elements: the sun, the train, the moon, and, most importantly, the river.

The first case of general animation and subjective description of nature is quite innocent and scarcely attracts our attention because of its commonplaceness: ". . . el aire . . . que bailó un momento."[11] The description serves two functions: it projects an exact visual picture of the swirling movement of the gust of wind in the tavern; it also personifies the wind, giving it a life of its own and the capacity of intentional physical movement, suggested by "bailó." The reader may take the ambiguous description either as literal (in the form it describes) or as a figurative and subjective case of animation of nature.

Only a few pages later, we feel the first intensification in general imagery as the narrator describes the initials carved in the trees near the river: "Los troncos estaban atormentados de incisiones" (28). The narrator's language is much more intense here than in the first quote. There is less emphasis on the descriptive level and more emphasis placed on the emotional impact of the carvings. The word "atormentados" personifies the trees and endows them with human feeling. By means of the adjective, the trees project a tormented helplessness not normally associated with plant life. The word "incisiones" vitalizes the description, as an "incision" is usually associated with the surgical cutting of human or animal flesh.

Later, as the young group eats sardines by the river,

they laughingly explain the resultant intestinal noises as "sardinas [que] rezan el rosario en su estómago" (121). Although this personification is slightly different from others in the novel, we are nevertheless reminded of the primitive man who explained hunger pangs as a wild animal gnashing at his entrails. The group of youngsters has jokingly invested the fish with the power of speech and religious feeling, although their transformation holds a special significance which they do not understand, i.e., as a foreshadowing of Luci's death in the river. The intensification felt by the reader is less one of emotional impact and more one of the degree of personification, but the reader pays little attention to the personification because of its humorous context.

Further along in the novel, the grass on the path to a nearby cemetery is animated with a greater emotional intensity: " . . . hierbas bravías que se iban comiendo las sendas" (152). The narrator intensifies the general trend of animation by means of a brief description of a subtle but concrete threat to the path. On a literal and descriptive level, the grass, having the external form of teeth, is slowly covering the path. On a figurative level, the grass, armed with its sharp teeth, is "bravía" and seems to be devouring the path.

The most intense case of animation in general description occurs shortly after night has fallen and just before

Luci's death:

> . . . parda, esquiva y felina oscuridad, que las sumía en acecho de alimañas. Se recelaba un sigilo de zarpas, de garras y de dientes escondidos, una noche olfativa, voraz y sanguinaria, sobre el pavor de indefensos encames maternales . . . (227)

The night represents the culmination of the intensification of general natural elements. Here, the night combines the power and characteristics of several previously observed images: the physical potential of the wind in "alimañas"; the emotional impact of the tormented trees in "escondidos" and "voraz"; the teeth and devouring quality of the grass. The night itself seems to be a sleek, wild, and powerful black cat, "felina oscuridad." The "cat" has perception in the dark, "olfativa," which man does not. Its "garras" and "dientes" and "zarpas" could easily tear a man apart; it lies ready in ambush, hiding its teeth beneath blackness. Through these emotionally-charged and primitive words, the description creates a tension between man, with his artificial light, and nature, with her natural darkness. It revives in the reader the universal feeling of fear of night as well as foreshadowing Luci's death. In the final analysis, the vision of the night presented here is a part of the second stage of the progression of imagery: the mythic. A primitive man might animate the night as a huge and dangerous black animal covering the earth, just as he would describe the sun as a fiery beast

racing across the sky.

The intensification in the general animation of nature is strongly supported by the conscious animation of the four individual elements, the sun, the train, the moon, and the river. More than the general animation, these individual elements serve to make the reader gradually aware of the structural progression from subjectivity to mythic process to primitive myth when they appear to conspire and collaborate in Luci's death. Like the general animation, however, they all serve the purpose of intensification, leading up to the death, and reveal the narrator's inherent subjectivity when anticipating the event.

The sun, although it does not collaborate directly with death, nevertheless sets the stage with a menacing atmosphere and is a part of the structural progression of intensification and animation. Ramón Buckley observes that the sun "es capaz de las más alarmantes personificaciones."[12] The sun's presence in the novel is, however, somewhat ambiguous: on the one hand, the narrator seems to communicate a hot day rapidly getting hotter, but, remembering the structural progression of imagery, the narrator introduces, along with animation, another process of explicative myth into the style of the novel: describing as visible and tangible something which is invisible and intangible.

Among the first observations made by the characters

is "ya se siente calor" (13). The people flock to the river to escape the heat of the sun. In the tavern, Mauricio, the owner, tells the iceman, who has just entered, to move the ice he has brought in so that "no se las coma el sol" (27). The sun, with its intensifying heat and simultaneously intensifying animation, now seems to "bite."

The second level of intensification comes about in an unthinking remark in conversation: " . . . no parece sino que [el sol] espera los domingos para apretar más todavía" (36). The patrons of the tavern, completely unaware of what they are doing, assign a planning, calculating mind to the sun. The word "apretar" represents the first step in the communication of the physical tangibility of the sun's light and heat.

The feeling of the uncommon "solidity" of the sun's heat is intensified in a subsequent description: " . . . aplastaba la tierra como un pie gigantesco" (45). With "aplastaba" the passage produces a feeling of intense and solid heat, the type we could not only perceive and sense on our skins, but also reach out and touch, as if we were touching a solid object. The word "aplastaba" is a significant and much more menacing image than "apretar" since the latter indicates pressure and the former implies destruction. The comparison with a "pie gigantesco" suggests a dangerous tangibility as well as menacing heat; a giant foot of such proportions would physically crush the people

below. The light and heat are red, like fire, and the light is described as "dense," a characteristic of tangible objects. Someone comments later that "nos estamos asando vivos" (65). In comparing narrative description and dialogue, narrative language may be generally viewed as literal, taking on a figurative and, at times, mythical value in light of Luci's imminent death (the heat of the sun becomes a menacing, giant foot); figurative expressions in dialogue, such as "nos estamos asando vivos," become mythical portents of death for the reader, but are restricted to a literal value for the characters. In other words, the narrator's descriptions allow the reader to find cosmic implications in even the mundane commentaries of the characters.

Another level of intensification of the sun is reached by means of two less ambiguous objectifications of sunlight:

> [el sol] . . . moteaba de redondos lunares, monedas de oro, las espaldas de Alici y de Mely, la camisa de Miguel y andaba rebrillando por el centro del corro de los vidrios. (101)

> . . . alguien lo tuvo todavía en su pelo, en su espalda, en sus pendientes, como una mano mágica. Zumbaba sobre la tierra sordamente, como un enjambre legendario, con un denso, cansado, innumerable bordoneo de persistentes vibraciones de luz . . . (152)

The words "moteaba de redondos lunares," in the first description, fragment the sun (figuratively) into smaller entities, a conceptual process common to solid objects; "monedas de oro" is an embodiment of the sun's golden

lustre into a solid and visible image. The sun remains, as if stuck, on the young people's skins and shirts. The verb "andaba" gives the sunlight the characteristics of physical movement, a capability of a living thing.

The second quote carries the concept of tangible sunlight yet another step. Sunlight here is capable of being possessed, "tuvo." It is described as remaining in the skin, which is a scientific absurdity, as tanning and burning are caused by the pigmentation of the skin in reaction to sunlight and not the result of the skin's "retaining" the sunlight. In mythical thought, however, a red sunburn appears to have retained the red heat of the sun. The simile "como una mano mágica" confirms the supernatural tone of the passage and links it with the non-scientific and irrational description common to the novel. The second sentence of the passage is another concrete embodiment of the sunlight: the light is metaphorically described by the narrator as a noisy swarm of insects, "zumbaba," "enjambre," and "bordoneo." The word "legendario" raises the description to a more-than-literal level and gives it a timeless quality found only in mythical thought. The reader feels the effect of the sun almost as vividly as do the characters; but the implications of magic, myth, and ominous portent also make him see what the characters do not: that although the description of the sun is beautiful and the sunlit day is appealing, the feeling of menace

increases with every description.

As the sun sets, it turns red, and eventually reddens the countryside, "asándose en un fuego polvoriento" (216). This represents a final step of synthesis in intensification. The figurative "fire" which covers the hills is, more than the swarm of insects, a menace to all life about the river.

The use of mythic process in describing the sun's heat and light, then, serves two primary functions: it communicates to the reader an extremely hot, a "sticky" hot day on the banks of the Jarama river; although the sun does not ever quite reach the status of a "mythic collaborator" in Luci's death, it is nevertheless a negative force and an omen of death. Once the sun has finally set, the moon is a natural element not participating directly in Luci's death, but constantly foreshadowing it.

The moon is initially presented us with three simple but effective adjectives: " . . . la luna roja, inmensa y cercana" (234). It is red, like the sun; it is immense, seems "close" and therefore would constitute more of a threat if personified. The moon has appeared suddenly, "behind the backs" of Santos and Carmen, two of the youngsters who decided to return to Madrid early. As they make their way back, they are "surprised" by the moon: "La luna . . . los había sorprendido en la ladera, a sus espaldas" (234). The event recounted is not uncommon; one

may easily be surprised to see the moon at night in an unexpected location in the sky. In the context of other powerful animations of nature, however, the incident may be interpreted as a sinister and sly moon which is lurking behind their backs, ready to strike in an instant. This feeling is intensified when the narrator notes the "cara roja" (235) of the moon. The personification is significant in the trajectory of intensification, but not unusual or particularly striking because it is closely related to the "man-in-the-moon" myth, an age-old explanation for the forms and shapes of the dark craters on the moon's surface which resemble a human face. The myth is widely known and accepted without any serious or menacing connotation.

Santos remarks that the moon looks like "un gong de esos de cobre" (235). The visual image is excellent, almost photographic; but if left on a literal level, it is lifeless. A "gong" has an immediate connotation for the reader, although not for Santos: it announces an imminent event of importance to a large number of people. The description takes on a greater significance if we remember that, when it occurs, Luci is just beginning to become drunk and will shortly step into the water.

A less ambiguous characterization of the moon is later provided us by the narrator: " . . . sólo los astros más fuertes sobrevivían al claro de la luna" (256). The word

"sobrevivían" is important to the effect of this level of intensification because it connotes more than the mere fading of starlight behind the light of the moon. It implies, rather, a struggle for life and the "survival of the fittest" of the savage animal kingdom. The word further reinforces our growing feelings of uneasiness about the moon.

In spite of its menacing qualities, the moon is only an omen of death. The next significant intensification occurs after Luci's death when, over the garden of the tavern, the moon rises like a "gran cara muerta" (276). The intensity is raised a degree due to the fact that it is no longer simply a "cara roja" but rather a "cara muerta," reflecting, like a giant mirror, what has taken place. It is important that this image appear after Luci's death because it serves to maintain narrative tension even after the drowning in the river. The image supports the extension of the novel's climax which spans the time from the death to the point when the news reaches the tavern.

After Luci is brought to shore, the moon and its light are constantly with her, as if reminding us of its mysterious role in her death: " . . . sólo le quedó luna sobre el cuello" (277) and " . . . brillaba un poco de luna sobre la piel mojada del cadáver" (284). Words such as "quedó" and "un poco" give the feeling of tangible

moonlight, sticking to Luci's flesh. This feeling is reinforced by several descriptions in which the moon is seen as "pegando en los ladrillos" (284) and its light as "ráfagas rasantes de luna" (271).

Both the sun and the moon are portents of death; their role in Luci's drowning is ambiguous and cannot with textual evidence be proven in the context of the novel. The train, however, as Riley has pointed out, is a concrete conspirator with death: "La serie de acontecimientos es muy clara: súbita aparición del tren—Luci se estremece—se toma los hombros—siente polvo en la piel—se queja—Sebastián sugiere una zambullida—Luci accede con vehemencia—Luci se ahoga."[13]

As in other cases of animation and personification, the narrator begins controlling our view of the train with a fairly ordinary expression, appearing as the young people are standing on the train tracks: " . . . que aquí nos coge el tren" (20). The train, as a machine, could not literally "get" or "grab" the group; "coger" is an action of living things in its most literal usage. Hence, through an ambiguous figurative expression, the train begins to take shape as an animated object.

Later, as the train passes over the river's bridge, it shakes the bridge's structure with its power and weight: "El puente se quedó como temblando tras el vagón de cola, como recorrido por un escalofrío" (45). Except for the

word "escalofrío," this description is not unusual; "escalofrío," however, endows the bridge with a human quality. The bridge's "reaction" to the train is one of fright and shapes our reaction in the same way. The feeling communicated by "escalofrío" also lends some significance to a description found on the same page: " . . . se iba desbaratando lentamente el ancho brazo de humo que el tren había dejado sobre el río" (45). On a literal level, the word "brazo" helps us form a visual picture of the smoke: the forms correspond in our minds. Viewed figuratively and as a part of a gradual mythic transformation, however, a first step in the personification of the train is achieved. To cover the river, the "brazo" would have to be enormous in size (such as the "pie gigantesco"); "dejado" suggests that the train actively and with intent left the "brazo" to lurk on the river.

A brief description of the train's cars adds another complication to the emotive value of the train: " . . . vagones color sangre seca" (131). The color of "dried blood" may be interpreted as literal, but inevitably associates the train with spilled blood and death; the color red, suggested in "sangre" links the train with the sun and the moon in a tangled web of imagery to be discussed later.

The next step in the intensification of the personification of the train is found in the following

description: " . . . pasó el tren, el bufido de vapor como millares de efes enfurecidas" (131). On a literal level, the narrator provides us with an almost audible onomatopoeic description of the sounds the train emits as it pulls away from the station. On a figurative or mythic level, the narrator has assigned the train the power of speech, through the use of a specific letter; "enfurecidas" gives the impression of emotional fury. The personification is rounded out when the narrator tells us that the train's wheels and brakes "gemían" (219).

Passing into the second stage of the structural progression of imagery —the mythic—, the train is next raised to the stature of a mythical beast: " . . . donde el ojo de cíclope del tren brillaba como el ojo de una fiera" (227). Taken literally, the passage describes the external appearance of the train: its single headlight does resemble a glowing eye. On a mythic level, the fact that the train possesses or seems to possess an "ojo" and that it is compared to a "fiera" is almost overshadowed by the word "cíclope." In Greek Mythology, the Cyclopes were a menace to all men. They were giants, half-beast and half-god (significantly, the sons of Poseidon, god of the sea). It is important to note here than the image of the cyclops, appearing shortly before Luci's death, is the culmination, the highest intensification, and the synthesis of all preceding images relating to the train: it creates the

greatest feeling of menace; in size, the cyclops image associates the train with a mythical force larger than life. The image forms a tension between the modernness of the train (literal) and the primitiveness of the cyclops (figurative). The image synthesizes "nos coge el tren" as the cyclops certainly had the power of physical possession. With "brazos," the power of speech, it would without much doubt cause an "escalofrío" in persons nearby, if indeed the book's characters recognized its menace.

On a literal level, the train is an indirect cause of Luci's death, as Riley has proven. The river may also easily be seen as a cause of death in a literal sense, i.e., Luci drowns in the river. It has been observed that the people flock to the river to escape the heat of the sun, but, ironically, the river is as much and perhaps more a menace than any other element.

The opening paragraph of the novel traces the Jarama's course through Spain. As in previous cases of initial animation, the author begins quite subtly: " . . . [el río corre] sin dejar provecho a la agricultura" (7). The words "sin dejar provecho" immediately affect our view of the river: it denies water to crops with apparent sinister intent and leaves them no benefit.

The river is then described by the narrator with an even more sinister effect: "Oculto, hundido entre los rebaños discurría el Jarama" (18). The consonants ("n," "s,"

"rr," and "m") and the vowels ("o" and "u") in this passage project the sensation of distant, murmuring water. The word "oculto" in the context of "rebaños" communicates both the feeling of a river difficult to locate and, even at this early stage, of a wolf among sheep, seemingly preparing to strike at any moment.

The currents of the river are described by the narrator as "los largos músculos del río" (28). The effect of this essentially subjective description is as ambiguous as any other. It may easily be missed as a potentially mythic description because the comparison of external form between rippling water currents and muscular tissue gives the reader an exact visual picture. The river takes on the physical characteristics of a living animal; it is given more "solidity" than it actually has, i.e., the water would flow through one's hands without menace; muscular tissue is palpable and capable of squeezing the life from another animal.

On three occasions, the river is associated directly with death, thereby intensifying earlier feelings of menace emanating from it: In the first case, someone asks: " . . . y, ¿Adónde va ese río?" to which Santos, one of the youngsters, replies, "A la mar como todos" (39). This romantic image recalls Manrique's allegory of rivers which flow to the sea "que es el morir."[14] On the same page, the young group recalls in passing that they are swimming where many died during the Civil War in the Battle of the Jarama.

(39-40). We later learn that the river runs past a cemetery (152). The three associations form a scheme which flows from abstract to concrete: the first represents death and the river on an allegorical level, the second is death on a concrete level but removed into the past and less immediate, and the third is death in the immediate sense. The scheme is intensified only by Luci's present and actual death in the river.

A number of figurative expressions, descriptions, and seemingly unimportant incidents add to our general sense of uneasiness about the river. For example, a playful fight in the water is described in the following manner: " . . . aparecían y desaparecían los miembros . . . que querían ansiosamente respirar" (50). The river seems to have control of the "miembros," trying to suffocate them. The adverb "ansiosamente" intensifies the anxiety and emotional feeling of the struggle in the water. Paulina scolds the two involved in the fight telling them that they were "a pique de haberse ahogado . . . parece que no sabéis lo que es agua" (51). The narrator later describes one swimmer as "peleando con el agua" (60). This characterization adds the dimension of physical contact and struggle between the river and man. Shortly before Luci's death, the narrator speaks of the "creciente violencia de las aguas" (199) near the gates of the small dam, which control the speed of the current. Finally, at sunset, the

waters, like the sun, turn "color de fuego sucio" (203) carrying all the menacing connotations of the heat of the sun.

The river's menace does not end here. Its animation is intensified after nightfall when it moves into the second stage of intensification of imagery, into a final mythification as a more-than-literal collaborator with death. Although the river by night is more threatening than the river by day, it is increasingly attractive. The narrator first compares the river by night to a huge fish: " . . . una ráfaga de escamas fosforescentes, como el lomo cobrizo de algún pez" (236). The comparison is based on the river's glittering appearance in the moonlight. The fact that it is compared to a giant fish is important, but the narrator does not assign it any menacing qualities. The river is almost attractive with its "scales" glistening in the moonlight. But then we arrive at what is perhaps the novel's most important description: " . . . sentían correr el río por la piel de sus cuerpos como un flúido y enorme y silencioso animal acariciante" (271). The description moves and sounds exactly like what it describes: the repetition of the "y" and the softness of the "f," "c," "s," and the nasals "m" and "n" give the passage a flowing onomatopoeic effect. There is a precise sensorial impact produced by "flúido" and "acariciante." By means of these words and sounds, the description gives us the feeling of being on-the-spot

witnesses to the scene. On a mythical level, the river becomes an enormous animal, a silent reptilian or mammalian beast. The river is at the height of its process of intensification through its imminence to the young people's flesh and through its increased degree of animation. Like the image of the giant fish, this "animal acariciante" is almost attractive, caressing its prey in its lair; the sensual words "flúido" and "acariciante" contribute to this effect. Someone in the river, in fact, remarks: "¡Qué gusto de sentir el agua, cómo te pasa por el cuerpo!" (271). Minutes later, the narrator duplicates the sounds made by Luci as she drowns: " . . . y un hipo angosto, como un grito estrangulado, en medio de un jadeo sofocado en borbollas" (272). The "o," "s," and "ll" reproduce the sound of the water; they are combined with a small number of gutturals, "g" and "j" which are "lost" in the first group, suggesting the sounds of strangulation. The words "estrangulado," "jadeo," and "sofocado" contribute to the impression of a struggle between two beings and an intentional strangulation rather than a simple drowning, more the impression of a murder than an accidental death.

Subjective description, mythic process, and mythic imagery all form an important part of reader experience. From the reader's perspective, nature's menace seems obvious fairly early in the novel. The reader participates in a tension between the primitive and savage barbarism of

nature and death, and "modern" man who is seen in the novel as lost in pointless conversation and mentally stagnated, a prime victim for the wrath of nature. A clear example of empty values is the "cinema myth" on which the young Spaniards in the novel seem to thrive and which forms a vivid contrast with the primitive explicative myths scattered throughout narration. The best way to illustrate this cinema myth is to examine a specific example of it: Carmen and Santos, the pair which left early, have been startled by the moon, "la luna roja, inmensa y cercana" with its "gran cara roja." The reader sees the moon as a part of a process of intensification and a part of a larger myth which explains how natural elements foreshadow and cause Luci's death. Paulina and Sebastián, the two nearest Luci when she drowns, however, interpret the immensity of the moon in terms of cinema:

> —Parece, ¿no sabes esos planetas que sacan en las películas del futuro?, pues eso parece, ¿verdad?
> —Si tú lo dices.
> —Sí, hombre, ¿tú no te acuerdas aquella que vimos?
> —"Cuando los mundos chocan."
> —Esa. Y que salía Nueva York toda inundada por las aguas, ¿te acuerdas?
> —Sí, fantasías y camelos; que ya no saben lo que inventar esos del cine. (236)

Despite Sebastián's casual comment of "fantasías," the two do not see the moon as a threat. Carmen relates their experience to a movie seen recently; Sebastián, apathetic,

sees both the film and the moon as harmless objects. Since Luci is about to die of drowning, it is significant that, in the movie, New York is flooded. In the film, a planet appears immense in the sky and is about to collide with the Earth. The failure of this type of myth lies in its falseness: the cinema screen depicts a world not immediate to the viewer; it places a safe emotive and spatial distance between pictured action and audience; therefore, neither the planet in the movie nor the reality of the immense moon constitute a threat to the young people. Had Sánchez Ferlosio created a totally objective and cinema-like novel, he would have forced his reader into an identical non-emotional, uninvolved trap, forcing us to see the death as do the book's characters, from a distance.

Several quotes from dialogue give further evidence of the falseness of the cinema myth and the young people's blind dependence on it for identity: " . . . aquí cada uno vive su película" (117); Marirrayo's eyes "son una película cada uno" (211); and "mi vida es una película" (260). Cinema further serves the ancient but archetypal need of epic heroes and heroines: the masculine hero, an incarnation of physical strength, is Tarzan: "Sebastián se había puesto a dar brincos y hacer cabriolas; ponía contra el suelo las palmas de sus manos e intentaba girar todo el cuerpo, con los pies hacia arriba; dio un grito como Tarzán" (40). Since Sebastián imitates a "grito de Tarzán," it is more

likely that he heard the "yell" in a movie than that he read it in a book. American cinema also provides modern feminine epic ideals: "Quiere ser Esther Williams" (50); "Marilyn Monroe" (125), and "Hedy Lamar" (132). The falseness of the cinema myth again becomes apparent when, after Luci's death, Amalio, one of the persons in the tavern, observes: "Ya es que no se lo quita de las fauces ni el mismísimo Tarzán que se echase a sacarlo, con todo su golpe de melena y su cuchillo y sus bragas de pelo de tigre" (321). This allusion is particularly important if we remember that Sebastián, who was previously imitating Tarzan, was the one who did in fact try to save Luci.

Precisely when the cinema myth is definitively exposed as false, when the reader sees that it is empty and non-functional, especially in view of Luci's death, the reader (not the characters) begins to slowly realize that the first two stages of the structural progression of imagery have been a slow but constant build-up leading to the third stage of the progression, the creation of a primitive ritual sacrifice. After the news of Luci's death reaches the tavern, the people there, with excellent hindsight, begin to reveal their explicative myths about the river, in a slow and gradual process of intensification; as in other parts, however, their tone is playful and they do not seem to realize the very real and tragic significance of what they are saying. Mauricio, the tavern owner, begins, saying

that "el río este es muy traicionero. Todos los años se lleva alguno por delante" (320). The word "traicionero" gives the river a certain human fickleness and treachery; "se lleva" suggests the ability to "carry" as with hands and arms. The suspicion is confirmed when someone adds: " . . . las aguas de este río tienen manos y uñas, como los bichos" (321). The power of physical possession only implied before is now conferred on the river by "manos y uñas." Further attempts at defining the myth of the river accumulate a number of uncomfortable (for the reader) sensations, descriptions, and comparisons: " . . . como cosa viva, culebra, zorra, que no es persona este río" (321). Both "culebra" and "zorra" eliminate any previous doubts that we may have had about the river: "culebra" corresponds to its shape and "zorra" to the sensation of the "animal acariciante." Someone adds that the river has "sangre" and, when it has overrun its banks, a "barriga hinchada," its belly full of debris and small animals (322). Still giving life and mind to the river, although with tongue in cheek, the customers ironically note a possible future threat: "Y si un día se negara la gente a meterse en el río, saldría él a buscar a la gente" (324) and "El río saliéndose de sus cauces y liándose a correr detrás de la gente, como un culebrón" (324). The words "correr," "culebrón," and "buscar" add a great deal to the animation of the river in the novel. They give the river the ability to

search, to run, and to strike like a huge snake when it has caught its prey.

The line of thinking expressed in these quotes, albeit ironic, leads us to the final realization and conclusion that what has occurred has been a subtle form of ritual sacrifice to a natural deity. The people at the tavern jokingly suggest that the river must be appeased with a regular sacrifice or it will become an immediate menace to the community. Although they will likely remain oblivious to the mythic forces of nature until another victim succumbs to the river, their thinking is no different from that of South Sea Islanders who sacrifice to their "god of the volcano," of primitive hunting tribes to the god of the hunt, and of primitive fishing cultures to the god of the river. The ritual sacrifice in El Jarama takes place subtly but dynamically in the style and structure of the novel without the knowledge or consent of its participants. For this reason, none of the traditional spiritual comfort or peace of mind is provided the participants; it is, in fact, the reverse: a ritual of fear.

The rhythm of the ritual sacrifice in the novel is maintained and intensified by the animation of natural and mechanized elements which alternately weave themselves into the structure of the work. The four elements studied above —sun, moon, train, river— appear interspersed in dialogue, narration, and photographic description. If seen together,

it is easy to understand how they support rhythm, crescendo, and climax in the novel:

p. 203: the river by day, "color fuego sucio"

p. 216: the effect of the sun on the countryside, "asándose en un fuego polvoriento"

p. 227: nightfall, "la noche olfativa, voraz y sanguinaria"

p. 227: "el ojo de cíclope del tren"

p. 256: Luci is frightened by the train; decides to enter the water

p. 271: the river by night like an "animal acariciante"

p. 272: Luci drowns

p. 276: the moon's "gran cara muerta"

The most powerful imagery of the novel clusters around Luci's death. Natural elements conspire and collaborate with death and contribute to a gradually building rhythm through their increased appearance. We can discern an intensification in these culminating images of different objects: the "fire" is potentially dangerous, but distant; the night armed with claws and teeth and the cyclops eye of the train are more threatening but the first remains hidden and the second is on the move elsewhere; the moon seems closeby and actually startles Santos and Carmen, but these two are well on their way to Madrid when this happens; the "animal acariciante" is the most imminent and threatening, as it is directly touching Luci's skin.

The idea of rhythm is supported by the music of radios on the beach of the river and the phonograph and singing in the tavern. There is a significant note in the type of music being played because, in this ritual, the music celebrates death. On the same page as the descriptions "noche olfativa" and the "ojo de cíclope del tren" appear, the narrator makes reference to the music of a harmonica being played by the river: "Era una marcha lo que estaban tocando, una marcha alemana, de cuando los nazis" (227). The word "nazis" naturally supports the tone of fear and automatically suggests death. After Luci has drowned in the river, the narrator flashes back to the tavern, where Miguel is singing: " . . . y como tú no volvías—el sendero se borró—la fuente se corrompió" (273). The music of the ritual clearly matches the ritual. Luci will not "return" from the river and for that reason the "path" of return has vanished; the path may be seen as the link between life and death or as relating to the cemetery path formerly being "eaten" by the grass. The fountain, often associated with life, is indeed stale and stagnant; it may also be related to the devouring river.

The young people in the tavern begin to dance, as in ritual, shortly before Luci's sacrifice to the river. The Judge who investigates the incident has been summoned from a dance. There are a number of subtle references to the idea of ritual: Miguel is singing of Luci's death and had

previously gained fame in the tavern as the one who sang there the year before (15); the narrator's first comment about Lucio, one of the tavern's regular customers, is that "siempre se sentaba de la misma manera" (7); the young group chooses the same spot as the previous year and beside the same trees (28); a death in the river occurs "todos los veranos, casi una costumbre" (324). But neither the Judge who investigates nor the young people in the tavern realize that what has taken place is, in effect, a form of ritual sacrifice.

In primitive rituals of this kind, the animal or human being was offered up to the angered god. In El Jarama, we see the stylistic suggestion of both human and animal sacrifice. As the tempo builds toward death, there are constant and fairly evenly spaced associations of persons with animals, giving rhythm and ritual meaning to the novel. Some examples are: "golondrina" (16); "qué pato soy" (29); "te obedece como un corderito" (32); "como un cangrejo" (34); "hacer el ganso" (41); "risa de conejo" (53); "perrito chico" (62); "cada oveja con su pareja" (92); "animales lo somos todos" (106); "mona" (129); "burra" (134); and "gato" (230). The list is comprised of land mammals and water creatures and a few which inhabit both domains. The associations have the effect of animalizing the people, making them lesser beings with no free will, a part of a natural process. They are, in essence, reduced to the

status of sacrificial animals.

The expression "cada oveja con su pareja" is especially important in this sense. Luci, the "sacrificial lamb," is sitting with her "pareja" Tito just before her death. The narrator tells us early in the narration that the river was "oculto entre los rebaños," (18) and that Luci's swimsuit was a "traje de baño de lana negra" (42). The woolen material links her to the image of the sheep or lamb. After her death, someone remarks that the river often "eats" small animals and sheep (322). The color black is associated with the river by night, which is like an "espejo negro" (271) instead of red as before. Dressed in black, Luci is ready for death. The color causes her to blend with the water of the river, making her impossible to locate at night.

An important image in the process of ritual sacrifice appears just before Luci's death. Intoxicated with wine, she begins to feel sick and dizzy, "mareada," a sickness commonly associated with the sea, which has already been associated with death. She tells Tito that she feels as if she were on a "tiovivo" (227). This image is significant for three basic reasons: first, it is an accurate sensorial description of her dizziness, i.e., her head is spinning; second, the association with animals on the carousel is fairly obvious; being on the tiovivo, she either feels like a carousel animal or like she is sitting on one and is

unable to get off; third, the movement of a carousel is cyclical, circular, and repetitive, like the appearance of the train. Luci, without knowing it logically, feels uncomfortable because she senses that she is a helpless part of a repeated cycle, and the reader sees that she is a part of a ritual sacrifice.

Inclusion is an important part of ritual. All members of a primitive tribe wanted to be included in the ritual to be a part of a group act of solidarity and stability. We have already seen that Luci is associated with a sheep by her swimsuit and therefore is a common victim of the river. The color red, associated with blood, seems to permeate almost all of the collaborators with death and several other elements as well: the river is a mud-red (27); the sun produces a red heat and light (45); Luci's last sunset is red (234); the train's cars are a blood-red (131); the moonrise is red (234); the wine Luci drinks before she drowns is red (22); the mud by the river, which, because it touches her skin, causes her to enter the water, is red (28); and the rabbit (a pet of Justina, daughter of the owner of the tavern) which runs frightened to the front wheel of Luci's bike in the garden of the tavern has red eyes (111).

Involuntary inclusion into the ritual sacrifice, as in the above examples, is more a part of reader experience than character realization. It is an associative

and subconscious process found in description and imagery. Schraibman observes a "red de imágenes" in which "hay una metaforización mutua entre las personas, la naturaleza y el mundo animal."[15] To amplify a bit on Schraibman's observation, the major elements which form a part of the intricate web of imagery are: people, the earth, the river, the train, the sun, and the moon, the same which are bound to a ritual sacrifice.

The sun is first associated with a person in a figurative expression: " . . . eres un sol" (17). The bathers are virtually indistinguishable from the water because of a color association: "Los cuerpos tenían casi el color de las aguas" (34). Later, in the river, the people become "mass" and lose their individuality, an important aspect of ritual: " . . . multitud de cabezas y de torsos en el agua rojiza" (44). The river and the earth fuse together in one image: " . . . como si aquella misma tierra corriese líquida en el río" (26). The train and the river are associated as the smoke of the train drifts over the water (45). The sun and the train are brought together by a reflection: " . . . pegaba el sol en . . . un disco de señales ferroviarias" (122) and "los vagones . . . se perfilaban al sol" (131). People are bathed in sunlight: " . . . cromados ahora contra el sol" (203). The river and the moon are also brought together by a reflection of one in the other:

" . . . el reflejo de la luna en el espejo negro" (271). The people, by means of stylistic associations are, in the reader's experience, made a part of nature, and, without their knowledge, a part of a ritual sacrifice.

Subjectivity and primitive explicative myth in El Jarama, then, affect the experience of the work by contributing an emotive level to seemingly objective description. The imagery used to reinforce the emotive level is essentially archetypal. The sun, the moon, the train, and the river are gradually transformed with emotionally charged language into supernatural forces and mythic beasts, ominous portents and collaborators with death; the mano, pie, brazo, ojo, dientes, músculos, and uñas observed in various sections of the work form a composite "mythical beast" which seems to lurk by the river. The natural elements, the theme —death—, and the emotions communicated are universally human concerns. Their presence in the novel allows its experience to transcend the "one day of the week" or "slice of Spanish life" effect the book appears to have on an anecdotal level. The images raise the work to an uncommon metaphysical plane and maintain a constant balance between a concrete level (anecdote) and an abstract one (theme). The imagery is a product of the creative imagination and not the simple reflection of a specific social reality. El Jarama becomes a comment on death, its presence in our

lives, and our attitudes toward it. The experience of the novel, seen in this light, is summarized unknowingly by two characters: first, by Miguel, one of the youngsters, "Di tú que el día que quieras darte cuenta te llega un camión y te deja planchado en mitad de la calle. Y resulta que has hecho el canelo toda tu vida" (176); and by perhaps the only truly sensitive person in the group at the tavern, "el hombre de los zapatos blancos," who comments, "y está uno leyendo todos los días cantidad de accidentes que traen los periódicos, con pelos y señales, sin inmutarse ni esto; y, en cambio, asiste uno a lo poquísimo que yo he presenciado aquí esta tarde, y casi de refilón, como quien dice, y ya se queda uno impresionado, con ese entresí metido por el cuerpo, que ya no hay quien te lo saque. Como un mal agüero, esto es, ésa es la palabra; con mal agüero" (325).

The subjective and mythical imagery has a definite effect on the internal structure of the novel; it signals and reinforces major structural changes in the emotional impact of the narration and changes in the narrative attitude toward the scene (intensification). Characterization is affected by the animalization of inanimate nature, making the novel's characters the helpless prey of death and of those elements which conspire with death. Such a relationship reduces the possibility of powerful characterizations among the book's young, who are passive and apathetic "sheep" more than passionate beings who fight against their

destiny. The style of the work is enriched through the combination of camera description and figurative, mythical language. Imagery splinters into multiple levels of meaning through the literal-figurative-mythical ambiguity. The splintering adds a dynamic, vitalized quality to the novel. Literal language used by the narrator takes on a figurative and mythical meaning; figurative expressions in dialogue, in light of Luci's accident, become literal omens of death. The opposite processes in narration and dialogue emphasize the hiatus between the internal activity of the narrative (pointing toward death) and the external activity of dialogue (avoiding death as a topic of conversation whenever possible). Moreover, the double process underscores the similar hiatus between enriched reader perspective and very limited character understanding. The literal-figurative-mythical ambiguity may explain the many purely "objectivist" interpretations of the novel cited earlier. The camera-like description is deceptive; it forms only a part of the work's central experience and not its whole. Because of the abundant camera descriptions, we, as readers, can easily fall into the trap of viewing reality as do the book's characters, as a series of literal objects on a cinema screen. This is precisely what the mythification of nature in the novel enables us to avoid.

The suggestion of a modern ritual sacrifice also universalizes the experience of the novel. Ritual contributes

to the intensification of the narrative and forms an archetypal pattern which universally communicates a powerful tempo-building rhythm. Ritual sacrifice animalizes the people of El Jarama, making them an involuntary part of primitive nature, animals of prey to larger metaphysical realities. The ritual, along with music and dancing, gives a primitive rhythm to the novel. Luci ends up a "lamb for the slaughter," in the final analysis, only to appease the river.

With the tension between primitive myth and the modern cinema myth, the author draws a fundamental tension between modern man and primitive nature. By exposing the falseness of the modern cinema myth, the novel seems to say that man, no matter how modern he may think himself to be, cannot escape his status of animal, a part of nature and subject to it, that he cannot, with all his modern technology, escape the primitive forces of death, and, finally, that he may even be the unfortunate prey of his own modern invention (the train and the gates of the dam) which contributes inevitably to his own, self-created destruction.

Primera memoria, in both style and structure, invites comparison with El Jarama, even though its action does nct reveal any immediately observable similarities. In each novel, we see the animation and personification of natural elements, which, leading to an eventual mythification,

creates in the reader feelings of foreboding, of emotional intensification, and of death. In each novel, we are also dealing with universally appreciated rituals which determine novelistic structure.

By contrast, the essence of Primera memoria lies in the gradual development of a modern rite of initiation for its protagonist, a rite in which supernatural elements (as imagined by the narrator) seem to collaborate. The internal structure of the work is based on two narrative situations: first, the passage to adulthood of a young girl, the protagonist, who, with no mother or clear-cut adult model, is confused and ambivalent as she faces irrational external forces which draw her into a hostile adult world; second, a narrator, the protagonist in later years, who attempts to reconstruct the painful period by means of mythic processes, mythic imagery, and a universal rite structure, thereby bringing irrationality and the chaos of memory under control. While the protagonist illogically feels that nature —especially the sun— somehow collaborates in her unhappy passage to adulthood, the narrator uses tangible imagery and personification to reconstruct, define, and refine the irrational feeling; thus, as we examine myth and rite of initiation in the novel, we must be careful to distinguish between words which denote past action, i.e., from the perspective of the young protagonist, and those words which are little more than superimpositions of an older

narrator's perspective on the past action, i.e., present judgment.

Critics of Primera memoria have recognized the basic processes of animated nature and ritual passage to adulthood, but have not studied them in any great detail. Adelaide Burns has observed that Matia, the young protagonist, "fears" nature, and that her fear is related to a general feeling of anguish in the novel.[16] Janet Díaz has pointed out Matia's "resistance at entering the adult world which she senses is sordid and corrupt."[17] Margaret Jones has viewed the poetic transformation of nature as "antipathetic fallacy" in which "all of nature . . . forms a stylized whole which, although harsh and cruel, is nonetheless believable."[18] Two critics of Matute have associated the novel with myth-making: in reviewing Primera memoria for Insula, José Luis Cano identifies Matute as a "creadora de mitos."[19]; James R. Stevens speaks of the relationship between myth and memory, and discusses biblical name-symbolism, certain aspects of ritual behavior, and the "painful passage from childhood to the adult state . . . ."[20]

A brief summary of the novel's plot will clarify some of these differing critical observations. During the Spanish Civil War, young Matia lives on an unnamed island with her grandmother, her aunt Emilia, and her cousin Borja. On one of their many excursions to a nearby graveyard for boats and small craft, she and her cousin discover the body of a man,

José Taronjí, who has been brutally murdered by island fascists, possibly on orders from Matia's grandmother. The man's son, Manuel, appears suddenly and asks to use Borja's boat so that he may transport the body to his home. Matia later befriends Manuel and tries to communicate to him her sympathy for his family's loss. In doing so, she enrages her cousin, who is insanely jealous of Manuel because he is rumored to be, in fact, the illegitimate son of Jorge de Son Major, Borja's idol. After a brief visit to Son Major, however, both Matia and Borja are disillusioned when they see the real Jorge, a degenerate, sickly drunk. Borja, nevertheless, plots Manuel's destruction. He confesses to the local priest that he has stolen a great deal of his grandmother's money, but adds that Manuel has forcibly taken the money from him and has carried it off to a nearby tavern for safekeeping. Matia knows that Borja tricked Manuel into taking the stolen items there, but, out of cowardice, fails to speak out at the right time and to the right persons.

To illustrate with clarity and effectiveness the application of these points to the experience of Primera memoria, I have selected the ten incidents crucial to Matia's passage to adulthood: (1) Matia's first night on the island; (2) her contact with the corpse of José Taronjí; (3) the visit to Santa María church; (4) the excursion to the tavern of Es Mariné; (5) the brief visit to Emilia's room; (6) her

first long conversation with Manuel; (7) the gang war in which Borja is wounded; (8) the visit to Son Major; (9) the beginnings of Matia's betrayal, the visit to the Joven Simón with Manuel; (10) Borja's confession —the actual betrayal, which requires Matia's assistance.

In a sense, the first pages of the novel relate its eventual dénouement. The narrator confesses that she and Borja retain some of their grandmother's more unfortunate spiritual traits: "Supongo que Borja heredó su gallardía, su falta absoluta de piedad. Yo, tal vez, esta gran tristeza."[21] What Matia does not admit at this point is that she is, or was at one time, much more like her grandmother than she would like us to believe, or, perhaps, than she herself realizes here.

The first incident, Matia's initial night on the island, provides us with some preliminary evidence of mythic process and rite structure. We first learn that, upon her arrival, Matia has been separated from the motherly love of Mauricia, a maid, and that, four years prior to being passed to Mauricia, she had been left alone by her mother's death. Matia has been unwillingly thrust into the clutches of her grandmother, whom she hates and rejects. Separation from the mother and entrustment to tribal elders are essentially preparatory conditions for the initiate in a rite of passage.

The night of her arrival, Matia watches the sea, "mar plomizo" (14) which reflects darkness and hostility for

her. Suddenly, the night comes alive for Matia: "La cama . . . me amedrentó como un animal desconocido" (14) and " . . . las sombras . . . como serpientes, dragones, o misteriosas figuras" (14). Both images are incarnations of fright; the process of their creation is identical to that used by primitive man, who, when faced with the unknown, depended only on his imagination for an explanation. Hence, the bed engulfs her, "like an unknown animal," ready to strike. Simple stains on the wall become beasts of mythical origin. Both transformations intensify feelings of a hostile environment for the reader and cause him to sympathize with Matia. In the narrator's effort at reconstructing an irrational event, in short, she has been forced to turn to the fundamental processes of explicative myth.

In this first night on the island, other passages and facts show that Matia is, in effect, in a transitional period of her life, ready for initiation: although the narrator states symbolically that, on the island, "vi amanecer por primera vez en mi vida" (16), the protagonist still clutches her little doll, Gorogó (16). These images look both forward to the hope of adulthood and backward to the loneliness of childhood. The word "amanecer," in this particular image, begins a long series of images in which light-dark symbolism plays a key role in controlling reader experience in the rite. Matia sees dawn here both literally (the rising of the sun) and symbolically, with the

suggestion of rebirth in "amanecer," and a positive hope for the future.

The second incident, much more important and intense than the first, concerns the discovery of the corpse of José Taronjí. The children are away from the house because, presumably, Lauro, el Chino, is giving them lessons on the island's history, on the Bible, and about the island's "mercaderes." In other words, he is providing them with a knowledge necessary for their passage to adulthood in a particular culture, as in primitive rite. While out in the open air, they spot the "gallo de Son Major," whose eyes "resplandecían al sol" (22). In his relationship with the sun, which recalls the previous image, he suggests dawn, perhaps the passing of time, and new hope. His significance, however, will be explained as the action progresses.

In anticipation of encountering José Taronjí's body, the narrator begins to transmit to the reader images which reflect her past sensations of a hostile natural world; in this sense, the natural world appears to collaborate in the painful event and in the death: " . . . el cielo hinchado como una infección gris" (23); " . . . las piedras blanqueando como enormes dentaduras" (24); " . . . flores . . . que el sol parecía incendiar" (29); " . . . rocas como cuchillos" (32); and " . . . el mar como lámina de metal" (32). The sky is swollen, as if by an organic illness, giving it the repulsive appearance of a sickly animal.

Rocks appear as menacing teeth and sharp knives. The sun sets fire to the flowers, and the sea shines like the cold steel of an enormous blade. The narrator, through poetic and mythic transformations of nature, captures her feelings of dread and shares them with the reader. By anticipating the incident with images, she begins an intensification of the impact of the event. The reader is slowly pulled into the experience of the first contact with death and aesthetic distance is minimized in preparation for that contact.

After Matia has seen the body, images relating to the sun convey a feeling of shock and intensify the narrative rhythm, which has been fairly slow up to this point: " . . . como una úlcera, el globo encarnado del sol" (37); " . . . el odio estallaba, como el sol, como un ojo congestionado y sangriento a través de la bruma" (37); " . . . me pareció siniestro el sol que pulía las piedras de la plaza" (37); " . . . el sol feroz y maligno" (40). The words "úlcera" and "encarnado" project the feeling that the sun is a living, suffering animal; "un ojo congestionado y sangriento" parallels the death at hand and communicates its effect on Matia's sensory faculties. The sun "polishes" the stones on the plaza, which associates it with the man's killers, the Taronjí brothers (José's cousins), whose tall black boots strike the stones of the town's plaza, wearing it down. In the first descriptions of the sun, however, we first encounter the problem of narrative ambivalence expressed in

imagery. The sun, by all appearances, is a collaborator in the murder, as in El Jarama. But the sun may also be seen here as a victim rather than a perpetrator, i.e., an "ulcer" is a condition brought on by external pressure; the "ojo congestionado," although hideous in appearance, may also be interpreted as a person or animal victimized by a malicious external disease.

When Manuel appears from behind the boat, Matia notices the color of his skin, "el bronco color del sol," and that "había sol en el color de su pelo quemado" (41). These images remind us of the sunburned swimmers in El Jarama who have "captured" the sun in their skins. Manuel has contacted death in immediate sense: his own father. In Matia's eyes, he has been cruelly "burned" by the ravaging sun of maturity.

For Matia, the incident is not as immediate, but is equally important. She has contacted death, but, more importantly, she realizes that the death is real: "Me volví de espaldas. Estaba sorprendida. Había oído muchas cosas y visto, de refilón, las fotografías de los periódicos, pero aquello era real . . . . Parecía mentira, parecía algo raro, de pesadilla" (45). As in primitive ritual, previous education becomes reality; the initiates' ability to cope with their contact with death is a form of test, one which Matia here fails.

As Matia and Borja wait for Manuel to return with

their boat, they smoke and talk. James Stevens has correctly interpreted their smoking as "ritual behavior."[22] What Stevens does not point out, however, is that the smoking of cigarettes is indeed appropriate ritual activity because it is a direct imitation of what they conceive to be "adult." The performance of such a ritual, therefore, is in keeping with the demands of both primitive rite of initiation and with the modern: the cigarette is for their world as much as symbol of adulthood as, say, the spear was for a primitive hunting tribe.

Once the unpleasant contact is ended, Matia is ready for the third key incident in the development of her rite: the visit to Santa María church. The trip provides the reader with new parallels between the structure of the novel and the logical sequence of rite of initiation. The narrator desperately resorts to the animation of nature to try again to recapture her fright in anticipation of the event: " . . . piedras como cabezas siniestras en acecho" (59). The rocks are now more menacing than before; they are "heads" instead of "teeth." The rocks are "siniestras," and lie in ambush, like the Jarama river. They foreshadow death, but the death is figurative; it is the death of Matia's childhood.

To further confuse her in a time of need, Matia's adult models are thrown upon her in visible duality. Before she returns to the house, Matia imagines her

grandmother spying on the inhabitants of the slope with her jeweled opera-glasses: " . . . como dios panzudo moviendo los hilos de sus marionetas" (60), and " . . . sus ojos como largos tentáculos . . . lamían y barrían" (60). The grandmother is utterly repulsive to Matia; she appears as an evil, mythical god. The figurative "strings" she pulls to manipulate the lives below and her "tentacle-like" eyesight are mental objectifications of the intangible concepts of control and power. We are reminded, in this description, of Matia's earlier dream about Borja: " . . . que . . . me tenía sujeta con una cadena y me llevaba tras él como un fantástico titiritero" (25). Matia sees herself as a prisoner of a "cadena," which is, in essence, the rite of passage contrived for her and Borja by their grandmother. Matia feels, by association with "titiritero" and "marionetas," that Borja is much more willing to enter that world than she, and that he is, with her grandmother, pulling her into that adult world against her will. The association is significant because Matia here first shows a true realization of the path and the model she was following at that particular time of her life.

Only one page after the description of the grandmother, Matia remembers seeing Manuel's attractive mother, Sa Malene:

> El cabello se le había soltado. Era una mata de cabello espeso, de un rojo intenso, llameante; un rojo

> que podía quemarse, si se tocase. Más fuerte, más encendido que el de su hijo Manuel. Era un hermoso cabello liso, cegador bajo el sol.

Matia is strongly attracted to Sa Malene and, at this point, in the narration, begins a gradual sway toward Manuel and his mother as behavioral and physical models. The color of Sa Malene's hair is without a doubt confusing for Matia but at the same time explains her ambivalence and indecision: " . . . rojo intenso llameante" and "un rojo que podía quemar si se tocase" have been associated with the harmful fury of the sun; "cegador bajo el sol" draws a definite relationship between the two. Our view of the sun, because of this positive association, is slightly modified. The description of Sa Malene's hair makes her attractive, i.e., the brilliant beauty of her hair, and paradoxically, is distancing, i.e., that it would burn if touched.

The trip to Santa María church furthers the process of initiation into the Grandmother's world by echoing basic rite motifs: the darkness of the cave and the belly of the whale. In this incident, we see the sun emerge as a positive force of maturity which dramatically contrasts with the spiritual and physical darkness of the grandmother's world.

Matia enters the church, which is another entrance into spiritual isolation and darkness, similar to her encounter with the body of José Taronjí. Her first impression of the cathedral is that of a cave: she hears sounds

resembling those of a "murciélago" (79). The evidence for primitive rite mounts as Matia describes sitting in the huge edifice; she feels like "Jonás, dentro de la ballena con sus enormes costillas" (81). On a literal level, the image communicates the awesomeness of the size of the church for a small young girl; on a figurative level, the reader feels her fears and senses her feelings of insignificance and engulfment in a massive and hostile world. The key to Matia's thoughts here lies some six pages previous, as she was thinking of her grandmother: "Tú, dentro de tu corsé atrapada como una ballena" (75). Matia has made a vital link between her symbolic death and her grandmother's participation. She is figuratively being "swallowed" by her grandmother, and, in her mind, the association makes the experience in the church even more frightening.

The sun's activities during this same period are in constant tension and sharp contrast with the darkness of the church. The sun is still a somewhat ominous and terrifying force for Matia; it seems to press in hardest at her most difficult moments. At one point she refers to it as a "luz negra" (79).

Matia first noticed the effect of the sun on her that morning as she dressed for church: " . . . piernas quemadas por el sol" (74). The sun has burned Matia; it has permeated her skin after the incident on the beach with the corpse of José Taronjí. Her skin is now, like Manuel's,

marked by the sun, an apparent collaborator in her involuntary passage to maturity. Outside the house, Matia notices that "el sol brillaba fieramente" (74), as a menacing, wild animal. As she leaves the house for church, she describes the sun's presence: "El sol, muy cerca de mí, levantaba un fuego extraño del árbol, de las hojas, de las redondas pupilas del gallo" (76). The sun has set her world ablaze and she finds the feeling most uncomfortable. The adjective "extraño" may be interpreted as "strange" or perhaps "alien" but without any strongly negative connotation. The image of the sun's rays reflected in the eyes of the "gallo de Son Major" reinforces the symbolic relationship between these two natural collaborators with the passage to adulthood.

While Matia is engulfed in the darkness of the church, the sun "beats" at the stained-glass windows: " . . . el sol, rojo y feroz . . . . Una cruel sensación de violencia, un irritado fuego ardía allá arriba" (79); " . . . el sol lucía fuera como un rojo trueno de silencio" (80); and " . . . el sol reverberaba como si quisiera entrar" (81). The first image defines the sun as clearly negative and threatening. It appears as violent, ferocious, and irritated. Matia has conferred upon it the characteristics of a wild animal, "feroz," those of a human being, "irritado," and those of a fire, "rojo" and "fuego." Margaret Jones has pointed out that such words as these "confer on the sun

a power of its own, capable of inflicting harm and inciting violence."[23] The sun has become a paradox in Matia's mind; it is animal, person, and fire all rolled into one. Her confused and contradictory feelings are further developed in the second image: the synesthesia of "rojo trueno" combined with "silencio" intensifies the confused and irrational fears of the sun. The last image shows the sun "reverberating," an action possible only with "sound-producing" entities. The sun "acts" as if it wants to enter the church, and fully illuminate the darkness. Young Matia sees the sun as a concrete menace to her; it has become a supernatural being capable of exerting force and causing physical damage without changing its position in the sky.

The stained-glass image of the mythical Saint George slaying the dragon, fixed between the sun and the interior of the church, is another key image which will take on more importance as the novel develops. It is a part of the church, but is illuminated by the sun: " . . . el poderoso San Jorge, grande y lleno de oro, sobre el apabullado dragón" (80).

The second major division of the book is entitled "La escuela del sol," which reinforces the idea that the sun collaborates in Matia's education and passage to adulthood. The opening pages of the section relate the plan to go to the tavern of Es Mariné, the fourth incident in the rite of initiation. At the tavern we are introduced to the idea of

"adult secrets" as a part of Matia's initiation. On three occasions, Matia makes mention of the "secretos": " . . . sonreía como si estuviera en poder de muchos secretos" (95); " . . . comprando a Es Mariné cosas que secretamente escondía" (97); and " . . . tenían secretos comunes" (98). The reader is intrigued, as is Matia, by the nature of the "secretos," and is pulled into an active participation in the event. But the basic problem at hand is that Matia is a young girl and is in the company of young boys and men. The "secrets," as she quickly learns, are not for her, but for the young males in the group.

Logically, this stage of the rite belongs more to Borja than to Matia. For Borja, Jorge de Son Major is a mythic hero as well as his adult model. Borja frequents the tavern to learn more about the legendary adventures of his idol. Jorge embodies all the qualities that Borja would like to possess —he seems a free, adventuring spirit who roams the world, romantically clashing with pirates. In name at least, he is associated with Saint George; but in Borja's mind, the two are equal in their mythic fulfillment of his heroic needs. It is significant that, in terms of rite structure, when Borja reveals his desire to eventually be like Jorge, he is told: " . . . tendrás que nacer otra vez . . . " (100). The idea of rebirth is fundamental to rite of passage in all cultures. The question remains, will Borja pass to Jorge's world or to that of doña Práxedes,

Jorge's moral enemy. Matia's choices in this area are far more complex than Borja's. She also has a world of fantasy into which she desires escape, and, like the life style of Jorge appears to offer, it is deeply rooted in childhood, in Andersen's Fairy Tales, Peter Pan, and the "Isla del Nunca Jamás" (115). Matia is faced with the female models of her aunt Emilia, her grandmother, Sa Malene, and even her own long-dead mother.

If the fourth incident suggests "adult secrets" for Borja, the fifth, Matia's short visit to Emilia's room, develops her contact with female initiation, the "secretos de persona mayor," and the "oscuras cosas de persona mayor" (129). The incident begins with Matia's grandmother criticizing her physical appearance, in preparation for her physical initiation into womanhood. Doña Práxedes, setting herself up as the ideal feminine model and standard, begins telling Matia how she should dress, carry herself, behave, groom herself, and so forth. She eventually gives up on Matia, noting in passing, "hay que esperar que te vayas transformando poco a poco" (120).

Emilia takes Matia up to her room with her. In the dark isolation of the room, she and her aunt converse about feminine secrets. But all Emilia tells her is that she —Emilia— slept with her little doll up until the night before she was married. The narrator, across a span of years, sees Emilia as a child who had withdrawn from the

world into another reality tinted by cognac; her aunt shows only exterior signs of womanhood. The superficial nature of Emilia's concept of adulthood is revealed in two instances: first, she places, without explanation, a cigarette in Matia's mouth and lights it, a superficial recognition of adulthood; second, Emilia, as always conforming to her mother's standards of physical appearance, paints her nails with great care, in Matia's eyes, to excess. Matia, then, rejects Emilia as a possible female model: "Sería en otra vida, casi en otro mundo, cuando yo sintiera lo mismo que la tía Emilia, con sus Muratis, y sus cartas" (129). As the narrator suggests here, she would have to have been "reborn" into another life and another world to be like Emilia. Matia recognizes the idea of "rebirth," but rejects it with the words "otro mundo." The narrator distances herself as much as possible from Emilia because, I think, she fears that she is now much like what Emilia was then. The end of the novel will confirm this conjecture.

While in Emilia's room, the sun plays an important role in the intensification of the incident. The sun becomes attractive to Matia, who, in the darkness of the room, has definitely rejected her aunt as a listless prisoner of her grandmother. The first appearance of the sun outside Emilia's room parallels the sun's characteristics in _El Jarama_: " . . . el sol llameaba como mil abejas zumbando

en el balcón" (124). We are reminded, in this description, of Sánchez Ferlosio's sun, a "legendary swarm" of insects which buzzed, "zumbando," around the banks of the Jarama. The image of the bees, in Primera memoria, is again paradoxical in its effect on the reader. While a thousand bees pose a potential menace, they also objectify the sun's light into a thousand, individually golden, actively changing, and radiantly beautiful "pieces" of sunlight.

Observing Emilia's false existence, Matia notices the sun's relationship to her withdrawal: "Había allí algo, que no acertaba a definirme; algo cerrado, con los visillos corridos para que no hiriese la furia del sol, en aquella hora como acechante y cargada; algo dulzón y turbio a un tiempo" (124). Emilia shields herself from the "fury" of the sun, that is, from the "wounds" of maturity; she lacks the internal strength to confront life. Matia rejects Emilia's life style as "turbio," and yet, ambivalently, finds it attractive, "dulzón," as she herself is tempted to withdraw from the unpleasant exterior world.

In spite of Matia's yearning for escape, she sees the sun, at the end of her stay in the room, in a different way: " . . . entraba un vívido fajo de sol, como una espada de oro" (125). This image not only transforms the sun's rays into a visible and tangible object, but through "espada," it is reminiscent of the courageous Saint George, "lleno de oro" (80) which Matia saw and admired on the

stained-glass of Santa María.

In the sixth incident, Matia and Manuel's meetings on the island, we see an extension of both the mythic transformation of the sun and further echoes of Saint Goerge's epic battle with the dragon. As Matia and Manuel sit on the slope, Matia again notices Manuel's sunburned neck, reminding her of her initial contact with death. She then boldly speaks out against her grandmother's (and most of the island's) wretched treatment of Manuel and his family, but, in doing so, she becomes somewhat embarrassed and flushed; the narrator remembers: "Tenía la piel encendida como si todo el sol se me hubiera metido dentro. Y aún me dije confusamente: 'Pues no he bebido vino. Ni siquiera había una gota de coñac en la copa de la tía Emilia'" (135-136). The contrast between the bright sunlight of maturity and compassionate action and the shadows of Emilia's withdrawal from life is made apparent here. The juxtaposition of these incidents allows the reader to compare and contrast them. The sun no longer presses in from the outside, quite the opposite. On a mythic level, the above image resolves a long series of tensive animations of the sun. The sun is figuratively "inside" Matia at this moment. Before, it burned her skin, but now it has penetrated her completely. She feels its warmth, its strength and energy. At her strongest moment, she recalls that she is not under the influence of intoxicants. Her bold act of maturity is real,

not the result of drunken illusion, which usually leads to uninhibited conduct.

The act, however, is neither complete nor is it permanent in effect. The act was difficult for Matia, and we see that she still lacks a genuine compassion for Manuel, e.g., she becomes very irritated when Manuel does not speak out, and is seemingly indifferent. Nature then responds to her faltering: " . . . el majestuoso gallo de Son Major mirándome colérico" (140). The cock is majestic to Matia, but stares angrily at her, as if he knows her weakness. As a result, the sun again appears as a hostile force to Matia as she again withdraws into the shell formed by her grandmother's oppression: " . . . el sol parecía acecharnos" (142). Her withdrawl consists, in part, of a regression to thoughts of fairy tales and her "teatro de cartón." In spite of the protagonist's unstable ambivalence, the narrator realizes the truth: " . . . mi infancia . . . se perdía" (144). The reader is left with the question, as in Borja's case, of which path will she choose.

Matia withdraws even further with the appearance of the "lagarto verde," a reminder of her grandmother, who, as Stevens has pointed out, has been compared to a "lagarto."[24] Matia remembers seeing the lizard: "Por momentos parecía el terrible dragón de San Jorge en la vidriera de Santa María" (147-148). In confronting a "dragon" of her own invention, Matia fails in her test. She backs down, submitting

to the rite planned for her by doña Práxedes, an early signal of the novel's tragic end: "Cerré los ojos para no sentir la mirada diminuta-enorme del dragón de San Jorge" (148). The unusual construction "diminuta-enorme" communicates Matia's confused feelings, although "diminuta" probably refers to the actual size of the lizard, while "enorme," a mythic expansion of a harmless lizard, refers to the emotional intensity of the association, the unpleasant reminder that she has failed a real test of character and courage.

The seventh incident deals more directly with Borja's initiation but indirectly foreshadows subsequent steps taken by Matia. The section begins with an excellent "tone-setting" image: " . . . las uvas que maduraron a mediados de setiembre son ácidas . . . " (151). The external appearance of the grapes tells the pickers that they have matured, but their internal substance is bitter. We see the fulfillment of this suggestion as Borja, and later Matia, moves into the final stage of his rite of passage. Borja, in this period, is heavily involved in gang wars, which are, in short, a microcosmic objectification of the island's internal strife and hatred and of Spain during the Civil War. Borja imitates on a small scale what his father, a colonel for the fascists, does on a large scale. Borja returns from one skirmish with a straw effigy of himself which the other side was about to burn. He glows with

pride, but he has been seriously wounded in the fight. The narrator remembers: "Borja estaba solo, de pie (adiós, Peter Pan, adiós, ya no podré ir contigo la próxima Limpieza de Primavera: tendrás que barrer solo todas la hojas caídas), quieto y dorado en medio de la plaza, brotándole de los ojos un reflejo del tío Alvaro" (164). Borja will have the physical scars of battle, in his culture, of "manhood." The narrator, on the other hand, perceives a much deeper significance in the event. Borja has shed childish illusions, "adiós, Peter Pan," and has, in effect, become a mirror image of his father. He is therefore more than acceptable as an adult member of his grandmother's world.

The same night, Matia goes to bed without Gorogó. The reader is about to experience the end of Matia's innocence, but there remains a major obstacle or deterrent to Borja's, and Matia's, complete passage to doña Práxedes' adulthood: Jorge de Son Major. The eighth incident —the visit to Son Major— functions as a demythification of Jorge's magic aura. He is, for Matia and Borja, abruptly brought down from the sublime mythic plane of epic hero to that of a real man, with real weaknesses.

When Borja and Matia discover that Jorge and Emilia, Borja's mother, were once lovers, Borja becomes obsessed by the idea that he may be Jorge's illegitimate son, and, therefore, may rightfully follow Jorge's vagabond example. In

anticipation of their visit to Son Major, the narrator describes the sun in a most unusual way: " . . . un sol maduro, pleno" (184) and at the same time " . . . un sol cálido, como un vino antiguo que debía tomarse sorbo a sorbo, para que no se subiera a la cabeza" (184). The first image is visual, but at the same time links the sun to the concept of maturity. The protagonist feels positively about going to see Manuel, and then Jorge. But the narrator, who knows what happened later, implicitly predicts the outcome of the meeting: that they have been drunk with Jorge's image and, taken slowly and without distorting side-effects, Jorge may be seen as he is. The second image also supports the idea of expectation. The wine or the light of the sun is ripe, warm, and pleasing to the touch. We are reminded of Borja's earlier references to the grapes of Son Major: " . . . las de Son Major son dulces" (151).

Matia's description of Jorge's house confirms our suspicions: " . . . todo sumergido en vino" (190). The reader's first reaction to this description is pleasant. But it also conjures up for Matia the unpleasant reminder of Emilia's inebriated withdrawal from the world. As the "imagined" Jorge is slowly but surely demythified for Matia and Borja, an inevitable course is set; Jorge is eliminated as a possible alternate adult model and their choice is greatly narrowed: "Jorge no era como lo imaginamos. No era ni el dios, ni el viento, ni el loco y salvaje huracán de que

hablara Es Mariné . . . " (195). Although Jorge does not meet Matia's expectations, the narrator nevertheless identifies with his "ausencia de esperanza" (196), his "tristeza" (196), and "la gran copa de vino rosado de su nostalgia" (196). Jorge's adulthood is, in short, locked up inside a bottle of wine: "El sol arrancaba a una botella un resplandor rosado, transparente. Parecía una lámpara" (191). The bottle appears to contain the sunlight of Jorge's house. The image reinforces the idea of Jorge's withdrawal from the real world into the happy but false world of wine.

The ninth incident concerns the beginnings of Matia's betrayal of Manuel, and, moreover, the beginnings of her actual passage to the adult state fashioned by her grandmother's character ideals. Matia takes Manuel to the Joven Simón, where Borja stores his stolen goods. It is important that, during this period, the sun virtually disappears as a key image. There are three explanations: that the narrator has given up on depicting the sun as a positive supernatural force in evoking her passage to adulthood, which, at this point, was set on a course toward darkness and hypocrisy; that, if we interpret the sun as a consistently negative but maturing force, the process is complete and the sun's "collaboration" is no longer seen as important; and that the sun's disappearance is directly related to the pessimistic outcome of the story. If we view the sun as a basically positive force, the result is that the sun's previously

"repulsive" and "painful" appearance was due not only to the normal "growing pains" associated with puberty, but also to the almost insurmountable difficulty of speaking out and of being pure in a hypocritical and impure adult world, i.e., facing and confronting reality. As we see in the cases of Jorge and Emilia, this is not an easy task, especially if that world is dominated and controlled by a powerfully oppressing force such as the grandmother and the society (Spain) she represents.

At the Joven Simón with Manuel, Matia begins her reversal: she sways from the previously set course toward a positive maturity (compassion, honesty, strength, etc.) and falls into Borja's elaborate trap, taking Manuel with her. She recognizes that Borja is deceiving Manuel by asking him to take the stolen items to Es Mariné's tavern, but says nothing; she makes no effort to stop Borja or to warn Manuel. As the painful truth dawns on the narrator, certain distancing words begin to creep into her description of herself in order to separate her present self from her past self: "Pero yo era egoísta e irreflexiva sobre todas las cosas" (220), "Mi cobardía era sólo comparable a mi egoísmo" (221), and " . . . yo, hipócritamente, rehusé" (222). The narrator realizes that, at this point, she became a helpless, "egotistical," "cowardly," "hypocritical" prisoner of her grandmother's world. The narrator has begun to fulfill

her quest into the past; the fulfillment lies largely in the realization that she was indeed more like her grandmother than she at first believed. Borja was already a prisoner of the <u>abuela</u>: "Borja hizo un gesto extraño con las manos que me recordó a la abuela" (224). Matia sees Borja as imitating his selected adult model. There remains only the final betrayal —the crucial and binding test of passage for both— in the structure of the rite, the tenth and final incident: Borja's hypocritical confession.

As the final chapter begins to take shape, Emilia gives Matia a bottle of perfume as a Christmas present and anticlimactically declares "ya eres mujer" (230). A weak introduction to a finalizing ritual has been performed on Matia by an equally weak adult. The perfume is just as externally superficial now as painting one's nails was previously.

Borja goes to confession at Santa María and Matia unwittingly collaborates by accompanying him. At the church we note the reappearance of three principal images: " . . . las vidrieras despedían luces" (236), "San Jorge . . . había palidecido" (236), and "Algo cruzó la nave volando torpemente. 'Es un murciélago,' me dije" (236). If the sun was at one time a collaborator with a positive maturity in Matia's mind, it seems powerless now. The glass of the church deflects the sun's light and pours into the sanctuary a light of its own. Saint George has become "pale" both literally

and symbolically. Matia, again in the "cave" or the belly of the whale, has again symbolically contacted death, but in this case, the renewed contact pulls her back to an initiation into the moral darkness of betrayal and cowardice. Matia is about to be reborn a woman, in the spiritual image of her grandmother.

Borja relates his lie in the confessional to doña Práxedes, but Matia says nothing; even though she knows the truth, she cannot move: "Una gran cobardía me clavaba al suelo" (240). Matia egotistically fears that if she does speak out, Borja will reveal all of her dark secrets to her grandmother, and that she will be sent to a reformatory, where, ironically, there is no sunlight and only loneliness. Matia betrays Manuel with her silence: " . . . temblaba, pero era mayor el frío que tenía dentro" (241). The contrast between the cold feeling inside Matia during the betrayal and the "sol adentro" when she first spoke out against hypocrisy underscores a basic change in character. Matia's inner light has faded along with natural exterior light: " . . . la luz gris perlada del amanecer acuchillaba las persianas verdes de mi ventana" (242). The sun, a precious stone now gray and dim, fades symbolically from Matia's life, reminding her of her failure. It seems more hostile now than ever before with the emotionally charged word "acuchillaba." The sun reappears only with sunrise and the crowing of the cock of Son Major with his "coléricos ojos" and his

"horrible y estridente canto, que clamaba, quizá —qué sé yo— por alguna misteriosa causa perdida" (245). The "misteriosa causa perdida" refers to a multitude of previously suggested ideas: the cause of maturity, of adult purity, both lost; the loss of hope, traditionally associated with sunrise, is also suggested. The crowing of the cock at sunrise reminds us of Peter's denial of Christ. The narrator's final realization is, at the end of the novel, much like Peter's: she has, through cowardice, betrayed the only person capable of saving her from a life of spiritual darkness and remorse. Matia was (and perhaps is) the image of her grandmother, the person she most despised; and only a separation of many years and a painstaking search into the past have given her that realization.

Mircea Eliade has stated that in rite of initiation, "we are dealing with an existential experience that is basic in the human condition. This is why it is always possible to revive archaic patterns of initiation in highly evolved societies."[25] In order that we may properly assess the rite structure of Primera memoria, it will be helpful to step back from the novel for a moment and study its basic scheme.

The opening pages present us with a young girl, separated from her mother, entrusted to an elder, and ready for initiation; the environment which surrounds her, she feels,

is as hostile and painful as the difficult changes she feels inside her. When she first meets death, the body of José Taronjí, it is evident to her that supernatural beings (at least one) are collaborating in her unwilling passage to maturity. Her education in custom, history, and mythology is well under way, but is by no means complete. In Santa María church, she enters the "belly of the whale," the "cave" of symbolic darkness, in a lonely and trying spiritual isolation. The sun, forceful and frightening, presses in from the outside, but is "kept out" by the stained-glass church. Matia later watches her cousin evolve through his initiation by learning male adult secrets; he is told that he must be "reborn" to become like his idol, Jorge. Matia is subsequently taken to Emilia's room where she is told feminine adult secrets, however superficial they may be. After rejecting this rebirth, she turns to Manuel and begins to pull away from her grandmother's domination by speaking out compassionately for a friend. The sun, here, is inside her and appears somehow responsible for the mature act. With a small reminder of her grandmother, however, she backs down and returns to the course of initiation set by doña Práxedes. After seeing Jorge de Son Major's decadence, she is disillusioned and places herself in the grandmother's rite: she betrays her only real friend. The sun disappears as she completes the dark ritual of cowardice and deception by returning to the "cave" of Santa María, for a binding

action which confirms her move to the grandmother's world. The narrator implicitly confesses her guilt in her recognition of her own falseness and cowardice and the novel ends quite pessimistically.

Because Matia passes through four states of symbolic death, we might speculate that she, in fact, has from the first a choice of several paths of initiation and subconsciously passes through segments of two or three. Her initial contact with death was painful, but gave her strength later to defy her grandmother's power and authority. The second isolation and suggestion of symbolic death in Santa María was, without a doubt, a part of rite of passage as contrived by doña Práxedes. The third state of darkness was in Emilia's room, a rite which was, in effect, no rite at all. By cowardice, she rejects the first; she backs down from the "dragon," and accepts a synthetic form of the last two.

The rite of initiation, then, functions in numerous ways: it makes use of universal symbols and patterns of initiation which transcend the reality presented in the story. The reader's understanding of and participation in a personal, specific experience is facilitated by the use of archetypal concepts related to rite. The images implied by the rite of initiation are universally frightening and therefore cause the reader to share in Matia's initial fear and confusion. The rite structure gives the reader a

positive expectation of the dénouement which is, in the end, deceived. Because of the deception of the structure and because of the betrayal related in anecdote, emotive distance moves from a minimal distance between reader and narrator (sympathy) to a maximum distance (judgment). The reader expects a passage from light to darkness and then on to light, but finds the reverse, that Matia passes back into darkness just when she is about to progress to the bright sunlight of maturity. The betrayal of the traditionally positive rite structure distances us from Matia but at the same time causes us to share in her anguish, as she has distanced, in the end, her present being from her past self. The rite structure emphasizes and delineates key incidents which are vital to the process of maturity but which might otherwise go unnoticed in a more limited and less universal context. The rite assists the orderly reconstruction of a chaotic period by organizing these key events in her life in keeping with the most important characteristics of rite of initiation. The notion implied by the use of <u>primitive</u> rite corresponds to the primitive mentality of the island's inhabitants: barbaric treatment and inhuman killing of other men, which is a symptom of the Civil War.

Impressions and feelings of a young girl are objectified in images of a mythical quality so that they —a fleeting reality— may be tangible and immediate to both narrator and reader. Myth is used to embody irrational feelings

and emotions, the fears and pains of passage to adulthood, but, in this case, they reflect a hidden level of guilt on the part of the narrator as she subconsciously remembers that she did indeed betray a friend. The images reinforce the emotional impact of the individual units of the rite structure. The sun, in final analysis, appears to mature Matia as it matures the island's grapes: they seem to be mature on the outside, but their substance is bitter. External transformation is easy, nature provides us with all the changes; but maturation of the spirit, as the narrator, learns, must come from within..

The principal similarities between El Jarama and Primera memoria lie in their mythic aspects: the use of primitive myth and ritual. In each novel, natural elements create feelings of foreboding of death and emotional intensification. In both novels, myth and ritual are implicit and do not depend wholly on explicit allusions to archetype or to Classical Mythology; the fact that each novel does generally contain the same type of mythic aspect places each in the mythic trajectory in the Spanish Novel from 1956 to 1970.

The principal differences between the two novels lie in the novelistic techniques which each one fuses with myth and ritual in order to communicate a complete experience. In Primera memoria, for example, mythic processes reflect

character emotion and recognition whereas in El Jarama the characters did not react to or apparently even recognize the myth of death in full progress. In Primera memoria, we react to the ritual found in structure but see that it is controlled by a first-person narrator as opposed to the omniscient control of a third-person narrator in El Jarama. In Sánchez Ferlosio's novel, mythic images support overall intensification of an increasingly obvious ritual sacrifice; but, in Primera memoria, what we observe and feel is due more to the reconstruction through memory of a young girl's passage to adulthood. The passage uses the fundamental processes of primitive rites of initiation. It is a rite composed of individually intensifying steps; and each step is supported and intensified by the mythic animation of nature: natural elements are portents not of a literal death, as in El Jarama, but of a symbolic death, of innocence and of childhood. In both novels, we find subjectivity which eventually leads to the creation of myth, but each work uses subjectivity in a different way: in El Jarama we see the contrast between two views of reality, the camera and the mythic which lead to a composite view of reality including both subjective and objective elements. El Jarama, in this sense, serves as a link between the novel of the early '50s and the novel of the '60s, but also serves as the first major case of the creation of myth in the Spanish Post-Civil War Novel. Primera memoria adds to the trajectory a change

in novelistic technique and a slight change in the type of myth used. In terms of technique, subjectivity in Primera memoria is the experience of the novel and is not contrasted with any objective, camera-like techniques, which foreshadows the novel of the '60s. In terms of myth, I think, Primera memoria's rite of initiation is, culturally speaking, much more sophisticated than ritual sacrifice. This is to say that many cultures which have long since eliminated ritual sacrifice, still have an active rite of initiation.

With Tiempo de silencio and Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes, the sophistication of the type of myth used increases yet another step. We move from the implicit primitive myths and rituals of El Jarama and Primera memoria to the more culturally advanced epic myth (Tiempo de silencio) and then the Classical Literary Myth (Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes); we move from implicit myths of a fairly serious nature to explicit myths which mock and humorously demythify their models, but, at the same time, create very serious and often tragic visions of modern man and society.

NOTES

[1]Eugenio G. de Nora, La novela española contemporánea III (Madrid: Gredos, 1970), 264-272.

[2]Wallace W. Douglas, "The Meanings of Myth in Modern Criticism," Modern Philology, #50 (1953), 232-242.

[3]See for example James R. Stevens, "Myth and Memory: Ana María Matute's Primera memoria," Symposium, XXV, (ii), #2 (Summer, 1971), 198-203.

[4]Juan Luis Alborg, Hora actual de la novela española (Madrid: Taurus, 1958), pp. 328 and 335.

[5]José Corrales Egea, La novela española actual (Ensayo de ordenación) (Madrid: Edicusa, 1971), p. 76.

[6]J. L. Cano, "El Jarama," Arbor, XXXIV (1956), 313. Other critics who have stressed the novel's objectivity and realism are: Rafael Bosch: " . . . detached and uncommitted," see "The Style of the New Spanish Novel," in Books Abroad, 39 (Winter, 1965), 12; Delfín Garasa says that the narrator adopts a "posición rigurosamente objetiva," see "La condición humana en la narrativa española contemporánea," in Atenea, 162 (1966), 134; Marcelino Peñuelas, in a book on myth in literature, rejects myth in the novel, speaking of "novelas tan rabiosamente objetivas como El Jarama," see Mito, literatura y realidad (Madrid: Gredos, 1965), p. 134.

[7]Edward C. Riley, "Sobre el arte de Sánchez Ferlosio:

Aspectos de El Jarama," Filología, IX (1963), 201.

[8]Pedro Carrero Eras, "Lo concreto y lo mágico en El Jarama de Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio," Homenaje Universitario a Dámaso Alonso (Madrid: Gredos, 1970), pp. 265-272.

[9]Darío Villanueva, "El Jarama" de Sánchez Ferlosio: Su estructura y significado (S. de C.: U. de Santiago de Compostela, 1973), p. 110.

[10]José Schraibman, "La estructura simbólica de El Jarama," Philological Quarterly, 51, 1 (Jan., 1972), 329-342.

[11]Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, El Jarama, Ninth Edition. (Barcelona: Destino, 1969), p. 13. Future references to the text will be found in parentheses. Sánchez Ferlosio's essay, "Personas y animales en una fiesta de bautizo," Revista de Occidente, IV, #39 (jun., 1966), 364-389, explores the relationship between the naming (bautizo) of an object or entity and the entity itself (personas y animales); in his conclusion, he points out "la puerilidad interpretativa de la colectividad" (389), which would tend to support my observations here.

[12]Ramón Buckley, Problemas formales de la novela española contemporánea (Barcelona: Ediciones 62, 1968), p. 74.

[13]Riley, p. 218.

[14]See Jorge Manrique, "Coplas por la muerte de su padre," in Poesía española, ed. Diego Marín. (New York: Las Américas, 1962), pp. 83-94.

[15]Schraibman, pp. 338 and 335, respectively.

[16]Adelaide Burns, "The Anguish of Ana María Matute in _Los mercaderes_," _Hispanic Studies in Honor of Joseph Manson_ (Oxford: Dolphin Books, 1972), p. 24.

[17]Janet Díaz, _Ana María Matute_ (New York: Twayne, 1971), p. 133.

[18]Margaret E. W. Jones, "Antipathetic Fallacy: The Hostile World of Ana María Matute's Novels," _Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly_, XIII, Supplement (1967), 6.

[19]José Luis Cano, "Una novela de Ana María Matute," _Insula_, XV, 161 (abril, 1960), 8.

[20]Stevens, pp. 198-203.

[21]Ana María Matute, _Primera memoria_, Fourth Edition. (Barcelona: Destino, 1966), p. 9. Future references to this text will be found in parentheses.

[22]Stevens, p. 202.

[23]Jones, p. 15.

[24]Stevens, p. 200.

[25]See Mircea Eliade, _Rites and Symbols of Initiation_, trans. Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 7. For other helpful ideas about rite of initiation and related concepts, see Margaret Mead, _Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies_ (New York: Dell, 1963), and Arnold Van Gennep, _The Rites of Passage_, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

CHAPTER TWO:
NEW MYTHS FOR OLD
IN THE NOVEL OF THE '60S

If myth in El Jarama and Primera memoria was an implicit and, for the reader, a subconscious process verified by an analytical reexamination of the works, in the novel of the '60s —especially Tiempo de silencio and Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes— it becomes an explicit and conscious one. Novelistic technique, along with myth, makes a major shift with Tiempo de silencio in 1962. Martín Santos combines innovations in language and style with the use of mythic structures: the Odyssey and archetypal patterns relating to the passage of the hero. The emphasis shifts to humor and satire in Martín Santos' novel and then to a humorous revitalization of the Oresteian myth in Cunqueiro's work. What actually happens in these two novels is that both draw heavily on classical models in order to update them, applying their basic structures to modern Spain and creating, in the process, two very different modern myths. Tiempo de silencio concentrates on the passage of the hero through the maze of Spanish society; Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes, using a more culturally sophisticated myth, i.e., focusing in on the human mind, reworks the characterizations of Aeschylus' tale and creates profound and yet pathetic characters which constitute a comment on the human condition

as well as on contemporary Spain.

In terms of style, structure, and narrative technique, Tiempo de silencio is a myth critic's dream: the novel contains everything from mythological allusions and structures to specific references to "arquetipo," "mito," "ritos de iniciación," and "el inconsciente colectivo."[1] Because of these elements, the work has attracted a great deal of myth criticism, which approaches it from a wide range of perspectives: Julian Palley, for example, has made a detailed comparison between the structure of Homer's Odyssey and that of Tiempo de silencio, and has demonstrated the influence of Joyce's Ulysses on the novel as well.[2] Juan Villegas has applied some of Joseph Campbell's ideas on the "monomyth" of the passage of the hero and some of Eliade's ideas on rite of initiation to the work, showing that its internal organization corresponds to the archetypal voyage of the hero.[3] Robert K. Anderson, in a dissertation on Tiempo de silencio, unknowingly presents a synthesis of Palley's and Villegas' ideas, although his comparisons and analyses of internal allusions to Classical Mythology and archetypal structures are far more detailed.[4] Juan Carlos Curutchet studies the demythification element through a general examination of the work's sarcastic irony which is directed at archaic socio-cultural myths.[5] Pablo Gil Casado, in a second edition of his landmark book La novela social española, has placed Tiempo de silencio in a category of

new novels which he terms "desmitificación."[6]

I am indebted to each one of these studies, as they all approach myth in the novel from a different perspective. The basic problem with them as a composite view of the novel, however, is that none has studied myth in the work as it relates to tone and characterization. The structure of Tiempo de silencio is based on the development of three tonal stages: it begins as a mock-odyssey, a mock-quest in search of a mock-ideal, carried out by a modern anti-hero; in the second stage, the novel develops the idea of mock-odyssey, but also parodies rite of initiation (which in Primera memoria was a serious progression) and the passage and birth of the hero, although the tone is somewhat more serious; in the third stage, the reader sees a progression from satiric mockery and parody of ancient patterns to a vicious attack on contemporary Spanish society when the newly born hero "dies," creating a black and pessimistic modern myth.

Tiempo de silencio is an account of a few short days in the life of a young and ambitious medical student, Pedro, who is engaged in cancer research. Upon discovering that the last of his special laboratory mice have died, Pedro sets out for the squalid shack of Muecas, the presumed thief of a small number of the rodents. At the hut, Pedro learns that Muecas has kept the cancerous strain alive and he —Pedro— makes arrangements for their purchase. The Saturday night following the visit to Muecas' hut, Pedro

leaves the pensión where he lives and meets a wealthy friend. The two visit a brothel operated by a certain Doña Luisa; but Pedro, afraid of becoming involved with any of the prostitutes, returns to the boarding house. At the pensión, he has a sexual encounter with Dorita, granddaughter of the establishment's social-climbing matriarch who knowingly set up the encounter. That same night, Muecas appears at the pensión, pleading for Pedro to accompany him, as his daughter Florita is bleeding to death. Thinking that the girl might have become infected by a cancer-producing virus, Pedro agrees and returns to the shack with Muecas. Once there, however, Pedro is confronted with an already lost cause: Florita has had a crude abortion and is dying when the two arrive. Once Florita is dead, Pedro flees from the shack, seeking the protection first of Matías, his wealthy friend, and then of the brothel of Doña Luisa, where he is eventually detained by the police. He is locked up, questioned, and released only when Florita's mother confesses the truth, that Muecas himself was responsible for the pregnancy and the abortion. In spite of his acquittal, Pedro is expelled from the institute where he studies, and Dorita is horribly murdered by Cartucho, an avenging street rogue who believes "el médico" responsible for Florita's death. At the novel's conclusion, Pedro leaves the city, professionally and spiritually "castrated."

In order to facilitate my analysis of the work, I have

divided it into five structural parts, each containing one or two key incidents, which I believe essential to the development of Pedro as a mock hero: the first part (pp. 7-24), introduction to the anti-hero and his quest; part two (pp. 25-100), separation, the quest for mice involving the descent into the hell of the chabolas and, later, the visit to Doña Luisa's bordello; part three (pp. 101-147), the initiation, Florita's abortion and death; part four (pp. 148-206), flight, descent into the monster's belly, and rebirth —at Luisa's bordello and in jail; part five (pp. 207-240) return, modern myth —Pedro's final monologue.

Part One introduces us to the mock-hero and to his mock quest. Pedro is revealed as an anti-hero with an ignoble quest through a constant deception of reader expectations, i.e., we expect a hero and a noble quest and get a glory hound who seeks only the Nobel Prize. The first sentences of the novel give us some idea of the "hero's" character: "Sonaba el teléfono y he oído el timbre. He cogido el aparato. No me he enterado bien. He dejado el teléfono. He dicho: 'Amador'. Ha venido con sus gruesos labios y ha cogido el teléfono" (7). Pedro's thoughts, as we see, are not structured like our own: his language is concise, but artificial and excessively mechanical, especially with the bothersome repetition of the present perfect. Pedro's focus on Amador's "gruesos labios" is an early indication of his obsession with physical appearance, which he sees as a sign

of racial and mental inferiority or superiority.

Pedro's thoughts turn from Amador to "el retrato del hombre de la barba," (7) an apparent allusion to Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the only Spaniard ever to win the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine. The reader is tempted to bestow upon Pedro the great laurels of heroic nobility appropriate to his venture. The true nature of Pedro's quest, however, quickly surfaces: "¿Quién podrá nunca aspirar otra vez al galardón nórdico, a la sonrisa del rey alto, a la dignificación, al buen pasar del sabio que en la península seca, espera que fructifiquen los cerebros y los ríos?" (7). The allusion to Ramón y Cajal has caused Pedro to think about the Nobel Prize. The answer to "quién" is, of course, Pedro himself, a person performing potentially landmark research. Pedro seems more preoccupied with "who" in Spain will next receive the prize than with those persons who might benefit from his research. The word "aspirar" emphasizes the idea of personal ambition and drive to a position of intellectual superiority in "la península seca." The "sonrisa del rey alto" supports the personal-recognition level on which Pedro, the ignoble hero, views the award.

Pedro, again noticing Amador, exhibits his persistent obsession with his assistant's lips and smile: "Pero con sonrisa de merienda, con sonrisa gruesa. 'Qué belfos, Amador!'" (7). In this instance, Pedro uses "gruesa"

and "belfos" (as from a horse) to condescendingly describe the fullness of Amador's lips, again demonstrating his abnormal interest in his assistant's possibly inferior physical aspects. Amador's repeated announcement that there are no more mice causes Pedro to fear the failure of his quest for the Prize:

> . . . nunca, nunca el investigador ante el rey alto recibirá la copa, el laurel, una antorcha encendida con que correr ante la tribuna de las naciones y proclamar la grandeza no sospechada que el pueblo aquí obtiene en la lidia con esa mitosis torpe . . . (8)

The word "investigador" brings the idea of personal glory closer to Pedro, as does "mitosis," since he is presently studying them. The "copa" and "laurel," material objects, are symbols of personal glory. The anti-hero, then, quests more for glory than for the salvation of humanity or of his people. He, in fact, views the latter as mentally and physically inferior and is ashamed to be counted among them; he is worried that because his race is considered "inferior," he may not even be considered for the Prize and his accomplishments may go unrecognized abroad.

As he thinks, Pedro notices "los tres perros flacos que sólo de vez en cuando orinan tanto y huelen tan fuerte" (9). These and other animals at the institute are being starved and tortured for scientific ends. Pedro is indifferent to the animals' suffering. He cares only for his mice, who live in a "palacio transparente" (9). The dogs

are in great physical pain, but Pedro gives thanks "a que —aquí— las desteñidas vírgenes no cancerosas, no usadas, nunca sexualmente satisfechas, anglosajonas no existen para proyectar el rencor insatisfecho sobre la sociedad protectora" (9). This passage is important to Pedro's characterization as an anti-hero and to the presentation of his views toward women and sex. He sees both in laboratory terms: Pedro groups females —mice or human— as "cancerosas" and "no cancerosas," like his mitoses; women in this sense are for Pedro little more than laboratory animals. The words "no usadas" relate directly to Pedro's cruel idea of exploitation of living things to meet the needs and demands of science, where sex is for a calculated purpose: breeding.

After considering the possibility that one of Muecas' daughters might have contracted a cancer-producing virus, Pedro thinks wistfully of the prize, but this time there is no question about the identity of the previously noted impersonals "quién" and "el investigador": "Majestad, señoras y señores: El comienzo de nuestros experimentos, como en el caso del sabio inglés que fijó su atención en los hongos germinicidas, fue casual..." (11). Pedro is already practicing his Nobel lecture and is already feigning a false humility before the court with "casual," even though the comparison of himself with Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, maintains his presumed intellectual superiority.

At the end of part one, then, Pedro, like Odysseus,

experiences a shift in the nature of his quest. The Greek hero who set out to quickly conquer Troy and retrieve Helen found himself, in the end, searching for his homeland without much success. Pedro, the mock-hero or anti-hero, first reveals his ambitions for the Nobel Prize, but soon finds himself engaged in a quest for more mice, the only action which can save his dream. Our potential hero, unlike Odysseus, is cold and unfeeling, excessively mechanical in attitude and thought, professionally ambitious, subject to viewing people as laboratory animals, obsessed by a superiority complex, and very naive; he does not quest for Penelope and Ithaca but for rodents and a Prize.

The second structural part represents Pedro's first "separation" and contains the descent into the hell of the _chabolas_ and the visit to Doña Luisa's brothel. By means of our hero's wanderings, we observe in detail these separate and distinct social spaces, as well as that of the _pensión_, which serves as a general introduction to the anti-hero's environment.

The _pensión_ is important to reader experience for three reasons: the idea of "rito" is introduced; in it, myth becomes somewhat more explicit; and the reader is given a preliminary definition of how this modern hero sees himself. The first line introduces the idea of "rito": "Algunas noches, Pedro se sometía al rito de la tertulia" (35). The words "se sometía" imply duty rather than

pleasure on Pedro's part. The "rito" is, in fact, dull and repetitive, without authentic values or meaning for Pedro. As the tertulia progresses, we see that its purpose is not to entertain Pedro or to provide him with spiritual comfort, but to attract him to Dorita. The three "diosas" sit around him, all trying to lure him, in spite of the fact that the general idea is to lure him only to Dorita. The "mothers," however, "lo miraban con análoga mirada posesiva" (38). Julian Palley believes that this situation, a united "trinity of goddesses," resembles Odysseus' adventure with Calypso and also, in a composite sense, Penelope.[7] The three more accurately parallel the cause for the outbreak of the Trojan War. Paris was forced to choose the most beautiful among three goddesses: Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. All three lured and romanced him, as do the three "generaciones" in our novel, but Paris selects only one, Aphrodite. Hera, the protectress of marriage, is similar to the grandmother who masterminds the scheme to marry off Dorita to Pedro; Dora, the "hombruna," strongly resembles the masculine Athena; and, finally, the narrator's insistence on Dorita's dazzling beauty links her with Aphrodite, the goddess eventually chosen by Paris. The parallel is, of course, implicit, but is nevertheless a manifestation of narrative technique: it underscores the wide gap between the sublime plane of myth and the unattractive face of reality; it captures the women's "diosa"-like attitudes and postures (mostly

self-assumption on their part); and, by contrasting the ideal with the real, signals the primary function of mythological allusion in the novel.

During a conversation near the close of the section, Pedro defines himself more precisely as the modern hero: "No me interesan más luchas que las de los virus con los anticuerpos" (39). The words amaze and dazzle the "diosas," but Pedro is quite serious about the idea. He fights, like the ancient hero, but as a contemporary hero, he fights not the visible dragon, but the invisible threat.

The actual quest for the mice begins with a humorous narrative mockery:

> ¡Oh qué felices se las prometían los dos compañeros de trabajo de iniciar su marcha hacia las legendarias chabolas y campos de cunicultura y ratología del Muecas! ¡Oh qué compenetrados y amigos se agitaban por entre las hordas matritenses el investigador y el mozo ajenos a toda discrepancia de cultura que intentara impedirles la conversación, ignorantes de la extrañeza que producían entre los que apreciaban sus diferentes cataduras y atuendos! (25)

The narrator mocks Pedro's quest by means of an imitation of the inflated style of the novels of chivalry. We are consistently forced to stand apart from Pedro so that we may, by seeing him at a distance, more properly evaluate the changes in him at the novel's end. The narrator achieves this distance by not naming Pedro directly, by making several statements which we know to be false, i.e., Pedro does not consider Amador as an equal, a "compañero de trabajo,"

by any stretch of the imagination. The words "cunicultura y ratología" and "legendarias" clash satirically with "chabolas"; it is not the Holy Grail or the golden fleece that Pedro seeks but shantytown and mice. By using a mock-epic style, the narrator achieves humor, both by exaggeration and by the fitting of absurd elements into well-known and serious stylistic forms. In this manner, he keeps the reader from identifying with his anti-hero by ridiculing Pedro's exalted expectations of what he will find at the _chabolas_.

Pedro's characterization as anti-hero continues to develop as the narrator repeats the basic form of the above quote, but relates to the reader Pedro's inhuman thoughts: "¡Oh qué posibilidad apenas sospechada, apenas intuible . . . de que una . . . de las mocitas púberes toledanas hubiera contraído . . . un cáncer inguinoaxilar . . . !" (29). Pedro hopes that one of Muecas' young daughters has contracted a cancer-producing virus. The girl would, in that case, serve as an "ideal" laboratory subject. Here we have the same phrase form as before, "¡Oh qué . . . !", but the tone is very different. The reader remains apart from Pedro, but not because of humor: we are distanced by the gruesome thoughts running through his mind.

The idea of a "descent," especially into "hell," is an archetypal concept often associated with the passage of the hero; several critics have applied the idea to Pedro's first

trip to the chabolas.[8] It seems a fairly obvious pattern as the word "descendían" is repeated no less than six times, and the chabolas are later referred to as "el mundo infernal de las chabolas" (211), pointing up how hellish the conditions really are. We might consider that the "descent into hell" archetype, as well as suggesting the hero pattern, might reveal some fundamentals about Pedro's attitudes toward his quest. As the two descend, they notice in a shop-window a "donquijote en latón" (30). Pedro, who sees himself equally as glorious as Don Quixote, is little more than a modern, tin imitation of the Don. The idea of "descendían," then, can hardly be compared to Don Quixote's descent into the Cueva de Montesinos, which the Don sees as a purifying experience. The word, in the case of the anti-hero, corresponds more to Pedro's attitude toward what he is doing. He feels superior, not benevolent, to the environment into which he "descends."

After some interruption, the quest is continued. The pair finally arrive near the chabolas; Amador creates a humorous and satiric scene:

> ¡Allí estaban las chabolas! Sobre un pequeño montículo en que concluía la carretera derruida, Amador se había alzado —como muchos siglos antes Moisés sobre un monte más alto— y señalaba con ademán solemne y con el estallido de la sonrisa de sus belfos gloriosos el vallizuelo escondido entre dos montañas altivas, una de escombra y cascote y expoliada basura la otra . . . . (42)

The blend of comic mockery and tragic irony seen here is

typical of the novel's bitterly satiric tone. On the one hand, the comparison of Amador to Moses on the mountain top is skeletally accurate, but ridiculous to contemplate; the Hebrew people had reached that point after long years of journey and hardship. Amador himself starts out trying to remain "solemne," but a smile from his lips almost literally explodes from his "belfos gloriosos." The use of the adjective "gloriosos" with "belfos" is not only an absurd contrast, but also a direct mockery of Pedro's earlier considerations of Amador's "belfos labios" and "sonrisa gruesa." On the other hand, a tragic note surfaces at the end. What Amador is pointing to is not by any means the "Promised Land," the Land of Milk and Honey to which Moses led his people. It is certainly a "land" to which Amador has "promised" to guide Pedro, but it lacks the paradisiacal qualities of the Biblical place. The present "land" is set between two mountains of junk and garbage, at the end of a "carretera derruida," an anticlimax to say the least. The contrast merely accentuates, in the reader's mind, the vast, figurative chasm which separates the Biblical from the present reality.

Upon his arrival, Pedro questions Muecas about his secret for keeping the mice alive; Muecas explains:

> —Es cosa sabida, que el calor da la vida. Como en las seguidillas del rey David. Dos doncellas le calentaban, que si no ya hubiera muerto. Y lo mismo se echa de ver en las charcas y los pantanos. Basta

> que apriete el sol para que el fangal se vuelva vida de bichas y gusarapos . . . .
> Atónito escuchaba D. Pedro aquella teoría etiológica del cáncer espontáneo . . . . (52)

Again, in Muecas' explanation, we see contrasted the sublime Biblico-mythic plane and the coarse reality of the swamp. Impressed, Pedro listens attentively to Muecas' theory. As is often the case in odyssey-like quests, the hero does not gain the material object for which he searches but instead gains a great intellectual or spiritual gift. Pedro does not immediately obtain the mice, but does learn one important fact: that warmth is the secret of life. While there is no immediate change in Pedro as a result of the revelation, the incident represents the implantation of an important seed for future reference.

That same night, Pedro ventures out for Saturday night relaxation eventually to meet Matías and go on to Doña Luisa's establishment. Before he meets Matías, however, Pedro walks near the place where Cervantes once lived and begins considering the "case" of the madman Don Quixote from a rational point of view, using "su propio racionalismo mórbido" (62). Madness, thinks Pedro, is the essence of man's moral being. In the first spiral, Pedro begins with the supposition that all books of chivalry are false and represent a non-existent, ideal world. In the second spiral, Pedro says that, in spite of that falsehood, a man may will such a world to exist —even though it be false—. Third

spiral, this man will be called "el Bueno" even though he lives a lie. Fourth, he believes in good and sees evil. His madness consists of believing that that world can be improved. Pedro, an anti-Quixote, does not believe that the world can be improved. Fifth, therefore, it is better to crucify the madman, as he could make real the evil he only imagines. Sixth, the madman is mad. Cervantes said his madman was not mad but that he only wanted to make the priest and barber laugh, for only in madness can he be tolerated. Had he not been considered mad, he would have been thrown on the rack of the Inquisition.

The subtle irony which shines through Pedro's meditations is the source of a powerful, tensive force throughout the work. Since Pedro himself, although an anti-hero, does indeed wish to change the world, for whatever purpose, he is subject, therefore, to the same scrutiny of society. Once he has asserted himself as a changing force, the question remains for our further consideration as readers of the novel, will society view him as a madman, laugh at him (as does Amador), and therefore tolerate him, or will society, on the other hand, view him as a rational man (as he himself does) and throw him on the inquisitional rack? It is a question which, I believe, Pedro himself does not perceive.

Pedro's nocturnal odyssey continues as he wanders with Matías to the brothel of Doña Luisa. The door of the

establishment, the narrator tells us, is protected by Pedro's first "dragón": " . . . el dragón del deseo . . . con sus alas rojas . . . . Y lengüetazos de fuego . . . [el dragón] continuaba impidiendo la entrada a quienes no habían llegado a merecerla" (83). Pedro is up against the dragon of desire, of sex, and of warmth. It is not the most appealing type of human contact, but is nevertheless the first real "test" for Pedro. The dragon is an incarnation of sexual desire. In this passage, the narrator mocks both Pedro and the brothel by exaggeration and, again, by inserting absurd elements into well-known phrase forms, two concepts considered fundamental for the creation of humor by Bergson.[9] The narrator uses the conventional chivalric device of the "arch of purity"; the arch is always guarded by a fierce monster and only the pure in heart, those who "deserve it," may pass beneath it. The contrast between the reality of the brothel and the sublime description reminds us more of Cerberus guarding hell than a monster guarding paradise. Another mock-ironic level is established if we consider that the only real prerequisite for entrance into a bordello is money, and not at all "purity of spirit," in fact, quite the opposite. When the narrator uses these mock-satiric devices and superimposes a sublime reality upon a real one, he forces the reader to notice the vivid contrast, to think in terms of how far the sordid reality stands from the noble ideal. Along with humor and constant

interference, the narrator, with the superimposition, maintains a regular distance between the reader and the characters who participate in the sordid reality.

Inside the brothel, Matías, very drunk, is "madly in love" with the old, decrepit prostitute who sits by the door of the establishment: "Dulce servidora de la noche, dime: ¿Cómo conseguiste hallar el secreto de la eterna juventud? . . . ¿Cómo es posible que tras tantas catres la carne de tu cuerpo no parezca una esponja empapada en pipí de niño tonto?" (87). Matías begins with conventional love-rhetoric, but then inserts the base and absurd element of the urine-soaked sponge, creating a pathetically funny scene. He later compares himself to Oedipus, whose sexual relationship with his mother creates another mock parallel. When the lights go out, Matías exclaims that he, Oedipus, has been blinded, punished by the gods. The scene, while humorous for the reader, serves another more important function: it shifts the focus from the mockery of Pedro to Matías and the brothel. The narrator, in this way, prepares us to move, for the first time, a small inch closer to Pedro, who is but a passive observer of the scene. When it becomes clear that Pedro may soon be an active participant, he flees. He does not defeat "el dragón del deseo"; he does not even challenge it.

After Pedro leaves, we notice that the episode has had an important effect on him: "Deseando: No estar solo,

estar en un calor humano . . . deseado por un espíritu próximo" (92). Pedro, a character in the midst of a slow and gradual personality transformation, begins to feel the need for human warmth and companionship, but he recognizes the difference between the prostitutes he has just left behind and a genuine spiritual union. By experiencing that "warmth is the secret of life," as Muecas taught him, the anti-hero is now becoming the authentic hero.

Arriving at the <u>pensión</u> lost in thought, Pedro accidentally (as planned by the <u>primera generación</u>) encounters the naked Dorita and, after some faltering on Pedro's part, the two have sexual intercourse. Pedro, in a transitional state from anti-hero to authentic hero, sees Dorita through two "tunnels": "Por uno de los túneles se extiende en sucesión casi indefinida de tertulia, de silencios, de palabras intencionadas de las madres . . . ; en el otro túnel no está sino la imagen inmóvil de lo que él nunca ha visto, el cuerpo desnudo . . . " (95). Through the first, Pedro sees the chaotic and confused past as regards his relationship with the three "diosas." Through the other, he sees the sensual present, viewed by his still naive and innocent self. It is important that Dorita's body is described as "como una sirena silenciosa" (95), due no doubt to the effect of a blanket half-covering her "ondulado cuerpo extendido" (94). The comparison reminds us of the incident in the <u>Odyssey</u> in which Odysseus allowed himself to be "tempted"

by the sirens' wail. Insofar as Pedro's characterization is concerned, the image represents a change from his former view of people as laboratory animals: the mermaid is at least half-human.

The process of transformation and "education of the hero" is by no means complete. Pedro continues to wonder, "¿Es esto el amor?" and then doubts, "No. No es el amor . . . " (95). He concludes that his feelings owe to "esta embriaguez de vino y de erotismo insatisfecho" (95). Pedro, now introduced to "love," reduces his irrational feelings to two purely physical states: drunkenness and erotic excitement. He mechanically repeats "'Te quiero' 'Te quiero' 'Te quiero' 'Te quiero' 'Te quiero' 'Te quiero' 'Te quiero'" (96).

In part three —the abortion and surrounding events— the narrator's comic irony changes to a serious, at times fierce sarcasm. Pedro continues his "odisea" but the reader also begins to perceive more and more parallels with rite of initiation and the archetypal passage of the hero. In a human sense, the abortion incident is only a brief setback for Pedro's development as hero. Muecas' call for help only temporarily pulls him back to the world of his profession, to his old dreams of the Prize, and of possible future glory.

Pedro meets Muecas "el mensajero que la noche enviaba para volverlo a englobar en su seno pecaminoso, por no haber cumplido aún la total odisea que el destino le había

preparado" (100). The use of gods, personifications of natural and metaphysical abstractions, is common to epic myth, especially to the Odyssey. In this passage, the night, personified appropriately as a woman, engulfs Pedro in her "seno pecaminoso," an image reminiscent of Pedro's experience in the bordello. After having cowered from his first "test," Pedro is once again "separated," again engaged in his original quest —for the mice—, and finds himself "poniéndose los calcetines de nailon y disponiéndose a impulsos de su corazón, a reemprender los periplos nocturnos hacia la aun no explorada Nausicaa" (102). The "nylon socks" are a humorous sign of modern times and modern heroes. Odysseus arrived at Nausicaa's island at the whim of the gods, as apparently does Pedro, but Odysseus appeared stark naked with only a branch as cover; Pedro goes fully dressed, he is "naked" only in a figurative sense, in that he lacks experience and contact with the outside world.

As he travels back to the chabolas, the narrator recounts his —Pedro's— now ambivalent thoughts:

> Durante el viaje había acariciado la idea de que quizá hubiera habido un contagio virásico debido a íntima convivencia . . . . Pero pronto hubo de advertir la insólita realidad de los hechos y una luz asombrada golpeó en su ingenuo cerebro. La sangre de doncella —otra vez— por un momento, le mareó. Sintió un vahido de comprensión y de miedo. (109)

At first, the "hero-in-transition" toys with the idea that the cancer might have spread and might now afford him with

new subjects for study. The word "acariciado" carries the initial hope to grotesque and lugubrious proportions. Upon arriving, however, Pedro is incensed, in fact, nauseated by what he sees. He understands what has happened. In spite of being "ingenuo," words such as "asombrada," "mareó," "comprensión," and "miedo" clearly reflect his emotional involvement and participation. In this section, the distance between the reader and Pedro begins to diminish, not only because his human and emotional reaction shows that he is slowly becoming an authentic hero, but for several other reasons: first, because he is now more a victim of cruelty than a perpetrator of it; he is mechanical, but out of medical necessity; he tries to save the life of a human being rather than that of a mouse; he thinks not of a glorious future but of the urgent present; he has been tricked and lied to by Muecas; he is the victim of Amador's benign deception, his assistant tells him that Florita is alive when she is, in fact, already dead. The reader, from his position, cannot help feeling some sympathy for Pedro in this chaotic scene.

Once Florita is dead, her passing becomes for Pedro "un problema técnico" (113), an attitude which is a dim reflection of his former self as his apparent coldness here arises more from rage than indifference. Moreover, in terms of rite of initiation, the abortion represents the hero's first maturing contact with death. It is a vitally

important episode, but its impact on Pedro is not totally revealed to the reader until he later reflects on it from his jail cell, a section to be discussed below.

Pedro returns to the boarding-house, exhausted. While he rests, the three women "tejieron el necesario silencio alrededor de su cuarto" (114), a mild echo of Penelope's weaving in the Odyssey. The next day, Pedro goes to the house of Matías' mother for a lecture and reception. At the reception, the tables of superiority are turned on him and, for a change, he feels the inferior, the outsider. It is a key episode in his "education" and transformation into an authentic hero. The narrator follows Pedro's thoughts at the party, describing his observations in detail:

> Es demasiado sufrir a causa de este pequeño mundo por donde podría caminar y no camina, a causa de estas mujeres pájaros dorados que son estúpidas y vanas. Ser oído y admirado, saber besar la mano, ser admitido al diálogo insinuante, estar arriba, ser de los de ellos, de los selectos, de los que están más allá del bien y del mal porque se han atrevido a morder la fruta de la vanidad o porque se la han dade ya mordida y la respiran como un aire que no se siente ni se toca. (140)

We see here a mixture of Pedro's former desires and his present recognitions. The women are negatively described as "pájaros dorados," with all the glitter but none of the humanlike qualities he so desperately needs at this moment. The women's behavior is described as due to having bitten "la fruta de la vanidad," which Pedro sees as daring but false; he concludes that superiority is only the fruit of

vanity.

Part four opens at Doña Luisa's brothel, where Pedro hides from the Police, and ends upon his release from jail. The narrator begins the section with a significant personification: "El gran ojo acusador . . . extendió su actividad trasmutadora al ombligo mismo del mundo de las sombras, al palacio de las hijas de la noche donde . . . reposaba como hormiga-reina de gran vientre blanquecino . . . Doña Luisa" (147). The light of the sun is an "ojo acusador," or a manifestation of Pedro's guilt and a foreshadowing of his capture. The personification achieves the creation of a more complete, imminent threat, without being one completely. The narrator begins suggesting with "ombligo" and "vientre" the rebirth which will soon be more fully developed.

The episode at Doña Luisa'a bordello is a symbolic regression to the womb in preparation for the rebirth of the hero. Pedro has sought Luisa's protection, "la gran madre fálica," (151) and kneels before her "como si fuera a hinchar ante una verdadera madre . . . " (153). At this point, the idea of return to the umbilical and the womb becomes more explicit: "Misteriosamente le parecía que había dejado de respirar y que quedaba inmóvil en aquel espacio . . . (el alimento, el aire, el amor, la respiración) se lo introducían por un tubo de goma mientras que él permanecía inerte" (153). The return to the womb

functions in this passage not only to suggest the rebirth of the hero, but also forms a perfect parallel with Pedro's complete and total delivery of himself to Doña Luisa's protection and mercy. The use of parenthesis creates the effect of a "unity" of the four elements which pass through the cord. The "tubo de goma" is another sign of modern times: from the test-tube baby to the present rubber umbilical, we are all "children of modern technology." Pedro is going through the motions of initiation and is slowly moving into the state of an authentic contemporary hero, even with some of its more unfortunate technological aspects.

Pedro is not reborn with Doña Luisa, however; he is arrested at the bordello, aborted prematurely from her protection and hurled headlong into the belly of the monster —horrible by contrast— for a less comfortable and altogether different type of rebirth. The confusion which this abrupt shift causes in Pedro, i.e., where myth created order and harmony, society creates chaos, has an equally confusing impact on the reader. Moreover, the "jail" episode operates on archetypal levels, all related directly to hero formation: the descent into hell, the engulfment in the belly of the monster, and the return to the womb, all in preparation for the return of the authentic, redeeming hero.

Pedro is "conducido al proceloso averno en el que la caída, aunque rápida e ininterrumpible, se produjo a través

de los meandros y complejidades que canta la fábula" (170). As he descends into the labyrinthine hell of the jail, we have the distinct sensation that he is slowly but surely being swallowed and digested:

> Tras el que una nueva boca, ya más próxima a las fauces definitivas engullía con poderoso sorbo . . . . La próxima boca da paso a una garganta escalonada y tortuosa a través de la que, sin carraspeo alguno, la ingestión es ayudada por los movimientos peristálticos del granito cayendo así . . . en la amplia plazoleta gástrica donde se iniciara la digestión de los bien masticados restos. (170-171)

The first step is the "boca," then, we feel the swallowing with "engullía," down the esophagus with "garganta," ingestion, peristaltic movements, and then final digestion. The gruesome process of digestion contrasts sharply with the comfort of Doña Luisa's rubber umbilical. The digestion is a more harsh, all-engulfing, and humiliating experience for Pedro. The belly of society's monster is for Pedro, as the narrator tells us, an "infierno" (171).

The description of the jail cell, using a mock style resembling that of a luxury hotel ad, once again introduces us to the idea of rebirth. The narrator says that the prisoner, in order to sleep in the bed, must assume "la llamada posición fetal" (172) and mentions again, the "ombligo" (172) in his remarks about the cell. These allusions prepare the reader for Pedro's interior monologue inside the cell; their meaning becomes apparent when Pedro begins to question his former self, and starts to think about some fundamental

perspectives on his past actions.

The scene in the cell shows us the internal struggle between two Pedros: the early Pedro —the cold, mechanical scientist who dominates both exterior and interior reality— and the new, emerging Pedro —a humble and sensitive human being. At the beginning of the monologue, the technological Pedro fights to keep calm and to maintain control: "Yoga. Estar tendido quieto. Tocar la pared despacio con la mano. Relax. Dominar la angustia. Pensar despacio" (175). The following short paragraph, referring to his guilt-filled past, is quickly interjected into his thoughts: "¿Por qué fui?" (176). After this short slip, the technological Pedro returns to control and leaps at self-justification: "No pensar. No hay que pensar en lo que ya está hecho. Es inútil intentar recorrer otra vez los errores que uno ha cometido" (176). The use of "uno," the impersonal constructions, and the subjectless infinitive all serve to remove Pedro, in his mind, from his error. The paragraph which follows again brings up the pressing question: "¿Por qué tuviste que hacerlo borracho, completamente borracho?" (176). Pedro uses the "tú" form, in this case, to separate his present self from his past self.

The struggle continues until Pedro arrives at a partial synthesis, showing evidence of his transformation as hero: "Es una aventura. Tu experiencia se amplía. Ahora sabes más que antes. Sabrás mucho más de todo que antes

. . . . Tú enriqueces tu experiencia. Llegas a conocer mejor lo que eres, de lo que eres capaz" (176). The use of "tú" here implies that Pedro is standing back from his former self, admitting that he can and is learning something. His self-illumination is temporary, however, and the struggle continues: "Tú no la mataste . . . . Tú la mataste. No pensar" (177). Pedro notices the faded form of the "sirena" on the cell wall. This time, he does not think in erotic terms: "La cola son dos muslos cerrados, apretados. La muchacha de la cola no está dispuesta a dividir su cola con su cuchillo porque no ama" (177). The "sirena" is his half-human company. The mermaid may be a subtle reminder of Dorita, whom he would like to see at this moment; it might also refer to Florita's abortion, given the special focus on the legs and the "cuchillo." In the reader's experience, both exist because the "sirena" has been indirectly related to both characters.

The battle goes on, but with a greater degree of intensification than before, i.e., Pedro begins thinking in two widely separated extremes: from absolute self-justification "Lo hiciste lo mejor que pudiste" (178) to equally absolute self-condemnation "¡Imbécil!" (180). As Pedro realizes that he is in a state of major change, images suggesting rebirth begin to appear in his thoughts: "Vuelto a la cuna. A un vientre" (180). The interior contradictions are, as the monologue progresses, juxtaposed with greater

frequency, permitting the reader to view Pedro's conflict: "Tú no la mataste. Estaba muerta. Yo la maté" (180). Pedro's conclusion is, at the monologue's end, "¡Imbécil!" (180). The human, humble Pedro has won over the old, "error-free," technological one. It has taken an adverse experience such as this, a rite of initiation, contact with death, to mature him in such a manner. When the detective Similiano recounts his crime, Pedro thinks: "Los hombres deben afrontar las consecuencias de sus actos" (199).

After Florita's mother confesses that Pedro did not perform the abortion on her daughter nor did he cause her death in any way, Pedro is released and is ready to confront the world. He is at the stage in which, according to Campbell's definition, he must return to his people and, with his new ability, be able to bestow great boons upon them. Dorita greets Pedro at the jail and kisses him, but: "No podía devolverle las caricias. En los labios, al besar, sólo sentía la dureza de los dientes . . . . Me quiere" (205). He is loved but has some difficulty in corresponding. The reader might not consider such a reaction unusual, however, as one might expect Pedro to be a little dazed and confused after his trying experience. As he walks into the street, we see an important change in his attitude toward a person of "oficio bajo": "Un limpiabotas pasó con su caja negra en la mano y la visión de este personaje cotidiano, que se encaminaba sin prisa hacia su problemática, le

humedeció los ojos" (206). The contrast between this Pedro and the one we met in the opening pages of the novel is clearly defined in this passage. Where before, only Ramón y Cajal aroused any emotion in him, a simple bootblack now brings tears to his eyes. The distance between the reader and Pedro is at its lowest point when the narrator reiterates the definition of the modern hero and adds a short moral, which presumably corresponds to what Pedro has learned.

The narrator first defines the hero, his army, and his weapons: "Como un ejército aguerrido, llevando al brazo no armas destructoras no bayonetas relampagueantes, sino microscopios, teodolitos, reglas de cálculo y pipetas capilares de falanges de ciencia marchan así en grandes pelotones bien organizadas" (207). But the short moral reminds us that we should not judge internal worth by external appearance as did Pedro at the beginning of the novel: "Bajo un traje arrugado puede ocultarse el afortunado poseedor de un cerebro que —aunque enclenque, voluminoso— emanará pensamientos todavía por nadie sospechados, fórmulas nuevas partículas elementales, antiuniversos y semielectrones . . . " (207).

Part five represents the novel's conclusion: the hero, ready to bestow great boons upon his people, with the ability and the desire to do so, returns to the Institute, ready to re-commence his work. Recovered from the "subterránea y mortífera odisea" (208), he is ready to try to

redeem the human race from cancer. As further evidence of his change, the new Pedro greets both the doorman and a common scrubwoman with an enthusiastic "¡Hola!" The Director of the Institute, however, rejects him and tells him that "nunca llegará a nada" (211). Pedro is expelled from the Institute and from the possibility of redemption of his society. He cannot defeat the greatest ogre, the Spanish "Establishment."

While beaten by his most formidable opponent, Pedro goes on, undaunted. He still has the more important possibility of love: Dorita. His love, however, is soon murdered. Cartucho's slaying of Dorita is a final and crushing blow for Pedro in the sense that society once again has stripped him of almost all that he has gained. Cartucho's act is yet another defeat of the contemporary hero by the social decadence and the primitive conditions which spawned the rogue, but it is more a blow on a personal level as it involves the death of someone important to Pedro "the man" rather than Pedro "the researcher."

If we review the "battles" in which Pedro, the contemporary hero, has been engaged, we find three or four major skirmishes: the first is with "los virus," a battle lost by the death of the mice and Pedro's termination at the Institute; a battle with society on a personal level, lost by a queer twist of fate and Dorita's death; a battle with the "system," also lost at the Institute; and the central

one, the battle inside himself, fought and won in the jail cell. At this point, the personal battle and its positive result are the only bleak remnants of the authentic hero, who is figuratively "dying."

In his final monologue, Pedro sets himself up as the redeeming hero, describing how he will imitate the sun, in a way similar to the return of the socially redeeming hero: "Imitaré en esto al sol que permite a las viles nubes ponzoñosas ocultar su belleza al mundo para . . . hacerse admirar más abriéndose paso a través de las sucias nieblas que parecían asfixiarlo" (233). Although the use of "hacerse admirar" is somewhat suspicious, the reader is still sympathetic to Pedro's great losses and is hopeful with him for the future. His final monologue will reveal his ability or inability to carry out such a task as throwing light into Spain's darkness. Pedro's first thoughts are of the autopsy presumably being performed on Dorita:

> Claro está que ella está igual que la otra. ¿Por qué será que yo ahora no sepa distinguir entre la una y la otra muertas, puestas una encima de otra en el mismo agujero?: también a esta autopsia. ¿Qué querrán saber? Tanta autopsia; para qué si no ven nada. (234)

It seems incredible how much Pedro distances himself from Dorita and her death. He does not even mention her name, referring to her as "ella" and "la una." He sees her coldly as merely another corpse stacked among others, another autopsy among many. Pedro humbly admits his own

deficiencies, "no estoy dotado" (234), but then goes on, "si yo me hubiera dedicado a las ratas" (234). Pedro regrets his passage and all he has learned; he yearns for his former state. He thinks then about what he will do in the country: "Es una gran riqueza de caza, el monte salvaje. Cazar, cazar todos los días de fiesta . . . . Las perdices en el rastrojo, gordas como mujeres, después de la siega" (234). The "hunting" of which Pedro speaks is not for survival but for the fulfillment of an aristocratic pastime. The suspicion that he is again cold and indifferent to both animals and human beings is confirmed when he sardonically describes the "perdices" as "gordas como mujeres." As in the novel's beginning, Pedro, in this simile, equates people and animals. Other leisure hours, thinks Pedro, will be spent playing chess with the local men "que juegan al ajedrez y me estiman mucho por mi superioridad intelectual y mi elevado nivel mental" (235). The return of his superiority complex is accompanied by the inevitable "Rey de Suecia, tan blanco, tan pálido . . . . Las largas manos del rey de Suecia, con la corona de mirtos" (235).

The last of the visible remains of the former hero has, in every sense but the literal, "died." Reborn is the bitter, resigned, cynical, self-pitying, "castrated" martyr. Pedro enjoys his state of professional and spiritual castration, however, as it offers him no battles, no challenges, no tests. His monologue ends driving home the comparison

between his own present situation and the martyrdom of San Lorenzo, who was toasted on one side by his captor, and turned over "por una simple cuestión de simetría" (240). Now perhaps, we can fully comprehend the prophetic meaning of Pedro's thoughts on Cervantes: Don Quixote did what he did and was not thrown before the Inquisition because he pretended to be mad. Pedro, on the other hand, presumed himself to be a rational man and was placed on the inquisitional rack, severely tortured, and in a professional and spiritual sense, castrated.

What we experience in Tiempo de silencio is a conscious re-working of elements from Homer's Odyssey as well as the reshaping of archetypal hero patterns, creating in the process a black and pessimistic modern myth. Pedro, like Odysseus, becomes the victim of his own quest; both survive their cruel fates, but Pedro cannot purge his "Ithaca," he cannot surmount social obstacles to save his bride and redeem his people. Pedro begins an anti-hero with a mock-quest, but is not an authentic hero until he merits the title; the modern hero is born but is quickly defeated by his environment and proceeds to become a part of it rather than to conquer it.

Pedro's initial quest taught him that warmth is the secret of life. In his mock nocturnal odyssey through whorehouses and shanties, he learns compassion and humility.

The swallowing by the monster taught him self-assessment and an even greater humility, but the positive pattern set up by rite of initiation and archetypal mythic structures is, as in Primera memoria, modified. Pedro descended into hell three times, was reborn at least twice, and was swallowed up and disgorged by society's most terrifying monster, passed through every known process guaranteed to create a hero and still failed against Spanish society. Not only does the narrator deceive the pattern at the end, he constantly mocks it and its prime participant through most of the first half with satiric humor and ironic mockery to keep us apart from Pedro, in judgment, until he deserves our sympathy. The suggestion is a very powerful one: since these archetypal patterns permeate every society, and the hero, in every case, returns with the power to change and aid his society, the fact that Pedro cannot is the fiercest attack on contemporary Spanish society possible. The negation of a consistently positive pattern, moreover, accentuates the present social decadence as well as the urgent need for social reform. The betrayal of the archetypal pattern is, in addition to the modern myth it suggests, the primary source for the novel's emotional and universal impact on the reader.

Martín Santos' novel used as its model Homer's Odyssey; although allusions to the Greek work were scattered and at

times modified beyond immediate recognition, their presence nevertheless affected our experience by comparing Pedro, an anti-hero, to Odysseus, a well-established hero. Allusions to the Odyssey in Tiempo de silencio, accompanied by allusions to archetypal patterns related to the hero, function as a part of a complex system of innovative language and narrative techniques, reshaping not only our vision of the Greek epic but also of the novel as an art form, of all aspects of contemporary Spanish society, and of the decadence of that society. In a different way, Cunqueiro's Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes reshapes and revitalizes Aeschylus' tale of passion, murder, and vengeance. By means of imaginative and humorous expansions on the framework of the Oresteia, Cunqueiro brings the Greek myth up to date, creating a different but equally vibrant myth with direct applicability to present-day Spain as well as to a more universal audience.

In spite of the fact that the novel was awarded the Nadal Prize in 1968, it has received little critical attention. Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes has been ignored largely because it is not explicitly engagé. José Domingo, for example, describes the work's primary function as "embelesar, embaucar, divertir, evadir la realidad con la magia de la materia poética."[10] Both Domingo and Santos Sanz Villanueva class Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes in a category of novels which they term "realismo mágico."[11]

John Kronik, on the other hand, rejects an escapist reading of the novel as he expands on its complex thematic fabric: " . . . a political parable, an existential echo of Waiting for Godot, a metaphysical commentary on man's eternal concern with fate and the unknown, a psychological study of fear and indecision, an ethical consideration of justice, conscience, and moral order."[12]

As Kronik's comments indicate, Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes is not at all evasive or strictly frivolous in its very contemporary treatment of the story of the ill-fated House of Atreus; just the opposite, it deals with basic human existential problems in a direct way and with the problems of modern Spain in an indirect manner.

For the sake of clarity, I shall first present a brief contrast of the plots of the Oresteia and Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes before moving into the actual analysis of the latter work.

In Aeschylus' Oresteia, Agamemnon leaves for the Trojan War after sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia to the gods to insure a safe voyage and a victorious return. Enraged by this action, Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, bands with Aegisthus, surviving son of Thyestes, and the two plot Agamemnon's death, becoming lovers in the process. Agamemnon's son, Orestes, away when his father was murdered, avenges the death by slaying first Aegisthus and, with blood still on his sword, his mother. For his deed, Orestes

is tormented by harpies and is forced to pay a severe penance.

<u>Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes</u> deals primarily with the episodes recounted in the second play of the trilogy, <u>The Choephori</u> or <u>The Libation Bearers</u>, which tells of events surrounding Orestes' vengeance. Cunqueiro's work, however, begins with the appearance of a suspected Orestes, Don León, in an unnamed kingdom over which King Egisto now rules. We slowly learn of an intricate but often inefficient system of spies and counter-spies, set up by the king and his vassals to anticipate Orestes' return and execute him before he can carry out his murderous act. The wheels of Egisto's bureaucracy spin into motion as the suspected Orestes is questioned and spied upon, only to eventually be identified as merely Don León. Shaken by the appearance of the stranger, Egisto lives and relives Orestes' act of vengeance in wild flights of fantasy. Egisto remembers the long and agonizing years of waiting, the unceasing fears of Orestes' coming. Egisto later meets and vacations with a colleague, King Eumón, who temporarily takes Egisto's mind off his troubles with an extended ocean voyage, but Egisto returns just as concerned about Orestes' return, and equally preoccupied with the fact that he is rapidly growing old. The focus shifts to the real Orestes, who, we learn, is only a young and confused adolescent. Orestes wishes he had not listened to his big sister Electra as she hounded him to go

back to their native city and carry out the act of vengeance. After many years of wandering, Orestes does return, a pathetic old man tired of searching for his destiny, and so absentminded that he forgets even whom he is to kill and why.

In order to facilitate a more detailed analysis of exactly how Cunqueiro does revitalize and reshape the ancient myth for a modern reader, I will focus on four of the novel's six major parts, which account for the actions of three main characters: Don León (the suspected Orestes), Egisto, and Orestes.

The novel's beginning epigraph, taken from the Oresteia, provides an excellent starting point for the discussion of technique in part one:

> —Ha llegado un hombre que se parece a Orestes.
> —A Orestes sólo se parece Orestes.
> —Luego, ha llegado Orestes.
>
> Esquilo, La Orestíada[13]

Cunqueiro uses this quote from the Oresteia to show the reader a progression from ambiguity and doubt to certainty and fact, a progression typical of the Classical play. The passage sets up expectations in the reader about the same progression in the novel; but the passage is ironic in this sense because throughout part one of Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes, the progression is just the opposite: as readers, we proceed from the certainty which even a faint knowledge of the Oresteia's plot provides us to the

alternating suspicion and doubt of Cunqueiro's work.

The arrival in the kingdom of the mysterious stranger causes no widespread suspicion at first:

> Un hombre estaba sentado en el banco de piedra adosado en el palomar. Se levantó apoyándose en el grueso bastón . . . . Sus grandes ojos negros lo miraban todo amistosa y demoradamente . . . . En el anular de la mano con que sostenía el bastón brilló la enorme piedra violeta de la sortija . . . . (11-12)

This detailed description of the stranger is a good example of how the narrator subtly leads the reader into believing that the stranger is Orestes. The man is quiet; by his "bastón" and "sortija" we assume that he is of the noble class. The narrator describes the manner in which the stranger studies his surroundings as "amistosa" —as if once familiar to him— "y demoradamente" —as if carefully examining it with some hidden ulterior motive in mind—. These early details function as a part of a more complete montage which slowly develops paralleling details and chararcteristics that are associated with Orestes.

After Tadeo, the beggar, questions the stranger, he examines the suspected Orestes from head to foot: "Y como a tientas de ciego . . . recorría el rostro del extranjero, o de lo que fuese, se fijaba en las ricas ropas, en la hebilla de cinturón que figuraba una serpiente que se anillaba en un ciervo, y en las finas manos, y en el puño de plata del bastón" (13). Tadeo's close examination reveals to the reader more parallel descriptive details which will be used

later in convincing us that the man is indeed Orestes. The narrator toys with the reader with the ambiguous construction "o lo que fuese"; the construction invites the reader to consider that the stranger might not be precisely a "stranger," i.e., Orestes would not exactly be an "extranjero."

A more implicit link between Orestes and the stranger is drawn when the latter takes a golden coin from his jacket pocket; Tadeo's small blackbird reacts: " . . . al ver el oro se puso a silbar una marcha solemne, . . . como de entrada de rey o de galera, una marcha que marcaba los graves pasos o el golpe unísono de los remos, que entre boga y boga, el trino subía como quien iza una bandera amarilla" (13). The blackbird's song seems to announce the arrival of a dignitary, one of the magnitude of a "rey." The association is implicit because the bird sings more in reaction to the stranger's gold coin than to him. Tadeo, however, explains that the song is entitled "El león entra por puertas" (13), and later adds that the cry "¡Que viene el león!" (14) instills terror in the king and queen, who, upon hearing the word "león," run swiftly to a secret bedroom and hide, trembling in fear. The conceptual association of the stranger and the bird's chorus is further "proof" that the stranger is in fact the avenging stepson of Egisto.

In the next section of part one, Eusebio, "el oficial de forasteros," is pulling out and dusting off the "Orestes

File." The file, Eusebio thinks, is sealed, and "en los sellos una serpiente que se anilla en un ciervo" (21). We remember that the stranger's belt-buckle carried an identical symbol. The evidence is almost overwhelming for the reader. From this point, we are fairly sure that the stranger is Orestes, even though the conjecture is always suggested by indirect association and never directly stated.

As Eusebio remembers his past contact with the Orestes File, however, doubts are introduced into the reader's experience. The first false report of Orestes' proximity was "el hombre que hace un año compró una espuela en la feria de Nápoles, [quien] se parecía a Orestes" (27). The king, after hearing the report, ordered Eusebio to learn everything possible about spurs and especially about the Neapolitan variety. We see not only that Eusebio is a small part of a larger bureaucracy which is constituted mostly of ineffective red tape, but also that the king's paranoia has led him to suspect persons even vaguely resembling Orestes.

Eusebio's recollections of the file extend the problem of the appearance of false Orestes even further: there was one suspected but false Orestes who turned out to be no more than a young boy running from his sex-starved stepmother who forced him to make love to her during "plenilunios" (22); there was another with a "lion-shaped" birthmark who was killed after being accidentally pushed down a long flight of stairs.

The combination of these two factors —the king's paranoia and the profusion of false Orestes— serves to shake the reader's belief that the mysterious stranger is Orestes. Since we are now obviously confronted with a humorous distortion of the ancient story, we must concede the existence of more than one person who "resembles Orestes." A discussion between Eusebio and El Capitán shows us that we are in effect dealing with the original play's characters, but not by any means with the plot of the original play:

> —¡Siempre hay que estar en el partido de los héroes mozos que surgen de las tinieblas con el relámpago de la venganza en la mirada!
> —¡Coño, eso parece de la tragedia! (25)

A subsequent conversation between Filipo, "el barquero," and Eusebio confirms the suspicion that the present novelistic world is filled with possible but false Orestes. Filipo tells Eusebio that he sees many men who meet Orestes' general description: "Por ejemplo, hombres de obra de treinta años, dos docenas a la semana. Hombres con jubón azul, media docena a la semana" (34).

The narrator continues to toy with the reader's suspicions and doubts, but, at this point in the narration, returns the focus to the stranger and continues to mount parallels between him and Orestes. Tadeo accompanies the stranger to the house of "el augur Celedonio" (39), where the beggar expertly cuts the nails of the distinguished prophet. Here, we learn that the mysterious stranger calls

himself "Don León" (41). By means of indirect simile, the narrator once again plays with the reader's suspicions: "Levantó el bastón de caña con puño de plata como héroe que levanta la espada que quiere herir" (45). The two actions —the lifting of a sword and of a heavy cane— are without a doubt identical in a literal sense; but the menacing connotations of "espada" especially with "herir" converts an apparently harmless action into one which smacks of Orestes' vengeance. The narrator, still with a playful tone, follows the simile of the bastón-espada with a mock melodramatic scene which adds yet more fuel to the fires of suspicion:

> Se detuvo, la cabeza erguida, mismamente donde el último rayo de sol de la tarde le besaba los pies. Y era verdaderamente, en la mirada de Tadeo y Celedonio, una larga espada la que sostenía su diestra.
> —¡Orestes!— gritó el augur, sin darse cuenta de lo que decía.
> . . . .
> —¡Estás en tu casa, príncipe!— dijo solemne, abriendo los brazos. (45)

The parodic mockery in this scene depends in part on the image of the "rayo de sol" kissing don León's feet, as if the sun were a collaborator with fate. The word "verdaderamente," along with the sudden reactions of the augur and Tadeo, who are both convinced that León is Orestes, serve to influence the reader, negating the doubts caused by Eusebio's thoughts and memories.

Two more incidents augment don León's characterization

as Orestes:

The first incident involves a complex interior duplication. Filón, the kingdom's semi-official playwright, has written a play concerning the actual arrival of Orestes, using the people he knows —Egisto, Clitemnestra, Orestes— as principal characters. The complexity lies in the fact that the play deals with the novel's characters, who are in turn modeled after but not identical to the characters in the original play, the Oresteia. Filón, directing the scene where Iphigenia first sees Orestes, takes the script in hand, and, in order to show how the scene should be properly acted, reads the part of Iphigenia and acts it himself. As he reads, he thrusts open the windows of his house, as does Iphigenia just before she sees her brother return:

> Filón se había acercado a la ventana con la corona de Edipo apretada contra el pecho. Y miraba como miraría Ifigenia, hacia el camino real . . . . Junto a la puerta de uno de los obradores está un hombre alto . . . . Filón no lo reconoce. No, no es de esta polis.

Filón then spots the stranger's ring:

> El forastero se vuelve para darle el paño . . . a un criado que lo sigue, y en un dedo de sus manos brilla una piedra preciosa acariciada por el sol. (57)

From the brief experience, Filón gets a new idea for his play: a jewel will be missing from the royal crown of Agamemnon, and that jewel will be worn on a ring, a ring on the hand of the authentic "vengador, el príncipe que llega

oculto" (57). The incredible coincidence and the dramatist's seeming inability to distinguish between reality and fiction function as further "proofs" that Orestes is in the kingdom in the person of Don León.

The second incident takes place at the house of Quirino, the local fencing instructor. In a conversation with Quirino, don León describes the manner in which he strikes a blow with a sword, "como verdugo con hacha" (59); the words "verdugo" and "hacha" suggest to the reader the violent, death-dealing blow of an executioner of justice —such as Orestes. After a brief demonstration of Don León's abilities with the sword —in which he swiftly and powerfully knocks the head from one of Quirino's practice mannequins—, Tadeo tries in vain to move the sword which Don León has just used. Quirino tells him: "Mientras al acero lo habite el pensamiento airado del que lo usó para la venganza, no habrá quien lo mueva, salvo el héroe" (63). The word "venganza" is obviously the most vital link between León's action and Orestes' fate.

The closing pages of part one repeat the idea of "venganza," but with some ambiguity added. Don León is questioned about the nature, meaning, and origin of the "mancha en forma de estrella sobre [su] . . . ombligo" (71). León replies: "Anuncia . . . robusta ancianidad, abundantes hijos y felices venganzas. Veremos si la aciertan, porque todavía soy joven, aún no encontré esposa, y no me obliga

venganza alguna" (71). León's reply does not contain the word "venganza," but there are several factors which function to create doubt and ambiguity: León does not seem to be motivated by or to crave vengeance; he negates the word "obliga," which would suggest the forces of fate that drive Orestes to his vengeance; the word "felices" with "venganza" does not parallel the harpy-tormented Orestes of Aeschylus' play; and, finally, the star on his navel, the "ancianidad," and the "hijos" do not correspond to any previous descriptions of Orestes given us up to this point.

At the end of part one, then, the reader has undergone an experience which vacillates between certainty and doubt. The narrative tensions which we carry into part two include the question of León's identity and the unresolved question of the final vengeance. The narrator has continually toyed with our concepts of reality, suspicion, doubt, and, ultimately, of truth. He has convinced us that don León is Orestes by means of a barrage of ingenious narrative techniques —misleading parallels in characterization, similes which imply parallels, interior duplications which distort the line between reality and fiction, and reinforcement of the belief through the reactions of various secondary characters to don León—; at the same time, the narrator has, with many of the same techniques, created an equally strong doubt in our minds —indirect imagery, the profusion of possible Orestes, intentionally ambiguous language, humor,

and a playful tone. We have, because of tension and ambiguity, been drawn into the novel. In essence, we have been made to feel the same emotions and tensions which Egisto experiences in part two, thereby preparing us to sympathize with him to a greater extent than we would Aeschylus' character.

Part two focuses on the development of the characterization of the complex and pathetic ruler Egisto —his fears, his doubts, his wild imaginings, and, most of all, his aging. Part two is a humorous and yet compassionate study of an aging monarch who has been devoured by his own paranoia, driven insane by expectation, and anguished by the thought of a wasted life spent in preparation for an event that will possibly never happen.

After reviewing his "armas," Egisto remembers, in a summary form, the long years of waiting and anxiety:

> . . . estaba atado a su palacio por la dichosa espera de Orestes vengador, que no acababa de llegar . . . . Egisto, en los primeros años de su reinado, tuvo que gastar la mayor parte de su tiempo y de su dinero en defender la corona, que al fin había llegado a ella por ese sendero que se llama crimen. Horas y horas sopesando sospechas, estudiando gestos y palabras, de puntillas por los corredores y las galerías buscando sorprender un conciliábulo subversivo . . . . (76)

The paradox suggested by the combination of "dichosa" and "vengador" forms the basis not only of the entire's work's tragicomic tone, but also an integral part of Egisto's characterization: he desperately fears Orestes' coming and

yet thrives on it; it is his reason for being, as we shall see later in this section. The use of the imperfect tense and the infinitive with two naturally perfective verbs —"acabar" and "llegar"— creates a repetitive effect: Samuel Gili Gaya has stated that "con acciones perfectivas, el hecho de enunciarlas en pretérito imperfecto significa que son repetidas, reiteradas, habituales . . . "[14] The obsessive reiteration of Orestes' arrival (in Egisto's mind) throughout part two is precisely what we experienced in part one with the appearance of don León, another in a constant onslaught of suspected Orestes. The last half of the above passage, in which Egisto remembers some of his past precautions, creates an undignified if not burlesque picture of the king tip-toeing through the palace hoping to catch one of Orestes' spies in action, but the scene also augments our feeling that the king is excessively paranoic about Orestes' possible arrival.

The next section of part two pursues further Egisto's memories, but with more emphasis on his abnormal flights of fantasy. In the fragment that follows, Egisto imagines Orestes' act of vengeance in elaborate detail:

> Egisto, verdaderamente, lo pensaba todo como si la escena final se desarrollase en el teatro, ante cientos o miles de espectadores . . . . Cuando [Clitemnestra] se incorporase, despertada por el ruido de las armas, en el sobresalto debía mostrar los pechos, e intentando abandonar el lecho para correr hacia el ventanal, una de las hermosas piernas hasta medio muslo o algo más, que la tragedia permite todo lo que el

> terror exige . . . . Y en ese mismo instante Egisto caía, mortalmente herido. Tendría que caer sin doblegarse. Agamenón había dado unos pasos, le había caído la espada de la mano, se había agarrado a un cortinón, se había de caer de otra manera. Como herido por el rayo. Si pudiese mandarle un recado a Orestes para que trajese una larga espada, de hoja sinuosa . . . . Habría que sugerir a Clitemnestra unas frases, unos gestos, las posibles respuestas a las preguntas de Orestes . . . . (79-80)

The picture which Egisto paints shows us the absurdly humorous extent of his paranoia. The grotesque scene is at once comically burlesque and tragically pathetic. Egisto's creation of the final act includes, in his mind, several erotic scenes in which Clitemnestra, half-naked, scrambles about the royal bedroom, an indication of his still-ardent passion for the queen and of his erotic delight in imagining the scene, underscored by the suggestive "o algo más." Egisto's lugubrious picture of his own death and his frustration at not being able to tell Orestes what type of sword to bring both contribute to a tragic and pathetic vision of a man driven half-insane by fear and expectation. The techniques of third-person interiorization, burlesque humor, "humanization" of a classical model, and pathos, function simultaneously to bring us closer to Egisto and to an understanding of his tormented anguish. In part one, we experienced the expectation of Orestes' arrival, as Egisto does here. Egisto's fears open up a new perspective: clearly Orestes has not arrived, but we share with Egisto the reality of his spiritual presence. The myth of the vengeance of

Orestes, in our experience in the novel, is a psychological rather than an anecdotal process; it serves to define man's basic emotional makeup. This movement into the psyche is an important foreshadowing of the next novel to be studied, Reivindicación del Conde don Julián, which takes yet another step in interiorization of myth.

In the section which follows, King Eumón, in his conversations with Egisto, correctly defines his colleague's life with Clitemnestra as a "comedia de errores" (96). Eumón alleviates some of Egisto's doubts, but, in the process, creates even more. One of Eumón's first questions to Egisto introduces a new agony and doubt in Egisto's mind: "Querido Egisto, ¿estás seguro de que el muerto era Agamenón?" (97). More levels of doubt and uncertainty are established when Egisto discloses that no one saw the face of the corpse except himself, and that he had never before seen Agamenón. Eumón proposes that the man whom Egisto slew was Orestes and not his father. The youth, out of impatience for vengeance, was about to murder Egisto; Agamenón probably died in the Trojan War. Eumón concludes, throwing some light on Egisto's strange imaginings: "El muerto puede ser Orestes o no serlo. Lo que importa es que tú tengas la seguridad, o la esperanza, de que haya sido. Unos días estarás cierto de ello, y otros no. Pero, con las dudas, tu vida será diferente. Un hombre que duda es un hombre libre, y el dudoso llega a ser poético soñador, por la necesidad

espiritual de certezas, querido colega" (101). Eumón hopes that with his idea of the premature death of Orestes, Egisto will live with the doubt of Orestes' coming. Before, the doubt for Egisto consisted of the question "When will he arrive?"; now, according to Eumón, the question should be "Whom did I kill?", and "Will he ever arrive?" Eumón has put into words what the reader has in part already experienced: Egisto's doubts and his need for certainty were the source of the creation of elaborate and imaginative scenes. His present doubt, however, will inevitably lead him to other flights of fantasy, since the expectation of Orestes' arrival is still much stronger than all that Eumón has proposed.

The final scene of part two is composed not only of Egisto's wild imaginings, but also includes an emotionally real fantasy. In this fragment, the narrator diminishes the distance between the reader and Egisto by bringing the latter to grips with the universal problem of aging and the specific problem of a life wasted in waiting:

> La piel del rey amarilleó como pergamino. Calvo, debajo de la corona, cubriéndose la cabeza, se ponía trozos de tela, buscando que fuesen de vivo color. Ya no podía su mano con las espadas agamenónicas, tiradas en el suelo en un rincón del gran salón, las hojas oxidadas . . . . Cada vez veía menos, y el temblor de sus manos iba en aumento . . . y la casi ceguera de Egisto le impedía contemplar las estrellas que, apatéticas y lejanas, presidían su destino. Orestes no acababa de llegar, y la vida se le iba al viejo rey. (133)

We see here that the true avenger of the murder of Agamenón is time itself. Egisto's skin turns yellow, like royal parchment. He is bald, looking for the "vivo color" of his youth. Agamenón's rusted swords ironically reflect the ravages of time on Egisto. He has become a weak and feeble old man, more to be pitied than condemned. Blind and aging, Egisto is no longer the strong and formidable opponent that he once was.

Egisto's fantasy combines both his physical and spiritual preoccupations and anguish, resulting in a total portrait of a man consumed by fear and uncertainty:

> Egisto se sentía incómodo dentro de aquella piel tirante . . . necesitaba una piel nueva . . . . Los humanos debían mudar de piel como las cobras, y Egisto se imaginaba sumergido en la piel húmeda de una serpiente . . . y así el rey podía deslizarse por entre los prados . . . a vigilar la llegada de Orestes . . . . Egisto podía morderle el tobillo . . . . (135)

Egisto's fantasy provides him with a form of spiritual protection against his fears. With a new skin, a new identity, he could be the first to strike at an unsuspecting Orestes. The protection, however, is only temporary; his fantasy backfires on him. He goes on to imagine that a group of unnamed men are auctioning off his old skin as material for drum covers: "Unos hombres se asomaban al balaustre de la escalera principal y mostraban la piel de Egisto a otros que llenaban el patio. Era su piel, desde los pies hasta el cuello . . . " (135). When Egisto learns that the buyer

of his skin is none other than Orestes, he hides inside his old skin:

> Se escondió debajo de su piel, y era como un escudo protector allí, contra el que se romperían todas las espadas. Pero por los ojos entreabiertos de Egisto, el noble Orestes . . . entró dentro del rey, por un estrecho sendero que hay en la espalda de todo cuerpo humano, y al avanzar le deshacía las entrañas con las espuelas, con la espada . . . . (136-137)

Egisto has created a unique image of himself. Orestes has slipped into Egisto's body by means of his "ojos entreabiertos," suggesting both Egisto's present failing eyesight which leaves him vulnerable to attack, and possibly past slips in his constant vigilance. Orestes' onslaught inside Egisto's skin, tearing out his entrails, is a literal embodiment of how the fear of the avenger has consumed the monarch over the years and is yet another example of how the myth of the vengeance of Orestes moves into the human mind and imagination.

Part two, then, provides us a somewhat different picture of the Orestian myth than did part one. Part two focuses on a new kind of Aegisthus, not a strong and deplorable murderer, but a weak and pathetic old man. The revitalization for the reader does not lie so much in his involvement in ingenious techniques as in part one; reader participation depends in large part on his involvement in the creation of a "humanized" character who elicits a great deal of sympathy. Egisto lives Orestes' return every day

of his life. His doubts and fears are the kindling of a fertile imagination which creates and recreates the final scene of his own death. In spite of the absurdity and grotesqueness of some of his imaginings, we sympathize with him because he is the victim of an uncertain existence and of the ravages of time. Orestes never arrives in part two, but the actual waiting is simultaneously the fulfillment of the vengeance and, for Egisto, a reason for being.

Part three effects a similar humanization of the figure of Orestes. In this section we see not the cold avenger but a young, insecure boy who like Egisto suffers doubt, a lost youth, and the degenerating effect of time. The revitalization consists of a picture of how a real —not mythic— Orestes might have acted were there no forces of destiny —only people— to guide and encourage him.

Orestes' first thoughts in part three are full of the questions and doubts one might expect from a person in his situation: "Pero, ¿tenía verdaderamente fieles? ¿Lo esperaba alguien en la ciudad, alguien que le diese albergue y pan, y lo animase a la venganza, que era justa y necesaria? . . . . Y este lugar, ¿cuál sería?" (142). Orestes worries about the most basic elements necessary for the success of his mission: he realistically doubts fealty after so many years; he worries about food and shelter; and he frets about arriving at the correct place. As in the case of Egisto, Orestes' doubts immediately feed his creative imagination

with an absurd vision of his act of vengeance:

> No sabía desde cuándo había comenzado a imaginar que el acto de la venganza comenzaba porque él se descolgaba desde muy alto, ayudándose de una cuerda. ¿Con las dos manos agarrado a la cuerda y la espada sujeta entre dientes? Imposible sujetar aquella pesada con los dientes. Si fuese puñal sería fácil. (142-143)

Orestes' vision of the final scene focuses exactly on how he will enter and what he will do. The key word in the passage is "imaginar." Orestes' imaginings show us that, as an avenging hero, he is very unsure of himself. He cannot measure up to the clichéd hero who swings in dramatically on a rope with a sword clenched in his teeth; Orestes is required, much to his dissatisfaction, to slay the pair with his father's sword.

In Orestes' long journey homeward, he meets a number of different people whose influence sways him from his course. In this section we observe an important change in technique: where before, in parts one and two, potential Orestes were everywhere, in part three no one has ever heard of Egisto or Orestes or the fated act of vengeance; nearly everyone, however, has heard of a similar case in which a great act of vengeance was involved. Everyone Orestes meets relates the similar case to him, causing him to constantly consider and reconsider his own situation.

The first of four encounters occurs when Orestes asks a retired river pilot for some advice concerning his role

in the fated vengeance. The pilot replies abruptly that Orestes should castrate Egisto, but after some thought, the pilot relates a similar case in which a young man planned to murder his stepfather:

> Era un marinero de mi nave. Y empeñado en que su padrastro le estaba comiendo una viña y una pareja de bueyes, amén de acostarse con su madre, y esto a nadie le gusta que lo haga un forastero. Yo le pedía que no lo matase, que sería un descrédito para la nave, y le aseguraba que, cuando menos los pensase, el padrastro moriría de desgracia. Y así fue. Vino el padrastro con tres melones, resbaló en la escalerilla, se dio un golpe contra un ancla de repuesto que estaba en el muelle, y quedó en el sitio. Mientras comíamos los melones, yo le decía que aquello estaba previsto. (145)

The humor in this passage arises from a clash between what should be tragic —death— and the pilot's nonchalance in eating the melons, which were essentially the instrument of death. The pilot adds that, after another sea journey, the young man returned only to find that his mother had married again. The story contains two discouraging moral lessons for Orestes, lessons which increase his knowledge but also his doubts: the first is "la inutilidad de la venganza,"[15] since the stepfather died as the result of a freak accident (likely brought on by his insatiable appetite); the second is that even if one stepfather dies, another may quickly take his place.

In the second incident, which follows the pilot's advice, Orestes is at an inn, telling the innkeeper about his fated act:

—Voy a mi patria porque he de cumplir una terrible venganza. El amante de mi madre que mató a mi padre.
El gordo Celión, que sacaba una hogaza de pan de la artesa, volvió el pan adentro y bajó la tapa.
—¡Eso no te exime del pronto pago! (148)

Again, humor is created by an abrupt clash of two contrastive elements; in this case, the sublime nobility of Orestes' declaration and Celión's no-nonsense materialism. Celión proceeds to explain "que muchos, en aquellos tiempos de confusión, pasaban diciendo que iban a grandes venganzas . . . bebían un pellejo ellos solos, y se iban sin pagar" (148). Celión's story tells Orestes that he is not alone in his quest for vengeance, he is one among many. Moreover, he learns that the rank-and-file person not only has never heard his name, but also has no particular interest in his quest, especially when their own interests are at stake.

Orestes next meets a shepherd, who has also heard of a case similar to the hero's: " . . . conocí a uno que estaba en un caso semejante al tuyo. Tenía que matar al asesino de su padre, que se acostaba con su madre . . . y lo apuñaló, y cuando encendió la luz, vio que se había equivocado, que el muerto era el tornero . . . " (149-150). Even though the stepson is mistaken, he seeks out his adversary for a final duel, but "lo encontró risueño y gran narrador, y se hicieron amigos . . . " (151). The shepherd's story also has two implicit morals for Orestes: the first is that, in haste, he might slay the wrong man; or perhaps the

second, that Egisto (and his mother for that matter) may not even deserve vengeance, he might learn to like both of them.

Orestes' next encounter is with a nameless "tirano" who although himself a former "vengador," instills even more doubt and questions in Orestes' mind. The tyrant first asks him if he really hates Egisto, causing him to doubt and question the justification for his cause, since he does not indeed feel any hatred for Egisto. The tyrant then admits that he also was a "vengador." He had to kill the unfaithful second husband of his mother:

> . . . era la hora en que él acostumbraba a salir del baño. Tenía siete espejos y se iba mirando en ellos mientras se paseaba secándose. Se detuvo un momento y se inclinó para mejor secarse una pantorrilla. Tendí el arco y disparé la flecha contra su cuello. Me había equivocado. No le había disparado a él, sino a su imagen, reflejada en uno de los espejos. Asomó la cabeza, me vio, y se echó a reír . . . . Mi padrastro reía y reía, no podía dejar de reír, se ponía rojo, y de pronto quedó serio, mirándome fijamente, dio un paso hacia mí y cayó muerto. (155-156)

This incident raises three more questions for the doubting Orestes: will he be able to accurately identify his stepfather after all these years? Or will he perhaps be fooled by his trickery? Will it really do any good to try to slay him when he may die without Orestes even acting?

Many years and many more encounters later, Orestes finally finds the two islands on his map. It has been so long, however, that no one in the area recognizes or

remembers him. Moreover, he finds himself and his horse —who later falls over dead from old age— to be quite different from when they started their journey. "Sí, el veloz ruano había envejecido en su compañía. El corazón de Orestes se llenó de una extraña ternura. ¡Años de incansable caminar! ¿Y no habría envejecido también él, Orestes, en el viaje de regreso, perdido por los caminos?" (160). Orestes and Egisto never actually meet, but their predicaments are almost identical: both live the greater part of their lives waiting for a moment that may never arrive; both live with a constant feeling of uncertainty about the future; their only accomplishment after all the years of waiting is having aged.

Eight to ten years later, just before Orestes enters the kingdom, his doubt is still quite strong, but its nature has changed somewhat: " . . . se preguntaba quiénes serían aquellos a los que había de dar muerte terrible, cambiados también con el paso de los lustros, usados por los inviernos. ¡Semanas enteras pasaban sin que se acordase de sus nombres! Quizá lo que más le obligaba ahora al cumplimiento de la venganza era la muerte de su viejo caballo" (162). Orestes' senility now goes beyond just forgetting names and places, he forgets the very motive for his vengeance. Experience may have taught Orestes that vengeance is fruitless, but even this wisdom seems irrelevant as age has obviously taken its toll on the avenger.

Part three ends at this point, but its plot is not in any way resolved until we arrive at the part entitled "Seis retratos," in which six characters' individual dénouements in the novel are explained. The most important resolution, aside from that of Orestes himself, is that of Clitemnestra, whose characterization has been somewhat neglected up to this point.

Clitemnestra, like Orestes and Egisto, "envejeció lentamente . . . " (215). The unfaithful queen, however, is much more pathetic, more the victim of time and aging than either her son or her lover: "La reina fue quedándose ciega . . . . Y así iban los días, pasando . . . . Vieja, arrugadita, encorvada, fue perdiendo el sueño, y pasaba las noches en vela, a la escucha, por si se oían espuelas en los pasillos" (215). Clitemnestra is not now the passionate young wife who assisted in the murder of her first husband; far from that, she is old, wrinkled, and decrepit. Any previous condemnation of her behavior depended largely on her youth, her beauty, and most importantly, on her uncontrollable passions which led her to commit adultery and murder. She is not the passionate heroine to be condemned or judged, but the pitiful, weak old woman who is slowly but surely losing her eyesight, her youth, and even what little peace she may have had before passing to her aged condition.

As with Clitemnestra, Orestes' <u>retrato</u> resolves very

little in a literal sense. When he finally and definitively arrives, after a combined total of fifty years of searching, Orestes finds that "el palacio real había sido derruido" (223). He meets Aquilino, the candlemaker, who shows him a liquid-filled, clear plastic ball which contains another important interior duplication in the reader's experience:

> . . . era una bola de nieve muy preparada y dentro de ella un Orestes vestido de rojo, con una espada larga, atravesaba al rey Egisto, que aparecía coronado y con una capa blanca. A sus pies estaba ya caída Clitemnestra, vestida de azul. Aquilino movió la bola, y comenzó a nevar sobre el parricida y sus víctimas. Caía lentamente la nieve, llenaba la corona de Egisto y cubría el pelo rubio de Orestes, poniéndose tan blanco como ahora lo tenía. (226)

Orestes' final question before he departs adds a frustrating touch of irony to the above description: "—¿Qué habrá sido de Orestes?— preguntó el propio Orestes, con una voz fría y distante, por simple curiosidad" (227). It is snowing outside as Orestes leaves: "Caían copas finas como en la bola de nieve del cerero. Gruesas lágrimas rodaban por el rostro del príncipe. Nunca, nunca podría vivir en su ciudad natal" (227).

The complex interior duplication developed by the above series of events may be confusing and frustrating for the reader, who like Orestes and Egisto, has waited for the final scene of vengeance. But the three-part sequence conveys the novel's ultimate message in more a metaphoric than

a literal sense: the only vengeance which takes place is in a plastic re-creation of the event in the unreal locale of a "bola de nieve." The snow falls inside the bola, i.e., time passes, but before it does the vengeance is complete; it happens just as the fates had predicted. The parallel situation of the novel's Orestes —i.e., the snowflakes inside the bola— ironically contrasts the fated and the novelistic situation. Orestes, the aged avenger, forgets his vengeance before he has the chance to carry it out, and rides off into "real" not plastic snow with tears in his eyes, a victim of the passing of time.

Northrop Frye has defined "myth" as "a narrative in which some characters are superhuman beings who do things that 'happen only in stories'; hence, a conventionalized or stylized narrative not fully adapted to plausibility or 'realism'."[16] Filón el Mozo, in considering how he will create the main character for his play, states, "Mi Orestes será variado, porque es el hombre, el ser humano" (168). Filón's statement does not conflict with Frye's definition of a myth if we consider that Frye was speaking of a type of work such as the Oresteia, a stylized vision of a tale of vengeance in which characters are driven by the supernatural forces of fate. If we consider Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes a myth, it must be so considered in a modern context and not in the traditional sense. Cunqueiro's

novel does not deal with superhuman beings or forces since it portrays characters who are thoroughly human and depicts equally human motivations; what happens to these beings is so plausible and realistic that their inevitable end is tragic and anti-climactic. Far from stylized, Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes is an intricately detailed account of the lives of its characters. The message implicit in the last episode —the "bola de nieve"— supports this idea. The "myth of the vengeance of Orestes," as Frye indicates, happens only in a fiction, in a bola de cristal. In the modern context, vengeance seems fruitless as there are other, many other concerns plaguing modern man.

The final result is not a myth in the traditional sense, but a modern Spanish myth with universal implications. The new myth, by means of imaginative and varied narrative technique, teaches compassion and understanding whereas the old myth demonstrated blind obedience to the irrational external forces of fate. We identify with the novel's characters because we are led to understand their internal conflicts and to participate in them. While the ancient myth was based on the certainty and the inevitability of the future, the modern myth in Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes is based on absurdity, uncertainty, suspicion, and doubt. In the trilogy, we sympathize with the characters because they are victims of an inevitable fate, in Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes because they are

prisoners of eternal doubt. We begin the novel, naturally, with certain preconceived notions about both plot and character; those notions are effectively reshaped by means of dynamic novelistic experience. The novel's universality lies primarily in its "existentialism": doubt, uncertainty, anguish at the passing of time. All of its principal themes are basic concerns of modern man. We are forced to ask the questions, what is truth? innocence? guilt? justice? We see and feel that life is fleeting, and the many levels of interior duplication, along with the frequent anachronisms —"pasta dentífrica," "escopetas," "Londres," etc.— create a sense of timelessness and universal application.

Part one of the novel caused us to experience Orestes' arrival and to feel the confusion resulting when suspicion and doubt are in constant tension. In part two, we share the innermost thoughts of a half-mad monarch who waits impatiently for and yet paradoxically fears Orestes' return. In part three, we see that Orestes is not what anyone expected; when he does finally return to the kingdom, his vengeance is totally futile. The novel has no literal ending since there is no real satisfactory solution to the problems which the reader experiences in it. The ultimate consequence for all the characters is in the waiting, in the agony of expectation. The essence of their lives rests in preparation and not in culmination.

Aside from its many allusions to modern Spain —Málaga,

persons with "tricornios" thought to be "dragones"—, the novel offers several structural and thematic parallels with the present situation in Spain, parallels which are cleverly cloaked in the framework of the ancient myth: the aging ruler who awaits the return of the avenger; the difficulty all have in identifying precisely who is the enemy, a problem reminiscent of the Spanish Civil War; the complex bureaucracy and spy system run with more red tape and expense than effectiveness; the censorship imposed by the ruler on local writers and playwrights because he doesn't want to be reminded of the return of the avenger; the avenger himself, confused and lost in exile; the many years which separate the crime from the present; the aging; and the forgetting. All of these implicit parallels hold their moral for the modern Spaniard: the crime long-past, it is a time for compassion and understanding, for forgetting hatred and brutal vengeance, a time to look at both sides of the conflict, as does the novel, and for working toward a conclusive and realistic future.

Both Tiempo de silencio and Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes rework ancient myths and patterns in a way which updates them, universalizes their respective experiences, and creates a tragicomic, at times satiric, vision of modern man and society. Each novel presents its individual view of modern Spain. Cunqueiro's novel is more explicitly mythic

or mythological than Martín Santos', and in this sense we can see the two as a bridge between the novel of the '50s and the one of the '70s. In Tiempo de silencio, myth becomes somewhat more explicit; the novel's fundamental technique in mythic terms lies in the distortion of well-established archetypal patterns; in Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes humor and interiorization into the human mind bring us closer to the book's principal characters. The trajectory, thus far, consists of four stages: the first, in El Jarama, is a vision of a society or social group engaged in ritual sacrifice; Primera memoria focuses on the rite of initiation of an individual, the rite structure is deceived and the novel's message is black and pessimistic; Tiempo de silencio also centers around the rite of passage of an individual and also deceives the rite pattern while at the same time mocking the Odyssey's basic structure; Cunqueiro's novel uses ancient myth and, like Matute and Martín Santos, modifies its dénouement, but, in doing so, begins to move into the human psyche, a technique which becomes vitally important in Reivindicación del Conde don Julián the following year. Also important as a thread which binds these novels together is the idea of a breakdown in age-old mythic processes. We first observed a mild distortion of a mythic pattern in Matute. The modification is intensified in Tiempo de silencio where it becomes a social indictment; Cunqueiro uses Classical mythology but shapes and

distorts it according to his message. What we experience in the next group of novels carries the breakdown even further; it is in every sense a complete fragmentation of the mythic process.

NOTES

[1]Text: Luis Martín Santos, Tiempo de silencio, 6th Edition. (Barcelona: Seix-Barral, 1969), see pp. 219, 234, 44, and 219 respectively.

[2]Julian Palley, "The Periplus of Don Pedro: Tiempo de silencio," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, 48 (1971), 239-254.

[3]Juan Villegas, "La aventura de un mundo mitificadamente desmitificado: Tiempo de silencio de Luis Martín Santos," in La estructura mítica del héroe. (Barcelona: Planeta, 1973), pp. 203-230.

[4]Robert K. Anderson, "Tiempo de silencio: Myth and Social Reality," Ph.D. dissertation: St. Louis University, 1973.

[5]Juan Carlos Curutchet, "Luis Martín Santos, el fundador," Cuadernos del Ruedo Ibérico (París), #17 (feb.-mar., 1968), 3-18; and #18 (abril-mayo, 1968), 3-15.

[6]Pablo Gil Casado, La novela social española, 2nd Edition. (Barcelona: Seix-Barral, 1974).

[7]Palley, pp. 244-245.

[8]See especially Villegas and Anderson.

[9]See Henri Bergson, "Laughter," in Comedy, ed. Wylie Sypher. (New York: Anchor Books, 1956), pp. 77 and 133.

[10]José Domingo, La novela española del siglo XX, Tomo II. (Barcelona: Labor, 1973), p. 38. Also see his article

"Actualidad de Alvaro Cunqueiro," in Insula, #269 (abril, 1969), p. 5.

[11]Domingo, La novela, p. 37. Santos Sanz Villanueva, Tendencias de la novela española actual (1950-1970). (Madrid: Cuadernos para el diálogo, 1972), pp. 55-56.

[12]John Kronik, "Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes," Review in Hispania, 53 (Mar., 1970), 152.

[13]Text: Alvaro Cunqueiro, Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes. (Barcelona: Destino, 1969), p. 7. Future references to this edition will be found in parentheses.

[14]Samuel Gili Gaya, Curso superior de sintaxis española, novena edición. (Barcelona: Bibliograf, 1970), p. 161.

[15]These words were used by Cunqueiro himself in describing the novel's central theme. See the dust-jacket of the above cited edition of the work.

[16]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays, 2nd Edition. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 366.

CHAPTER THREE:

REIVINDICACION DEL CONDE DON JULIAN AND VOLVERAS A REGION:

FRAGMENTATION AND DISINTEGRATION OF THE MYTHIC PROCESS

Reivindicación del Conde don Julián and Volverás a Región, the last pair of novels to be studied, represent the final step in a progression of the fragmentation and disintegration of the mythic process in the New Spanish Novel. Goytisolo's novel was in fact published in 1970 and Benet's, while published in 1967, sets a new course for the Spanish novel. In each of these novels, we observe that the author's focus turns toward a direct characterization of the modern Spanish experience. Their styles and structures are almost completely fragmented: Goytisolo's novel represents a complete rupture with traditional conceptions of novelistic style and Benet's may be readily termed "labyrinthine" by dint of its extended and complicated sentence structures, a scrambled plot and time sequences. Volverás a Región, as we shall see later in this chapter, portrays a vision of a mythless society, one in which all past mythic patterns have in the present become fragmented or in effect disintegrated. Goytisolo's novel, on the other hand, focuses on the damaging effect of a very real and present mythological system on a specific individual, and on that individual's efforts at rejecting and destroying the system.

In terms of overall trajectory, Reivindicación del Conde don Julián carries the process of interiorization into the human mind several steps farther than what we observed in Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes. Within a framework of Classical Mythology, Cunqueiro's novel shows that vengeance is futile and usually unjustified. In Reivindicación del Conde don Julián, however, the theme of the futility of vengeance and Classical Mythology receive a very different treatment, largely due to the increased emphasis on psychological interiorization. In Goytisolo's novel, vengeance and myth both form a part of and are created by the subconscious mind of the work's narrator as he wanders through a Moroccan city. Although the narrator-protagonist does on selected occasions weave Classical Mythology and archetypal patterns into the reader's experience, his focus is primarily directed at rejecting and attacking a substantial group of Spanish socio-cultural myths which —in spite of his tireless efforts to completely reject them— form an indissoluble part of his being. Reivindicación del Conde don Julián is, in short, a somewhat fragmented "Spanish odyssey" in which the narrator confronts the "gods" of traditional Spain.

Because of the novel's density and complexity, most critics have understandably limited their analyses to the study of some of the work's more salient characteristics. The theme of social protest, the innovations in language,

and the often blurred line separating reality and fantasy have been studied in the greatest detail; its mythic content is almost always mentioned —*i.e.*, "demythification"—, but generally speaking, it is mentioned only in passing. José Ortega, for example, states that the novel "exige una destrucción de la mitología enajenada y la construcción de una mitología progresiva," but focuses his study mainly on the function of "agresión" in the novel.[1] Sanz Villanueva believes that *Reivindicación del Conde don Julián* represents "la negación radical y absoluta de todos los valores tradicionales, sociales y morales del país."[2] In a general review of the novel, Kessel Schwartz sees it as always "hovering between dream and reality and involving mythology and metaphysical doubts as it recreates the Spanish tradition"; it is, for Schwartz, "a kind of existential odyssey."[3] Ramón Buckley finds in the novel principally the archetype of the "paraíso perdido."[4] Manuel Durán describes the narrator as "más 'miniorestes' que 'miniulises'," which supports the idea of a close connection between Cunqueiro's work and Goytisolo's, published only one year apart.[5] Finally, Héctor Romero's study —the only one specifically concerned with myth— focuses on Goytisolo's attack on "los mitos de la España sagrada." The narrator's purpose, according to Romero, is "invadir a España y destruir los mitos de su patria, y el lenguaje tradicional y estancado que les ha dado vida."[6] No critic, however, has explained the

specific function of Classical Mythology and archetypal patterns as they relate to novelistic techniques and ultimately to the novel's central experience which is, to my mind, a combination of fragmented archetypes and myths —*i.e.*, the passage of the hero and the *Odyssey*— and an attack on Spain's decayed socio-cultural mythology.

To facilitate my study, I have divided the novel into two major parts or halves, even though there are actually four parts provided by the author. The general action of each part is as follows: At the beginning of the first half, the narrator awakens in his apartment in modern Morocco, cursing Spain, his mother country. After filling a small pouch with a varied collection of dead insects, he walks to a nearby library where he ruthlessly smashes them between the pages of Spanish literary classics. Some time after leaving the library, the narrator observes a group of American tourists who are watching a snake charmer. In an imagined scene, the snake poisons the person the narrator most hates, Mrs. Putifar, a Daughter of the American Revolution and the synthesis of all that he despises about the United States. After wandering farther, he enters a café, where he meets his comrade Tariq, and with him smokes hashish. This half of the novel is strewn with allusions to Classical Mythology and archetypes and represents a "physical" odyssey in which the "hero" confronts the various demons and gods of Old Spain and often lashes out at them

in a physical sense —*i.e.*, the smashing of the insects between the pages of the classics—. In the second half of the novel, we follow the narrator's mind in a spiritual or mental odyssey in which he wreaks vengeance on traditional Spain and all that it stands for. The narrator is "reborn," mentally transformed into the infamous Count Julian as he prepares for an all-out attack on the Peninsula. His vengeance is embodied in a series of episodes or "happenings" as he calls them: he first creates a scene in which a Spanish lawyer named Alvaro Peranzules, also known as "el perfecto caballero cristiano,"[7] is seen as a common and unusually obnoxious procurer; in a mythological adventure, he journeys into the womb of Isabel la Católica, daughter of Alvaro; he watches Alvaro die of horror as, before his eyes, swarms of insects devour Spanish literary classics; Julián leads his men on a hunt for the legendary "capra hispánica"; after reviving Alvaro as "Alvarito" he casts him as the principal character in a perversion of the folk tale of Little Red Riding Hood, "*Caperucito y el lobo feroz*," in which Julián commits sodomy on the young Alvaro; as an ultimate blast of fury against traditional Spain, Julián and his men plunder a church, his men raping the "beatas" present while he despoils the statue of the Virgin and Christ-child. His daily ritual ended, the narrator returns to his apartment thinking "mañana será otro día, la invasión recomenzará" (240).

The narrator's hostile thoughts begin part one: "tierra ingrata, entre todas espuria y mezquina, jamás volveré a ti : con los ojos todavía cerrados, en la ubicuidad neblinosa del sueño, invisible por tanto y, no obstante, sutilmente insinuada" (11). The narrator sets the tone of alienation with the series of pejorative adjectives, "ingrata," "espuria," and "mezquina," and at the same time foreshadows his own narrative technique with the series of seemingly contradictory adjectives and nouns, "neblinosa," "sueño," and yet "invisible" and "sutilmente insinuada." His dream-like state and subsequent wanderings are not, however, unusual; they are in fact a part of a meaningful but ineffective daily ritual: "un día y otro aún; siempre igual" (11).

As he lies in bed thinking about his mother country, the narrator effects his first major mental transformation of external reality: "nueva Atlántida, tu patria se ha aniquilado al fin : cruel cataclismo, dulce alivio" (12). In the narrator's mind, Spain becomes the legendary continent of Atlantis, which is said to have sunk in a cataclysmic earth and sea quake; his country is, therefore, mentally destroyed. The comparison to Atlantis accentuates his own negative attitude toward his motherland, but is ineffective against its physical reality. We see here, as we see throughout the novel, that, since he cannot blot out Spain physically, he is forced into an attempt to destroy it with

his imagination.

The second major mental transformation is more clearly of a mythic nature: "el mar convertido en lago, unido tú a la otra orilla como el feto al útero sangriento de la madre, el cordón umbilical entre los dos una larga y ondulante serpentina" (13). This simile is essential to the understanding of the structure underlying most of the myth in the novel, as it unquestionably establishes Spain as the figurative "mother" to the narrator. It is important that the "cordón umbilical" is still attached, as this "attachment" is a reflection of the narrator's unwilling emotional attachment to Spain during the first half of the novel. The novel's dynamism, in fact, depends largely on the narrator's efforts to break free of the chain formed by the cord. Romero has correctly observed that, at this point in the narration, "el personaje rechazaba a España y al mismo tiempo se sentía unido a ella."[8]

The narrator's third major mental transformation is of a mythological nature: " . . . el día que aguarda tras la cortina, caja de Pandora maniatado bajo la guillotina" (13). He compares the form and mechanical operation of the curtain to raising a guillotine, but adds the connotation of the Pandora's box. If he opens the window, he, like Pandora, will release all of the troubles and woes which plague him. He sees the act as self-destructive, as executing oneself with a guillotine. He is content to remain in the "penumbra

fetal" (15) of his room, which is a comfortable "womb" in itself, distant from light and reality. His only stay of execution and hope of refuge is "inventar, componer, mentir, fabular" (13). To delay having to face a new day, he must "invent." He therefore imagines himself as "Scherezada" who put off her own execution by means of "fabulación."

The narrator's mind turns back to Spain, which now takes on the form of a dangerous animal, very similar to the river in El Jarama. The narrator tells us that his residing in Morocco is the

> última garantía de tu seguridad frente a la fiera, lejos de sus colmillos y zarpazos : los músculos bruñidos por el sol, las fauces inmóviles, agazapada siempre . . . al acecho de la embestida (14)

Here, the narrator elaborates on a previously suggested idea of Spain as a vicious monster. The beast's salient characteristics all emphasize its violent, menacing nature: "colmillos y zarpazos," "músculos," "agazapada . . . al acecho." The animalization of Spain is in effect an intensification of his hatred toward his country. On the pages following the above quote, in fact, the narrator makes yet another shift in the vision he creates of his country: "adiós Madrastra inmunda" (15), and "que la Madrastra sigue allí agazapada, inmóvil" (16). By referring to Spain as "madrastra," he has created a considerable physical and emotional distance between himself and his country. The narrator ends his first monologue —an

introduction to his odyssey— revealing his plans concerning how he will fight the "beast," how he will vent his anger: "nuevo conde don Julián, fraguando sombrías traiciones" (16).

After opening his window, the narrator hears the music of a flute, "la flauta pastoril de algún émulo de Pan, compañero de Baco y persecutor de ninfas" (16). Again, he depends on Classical Mythology to express what he —a man who rejects his own mythology— cannot rationally express. The mention of "Baco" aptly describes the inebriating effect of the music on him, but may also be connected with the novel's overall hallucinatory effect. The music woos him to embark on his odyssey and, at this point, he makes preparations for a "separation" from the comfort of his apartment.

Upon entering his kitchen, the narrator sees the collection of dead insects lying about: the insects "sorprendidos por el poderoso insecticida como los habitantes de Pompeya . . . por la lava del rugiente volcán : muerte súbita que extiende sus voraces tentáculos por el Foro . . . " (19). The comparison is superficially accurate: both the insects and Pompeyans died suddenly, some literally frozen in flight. A more careful examination, however, shows that the two sets of entities are leagues apart. The narrator has exalted a common, if not repugnant, situation comparing it to the unique and almost legendary destruction of Pompey.

In the narrator's mind, the insecticide has hit the insects like hot lava, and all are conserved intact, "esperando la pluma del Bulwer que los inmortalice" (19). The association of insects and literature is an example of the narrator's propensity to exalt his humdrum reality and planned actions, and is an important seed for two subsequent incidents: when the narrator smashes insects in the pages of Spanish classics at the library, and when the insects later actually devour the books. After leaving his apartment, on his way to the library precisely for the purpose of defacing the books, the narrator comments briefly on another important narrative thread, the synthesis of the "ideal" modern hero, James Bond: "la perfilada silueta de un hombre con un revólver tácito y elocuente, JAMES BOND, OPERACION TRUENO, última semana" (28).[9]

As he enters the library, ready for his first clash with Spain's "monsters," we follow the narrator's thoughts and observations: "el rico depósito de sedimentación histórica de vuestra vernácula expresión, grave discurso, serenamente fluvial, del alma del país" (33). The narrator, having shifted from Classical Mythology as a basis for imagery to Spain's classical literature as the object of his attack, sees the latter as an integral part of his country's socio-cultural mythology, especially in view of his notation that the literature is a product of the national unconscious, "el alma del país." Given that he does indeed recognize the

literature as the soul of the country, his actions following the recognition constitute his own personal demythification of what that literature and those myths represent. His actions form a vengeance which gives him momentary satisfaction, but which again leaves Spain unchanged. The narrator toys with the reader's concepts of fiction and reality as he smashes the insects between the pages: " . . . depositando entre sus páginas una hormiga y seis moscas : en el quintaesenciado diálogo de Casandra y el duque" (37). The insects fuse with the fictional reality of the books; for example, the narrator places a spider "entre los lentos paisajes del Noventa y Ocho" and smashes it on an "aldehuela apiñada alrededor de su campanario" (38), simultaneously destroying the literature (pages) and defacing its thematic content.

Upon leaving the library, the narrator continues to suggest the idea of a mythical or Odyssey-like adventure, a "cotidiano periplo" (39), meeting a beggar, who resembles a "cíclope" (44) and passing the "café con los asiduos del loto" (41). When he spots a group of American tourists, his mind again returns to the creation of essentially mythic imagery. He calls the group and their vehicle "el autocar de los marcianos . . . de las Very Important Persons venidas de otro planeta en busca de otoñales aventuras" (46). The tourists appear as "martians" to the narrator, so distant from him emotively and so different physically that

they seem to be "de otro planeta." If we remember the mythological connotation of Mars, i.e., the god of war, the comparison becomes even more significant, especially in relation to the constantly resurfacing thread of anti-American imagery, which is also based on ancient Roman culture: "las hostias de la pax americana : napalm allí, leche acá" (42). Appropriately, the tourists' guide recommends that "a favorite excursion is to Hercules' Caves where the hero-god lived" (47). The contrast between the narrator's dependence on Classical Mythology to give meaning to his existence and the exploitation of the same by American tourism underscores the bitter compromise of mythology's high ideals caused by modern society.

One particular tourist, Mrs. Putifar, is the special object of the narrator's mental aggressions. In his mind, he sees her as an absurd embodiment of American sociocultural myth, another "god" which he must confront in his odyssey: "los pechos que parecen despeñarse a pesar de la rígida muralla de contención sintetizando en su vasta persona las virtudes magníficas del gran pueblo" (48). The narrator sees her —and her breasts— as a unique American cultural essence. The reminder of "JAMES BOND : OPERACION TRUENO" (51) serves as a sexually complementary vision of the invading English and American mythology of sex and violence.

Up to this point, the reader has accompanied the

narrator in his physical periplus, his odyssey, and his "outward oriented" protests, negative transformations of external reality, and fierce criticism of American tourism. Now, lost in the labyrinth of the city, the narrator turns inward, revealing a profound existential crisis:

> y desdoblándote al fin por seguirte mejor, como si fueras otro . . . consciente de que el laberinto está en ti : que tú eres el laberinto : minotauro voraz, mártir comestible : juntamente verdugo y víctima (52)

We see here, and in the entire first half of the novel, a fragmented person, aware of his inner complexity and chaos; he is the minotaur and martyr of his own labyrinth and is his own executioner. In this half of the novel, the narrator is, generally speaking, passive; he is martyr and victim. In the second half, however, after a symbolic rebirth, his role as the active and aggressive minotaur and executioner is emphasized. The narrator's passive character in the first half is exemplified on several occasions in which he shrinks from almost all human contact. As he walks to the restroom of a café, for example, he stops before arriving, "sin aventurarte en el polifémico, no amordazado antro" (59). Why he does not enter is open to some speculation; it appears that he sees "entering" as a mythic adventure, a combat with Polyphemus, of which he considers himself incapable. In any case, he is reluctant to enter a more crucial stage of his odyssey or to descend into "hell" and be reborn as is the archetypal hero. After

accidentally urinating on a man who was apparently drunk or asleep outside the restroom door, he is even "incapaz de articular una excusa" (60).

Upon leaving the café, the narrator's eyes again turn toward the Peninsula and the Strait separating the two continents. As he considers his homeland once more, he intensifies the emotive impact of its personification: "la venenosa cicatriz que se extiende al otro lado del mar : herida más bien, infectada y abierta . . . olas que galopan como sementales en furia hasta la opuesta ribera : huestes victoriosas de Tariq" (61). The "scar" which separates Morocco from Spain is at first "venenosa," then a wound which is "infectada y abierta," suggesting first a menacing serpent and then an infected wound. The waves seem to be galloping horsemen in Tariq's attacking army, a personification of the narrator's most intense desires.

The narrator continues to exercise the avenging capabilities of his mind when he again sees Mrs. Putifar and "el autocar de los marcianos" (65). As the tourists gather around a nearby snake-charmer, the narrator thinks "la escena de todos los días, pero cambiarás el final" (66). He is prepared for combat with a mythical beast armed only with his imagination, which is in many cases all that Odysseus himself had. The narrator's mental transformation turns out to be a vicious attack on Mrs. Putifar and on what she represents. The serpent coils itself around her (in

his mind) and injects in her its deadly venom. In the narrator's experience, Mrs. Putifar dies and is debased by a group of "gnomos orientales . . . [que] con irreverencia levantan la falda y se arriman a orinar a la gruta" (68). She is killed and stripped of honor, but only in the narrator's mind. Upon seeing Mrs. Putifar alive again, he casually observes that she is now "repuesta de su muerte y profanación" (69). Her mental "rebirth" suggests magic, in the Odyssey context, and that in a social sense American tourism and influence is both omnipresent and irradicable.

The narrator's mind later turns to even wilder flights of mythic fantasy as he imagines himself in the sea, a situation very reminiscent of the Odyssey. He envisions "esponjas gigantescas, medusas en forma de sombrillas . . . el océano deviene una vastísima gruta . . . la carnosa proliferación de estactalitas del reino de la Noche, del Sueño y de las Sombras . . . antro femenino, reducto sombrío de Plutón!" (78) This passage recalls two basic passages in the Odyssey, the hero's descent into the underworld and his encounter with Medusa. The ocean becomes, for the narrator, an enormous womb, "antro femenino," of which he is a part. This passage is a foreshadowing of his actual descent into a form of "hell," which we see more clearly in the second half of the novel.

Continuing to dramatically alternate archetype and Classical Mythology with attacks on Spanish and American

socio-cultural mythology, the narrator begins his assault on "don Alvaro," whom he now casts as "Séneca," and whom he describes as the "quintaesenciada encarnación de tu tribu" (79). Don Alvaro represents not simply a cultural essence but a quintessence, an even purer, more unique, more essential incarnation of what traditional Spain holds sacred. Don Alvaro, as we immediately notice, is not at all human, but in the narrator's vindictive mind, a mock synthesis of a "perfecto caballero cristiano" (158). Alvaro is so perfect that the squeaking of his bones sounds like creaking armor: "al caminar, sus articulaciones crujen dificultosamente, con las piezas mal ajustadas de una armadura" (79). Don Alvaro's entire sense of life is a "sentido ascético y militar . . . " (80); he expresses himself "en un castellano purísimo" (80). In short, Alvaro represents the perfect incarnation of a long series of ideals forged by the Spanish national unconscious. The narrator's mockery of Alvaro becomes more explicit as the latter picks up, smells, and admires a piece of sheep dung: "es una capra hispánica . . . las entrañas de Gredos son como las entrañas de la Castilla heroica y mística! : ombligo de nuestro mundo serrano a más de mil metros de altura! : la capra encarna nuestras más puras esencias" (82). The word "ombligo" reinforces the idea of Spain as a figurative mother. The contradiction between dung and Spain's "más puras esencias" —a subjectively drawn relationship— is the source of ironic humor and

fierce satire.

Near the end of the first of the novel's four parts, the narrator, who is soon to be reborn after the manner of the hero, undergoes an important transitional stage in what seems to be, again, both hell and womb. In this instance, however, neither hell nor womb are related to Spain; both, on the contrary, have a positive, purifying effect on him. In the underground café, the narrator, settling in to smoke hashish with Tariq, places himself on the threshold of mental metamorphosis. Because the entire incident is so crucial to the understanding of my thesis and to the fullest appreciation of the novel's experience, I quote the two pages involved in their entirety:

> . . . la esbelta invitación de una mano que te indica una puerta, un zaguán, un breve, desconchado corredor : hasta la mesilla que sirve de caja y el exiguo vestuario común : todo por el módico precio de tres dirhames (service compris) pagaderos (pagados) al servicial Plutón que se expresa en francés e insiste en guardar (à tout hasard) tu desmerecida cartera : estás en el umbral del Misterio, en la boca de la infernal Caverna, en el melancólico vacío del, pues, formidable de la tierra bostezo que conduce al reino de las Sombras, del Sueño y de la Noche, ínclito Eneas súbitamente abandonado por la Sibila : húmedo antro virgiliano impregnado de un tenue e indeciso olor a algas : avanzando cautamente bajo la luz tamizada, en el aire en tensión, sobre las lajas bruñidas y lisas : entre efluvios de vapor que esfuminan las líneas y metamorfosean la morisca asamblea en una viscosa fauna submarina, dúctil e inquietante : rostros globosos, brazos como pulpos, esferas oculares inertes : por las rezumantes moradas sucesivas invadidas de miasmas : no, no hacia el helado horror de la víctima nuda, del grito crispado e inútil, del frágil ademán indefenso : seres apurados al límite estricto de los huesos, humano ganado hacinado en vagones, eliminado allí, por razones de higiene, para tranquilidad de conciencia de

> la escogida, pedigreada raza : cuerpos y más cuerpos volcables luego, a carretadas, en las fauces hambrientas de la fosa común : no, no, no : para purificarse, acá : de lujuria o de gula : de excedentes nutricios o quizás seminales : en una penumbra brumosa que parece adensarse conforme te adentras en ella : baño de irrealidad que desbarata planos, desdibuja contornos, rescata sólo imágenes inconexas, furtivas : cuerpos erguidos, sentados, yacentes : inmóviles o entregados a experta gimnasia : robusta disposición genitiva : tendones bruscos y nervaduras recias : blanca musculatura compacta : buscando un hueco en donde acomodarte y hallándolo al fin : la espalda apoyada en el mármol, las piernas horizontalmente extendidas : respirando aliviado : vivo, vivo! : no en el proteico reino de lo blando e informe, de la flora rastrera e inmunda, de la obscena ebullición de lo inorgánico : abarcando las tersas superficiales pulidas, eludiendo la mórbida carnosidad innecesaria : sin Radamanto, sin Tisífone, sin Cerbero : hechas las abluciones rituales, cumplida la ofrenda : en la llanura de deliciosas praderas y rumorosos bosques, ámbito de los seres felices : sombras que se ejercitan en la palestra, midiéndose en los viriles juegos, luchando sobre la dulce arena dorada : cráteres de ardiente lava, abrasadores de géiseres en los que el eterno pompeyano busca y halla súbita y deleitosa muerte : Tariq, Tariq! : agnición de la humana fraternidad! : sólita epifanía del verbo! : mientras el sudor escurre por el cuerpo como si te hubieran baldeado y, poco a poco, naufragas en la languidez bienhechora : con los versos miríficos del Poeta incitándote sutilmente a la traición : ciñendo la palabra, quebrando la raíz, forzando la sintaxis, violentándolo todo : a un paso del tentador Estrecho : a punto de cruzarlo ya : inclinando también la cabeza y cerrando, sí, cerrando los ojos (84-85)

The narrator enters the café at the "esbelta invitación de una mano." As before, he is reluctant to enter this difficult stage of his odyssey, for in it he must confront some of the most "evil" of Spanish "gods." Due to the repetition of "Plutón," we have the feeling that he enters Hell. The narrator describes the entrance as the "umbral del Misterio, en la boca de la infernal Caverna" and finds himself,

as before, a part of the "reino de las Sombras, del Sueño y de la Noche." The images recall his fantasy in the sea, where both hell and the womb were suggested. The feeling of the sea's presence in the café is evidenced by his observation of the "morisca asamblea ... . una viscosa fauna submarina." But he further describes the place as "las fauces hambrientas de una fosa común" continuing to imply a living death, but also combining with it the idea of the "belly of the monster." In the "baño de irrealidad" which darkness provides, the narrator looks for a convenient spot in which to smoke. He observes before beginning that this particular "hell" is more a refuge; it is a hell "sin Radamanto" one of mythological hell's three judges, "sin Tisífone" the fury who harassed and punished those who entered the underworld, and "sin Cerbero" the three-headed dog who is said to have guarded the entrance to the kingdom of the dead. Becoming slowly immersed in the hallucinatory world of hashish, the narrator states that he is "a un paso del tentador Estrecho : a punto de cruzarlo ya" describing his readiness for the invasion, but he paradoxically adds, "inclinando también la cabeza y cerrando, sí, cerrando los ojos."

The descent into hell, the belly of the monster, and the implicit rebirth archetypes here function to introduce to the reader several concepts: the narrator's imminent spiritual metamorphosis, his mental odyssey, his almost

complete change of identity, his transformation into the person of don Julián, legendary betrayer and invader of the Peninsula. The paradox of the passage's last line is, of course, easily explained by the fact that the invasion is not physical but mental. In his description of the café, the narrator uses every archetype possible to indicate the rebirth of the hero, since Julián is not normally placed in this category. Perhaps the narrator depends on the universal communicative power of the archetypes to give his culturally limited subject matter a wider appeal and understanding; moreover, I believe, he depends on them for structure, order, and meaning, since he, as a result of rejecting the myth of modern Spain, lives in chaos.

Part one, then, is essentially a physical odyssey which leads into a mental one. The second of the novel's four parts begins by continuing the idea of a mental odyssey "hacia dentro hacia dentro : en la atmósfera algodonosa y quieta, por los recovecos del urbano laberinto : como en la galería de una feria . . . " (89). The trip "hacia dentro" is not in physical space, through the city's labyrinth, but through "urbano" ("que probablemente se llamara Julián o quizás Urbano, Ulbán o Bulián," p. 7) and the "laberinto" ("consciente de que el laberinto está en ti : que tú eres el laberinto," p. 52). The image "galería de espejos" supports the idea of an inward journey.

Part two functions primarily as a transitional section

in which we encounter a chaotic repetition of motifs and images found in part one; but we also experience the very orderly introduction of many elements to be further developed in subsequent parts. For example, the narrator briefly enters the "gruta" (100) of Mrs. Putifar, as a foreshadowing of his penetration of Isabel la Católica. But part two mainly focuses on Alvaro, and on his transformation into Seneca and a Spanish socio-cultural myth. The narrator engages in a fairly serious creation of a national symbol in preparation for the destruction of the same in parts three and four. The narrator traces Alvaro's life from his childhood to the present. The end result, however, is by far the most important.

Alvaro is not a real person, but a national myth; in this sense he is a mythic opponent for the narrator, the "hero." The fact that Alvaro is made of granite (116) and that his bones squeak like armor are proof enough of this assertion. The narrator tells us, moreover, that in the adult Alvaro, "las esencias hispánicas son evidentes, el alma carpetovetónica ha encontrado su símbolo : Alvarito es ya don Alvaro . . . y el pequeño Séneca es Séneca el Grande . . . " (116). He adds that Alvaro "deviene el emblema nacional" (118), "con su caballerosidad y cristiandad en fusión perfecta" (117). In a mock national election, one person explains that Alvaro has received his vote "porque él encarna nuestras más puras esencias" (124).

At the close of this section, the narrator reiterates that all forthcoming "vengeance" is mental: "hachich, aliado sutil de tu pasión destructiva!" (126). And at the beginning of part three, he repeats his belief and intention: "la patria es la madre de todos los vicios : y lo más expeditivo y eficaz para curarse de ella consiste en venderla, en traicionarla . . . por el simple, y suficiente placer de la traición : de liberarse de aquello que nos identifica, que nos define" (134). The narrator still feels that Spain is a part of him and that he is a part of Spain. His intention is a total rejection of the "madre" and the conversion of himself to a historical traitor of his country, a step recalling the "rite of initiation" as defined by Eliade. While the narrator was weak and fragmented in the first half of the novel, he now becomes unified and strong under the new identity of Count Julian. We see the difference in his character almost immediately as he meditates on his planned betrayal:

> traición grave, traición alegre : traición meditada, traición súbita : traición oculta, traición abierta : traición macha, traición marica : hacer almoneda de todo : historia, creencias, lenguaje : infancia, paisajes, familia : rehusar la identidad, comenzar a cero : Sísifo y, juntamente, Fénix que renace de sus propias cenizas (135)

Here the narrator begins to assert himself, unified under the name and person of Julián. Although the above enumeration still shows internal contradiction, we notice that it

is unified and well structured. The narrator is preparing himself for the ultimate betrayal: selling out his mother country. The contradiction between the myth of Sisyphus —eternal punishment, repetitive action, toil with no visible effect or progress— and the Phoenix —instant rebirth from ashes— shows us that he is still in transition, i.e., Sisyphus is what he feels that he has been, the Phoenix represents what he hopes to be. With the help of "una dosis de hierba más fuerte que la ordinaria," (135) he will move from a transitional phase to a final transformation.

Shortly after taking the larger dosage of hashish, and still inside the dark "womb" of the café, the narrator is "reborn" as Julián, making ready the invading army. His plan: the army will invade and destroy "nuestros símbolos vetustos" (136). Finding their way around the country will be no problem, thanks to the "frondosos epígonos, monopolistas y banqueros de la recia prosa de hoy, podrás identificar y recorrer el paisaje de la fatal Península, inmortalizado gloriosamente en sus páginas" (140). Nor will the Spaniards themselves pose any problem to the invading army because "el garbanzo ha inmovilizado sus mentes" (144).

Julián's first meeting in this part with Alvaro occurs, strangely enough, in Tariq's mustache:

> bueno, pues ya te enteras : de tercer grado nada menos : chancro lingual, con ramificaciones en los huesos y los intestinos : incurable, chaval : sus íntimos dicen que se mordía los puños y se daba de cabeza contra las paredes : su triste final me inspiró la oda por la que

fui elegido miembro correspondiente de la Real Academia y que me valió además, un premio de la fundación Al Capone : sabes cuánto, nene?
no!
pues agarráte : medio millón de pesetejas! : lo que, aún después de la última devaluación, no es moco de pavo : y el prestigio y la popularidad : televisión, Nodo y toa la pesca! : y las chavalas así así : que se me comían vivo : casadas, solteras hasta vírgenes! : ná, que tuve que tomar reconstituyentes, no te digo más! : había sobre tó, una rubita, con unos pechines así, que no me dejaba a sol ni a sombra : encaprichá con mi menda una cosa mala : loca, loca de atar : si tenía que separarme un minuto de ella, deliraba : me besaba en la boca y me mordía : te lo juro, majo : que partía el alma : mira : aquí tengo su foto
el hombre echa mano a una sobada cartera de piel y saca de ella el retrato en color de una muchacha en minifalda y con blusa ceñida y leve que permite adivinar, al trasluz, la finura y esbeltez de sus senos
se la saqué yo mismo al pie de la turefél : dieciocho añines y, en la cama, una fiera : francesa ella, y eso sí : limpia y educá : si quiés medirle el aceite te la presento : casualmente, vive cerca de aquí : veinticinco dirhames por un rato, cincuenta toa la noche : vienes, macho?
no, no te decides y, en vista de ello, él te agarra de la manga e insiste con voz apremiante al tiempo que saca nuevas fotos de la cartera y las despliega ante ti en abanico (154-155)

In this extensive passage, Séneca is awarded the dubiously honorable "premio . . . Al Capone." Alvaro is first connected with the American "gangster" world and then made mockingly materialistic, "no es moco de pavo"; his language and speech patterns are not those of an "académico de la lengua," but of a common peasant, —<u>toa</u>, <u>tó</u>, <u>encaprichá</u>, and <u>quiés</u>—; the content of what he says progresses from lechery in speaking of the "rubita" to procuring, and in a totally obnoxious manner. Alvaro is, in short, no different from any Spanish degenerate, a considerable demythification

of his former mythic aura. The narrator's mental attack —through the creation of bias and distortion in relating anecdote— on Alvaro functions also as an attempt at demythifying his country in his reader's mind. After deforming Alvaro's image, the narrator imagines for him a violent death as the "perfecto caballero" falls from Tariq's mustache onto the floor covered with cigarette butts, where he is crushed under the heel of one of the café's patrons.

But like Mrs. Putifar, Alvaro is quickly resurrected in the narrator's mind. Julián, after reviewing "la definición y el decálogo del perfecto caballero cristiano" (158), concludes that he must meet an example of this rare breed: "apúrate Bulián : necesario será que conozcas a tan descomunal caballero" (158). Julián quickly finds "el domicilio del perfecto caballero cristiano," which is "macizo" and "recio" like the personality of its prime inhabitant. Alvaro-Séneca, knight and philosopher all in one, is there to greet him with his "gran mascarón, cara al viento . . . su armadura ósea, mezcla híbrida de mamífero guerrero medieval" (160).

Before initiating Alvaro's second destruction, Julián clandestinely observes "Isabel la Católica," Alvaro's daughter. She is Catholic, a mystic, "el mirar gracioso y honesto" (163), the female counterpart of Alvaro and, therefore, a synthesis of the traits of the "ideal" Spanish woman. Isabel —a parody of all that "Catholic" Spain

represents— dances about her room, methodically stripping off her clothing to the music of the Rolling Stones (164). Her ritual-like act is in preparation for indulgence in "mystic" self-flagellation. Once she is completely naked, the narrator enters the room and then penetrates her vagina —how or in what form he accomplishes this has drawn differing critical opinions.[10] In a bizarre return to the womb and simultaneous descent into hell, the narrator journeys up the vaginal passage of Isabel, who is unquestionably a symbol of Catholic Spain and emotively connected with the "cordón umbilical" seen in the novel's opening pages. The vaginal entrance is also occupied by the ever-present "Very Important Persons" (166), the group of American tourists with their multi-lingual guide, about to tour the national shrine. The guide explains that the vagina and womb are a prized monument, "gracia de nuestra adaptación a las exigencias turísticas del momento" (167). We see also "el espacioso parque de vehículos habilitado frente a la Caverna" as if the attraction were the Caves of Altamira instead of what it is. A curious repetition reminds us of the narrator's first entrance into the underground café:

> estás en el umbral del Misterio, en la boca de la infernal Caverna, en el melancólico vacío del, pues, formidable de la tierra bostezo que conduce al reino de las Sombras, del Sueño y de la Noche, ínclito Eneas súbitamente abandonado por la Sibila atravesando audazmente el himen penetrarás en los sombríos dominios de Plutón. . . (168)

We experience here virtually the same descent-penetration as in the café, but the narrator later adds that he is an "Orfeo sin lira tras las huellas de Eurídice . . . " (168). A poorly equipped and insecure hero, he traverses the womb and uterus, "la vasta y muerta extensión de la laguna Estigia" (169), facing enroute, as Odysseus, "la imagen delirante de la Discordia y su envenenada caballera" and a host of other mythological beasts including "un enorme perro guardián [que] ahuyenta con feroces ladridos las sombras exangües de quienes, en vida, intentaran violar el secreto del Antro" (169). The dog, Cerberus, is a present menace here, where in the café, we remember, the narrator was "sin Cerbero." Julián, after tossing a "panal de miel a la triple boca hambrienta y voraz" (170), continues his descent-penetration —his "violación"— until he reaches the ovaries, also well guarded.

After the narrator has penetrated all defenses, however, his action is surprising and almost unexplainable:

> vengativo Julián con las artes invulnerables de Bond fijarás la ofrenda en el umbral del sagrario en el instante preciso en que el grupo de turistas y el guía irrumpen detrás de ti . . . (171)

The narrator's "ofrenda" is not one of reverence, but of violation of Isabel's chastity. The vengeful, aggressive Julián does not, as one might expect, destroy the eggs (of Spain). It seems enough to have violated what was so well guarded and so sacred: Isabel's chastity. He has

corrupted the "sangre pura" with his seed. The passage ends with a long verbal harassment of Spain centered around the idea that "Coño" is the "emblema nacional del país de la coña" (172). His failure to act with destructive physical vengeance, i.e., murder, parallels his earlier failure to participate directly in Alvaro's death, and is certainly not the last time he fails to act directly and decisively when faced with the opportunity to stamp out his enemy.

Shifting back to Alvaro, the narrator prepares his second major act of vengeance against him. In the library Alvaro practices recitations of Spanish classics. His "máscara" grows to gigantic proportions as he recites; but, upon noticing the smashed insects on the pages, Alvaro is interrupted and overcome with horror and shock. The effect of the vandalism on Alvaro is physical: "su coraza se agrieta y algunas escamas caen" (178). He and his mask grow smaller, and smaller still as the insects come to life, regenerate, and reproduce. As he agonizes, Alvaro suffers "contracciones faciales dignas del mejor Frankenstein" (179). The insects attack the books like planes and "la desconfianza en sus propios valores le gana y se extiende como una gangrena" (180). The insects methodically destroy the books, "eating" sonnets, verse by verse. The narrator finally announces that "el perfecto caballero ha muerto" (182). The sacrilege performed by the insects is the ultimate cause of Alvaro's demise. Again, we note that Julián

has been a passive observer, perhaps a conspirator, in Alvaro's death.

Before again resurrecting and attacking Alvaro, Julián provides the reader with a thematically related interlude: the journey to "donde la capra [hispánica] se cría y el carpeto florece" (189) with the apparent ultimate intent to hunt down and destroy the pair. The capra and carpeto hide, "confiando en la ayuda del Señor" (198). But, in the fantasy, God hides behind a cloud, afraid to intervene. Once the pair has been located and cornered, Julián's men wait for the order to strike and yet we watch a familiar progression develop:

> los jinetes han desenvainado sus corvos alfanjes y aguardan tus órdenes agazapados, silentes, felinos . . . la pareja debe morir : sus cuerpos desgarrados lucirán como trofeos en lo alto de las picas : el alma a los luceros y el cuerpo a criar malvas : divorcio radical! : y ensillando de nuevo los corceles galoparás y galoparás, ligero y aerícola . . . y si el carpeto obtuso y la porfiada capra se cruzan contigo te abalanzarás a ellos y los acometerás con tu alfanje : a los luceros, sí, el alma a los luceros y el cuerpo, la carroña del buitre, a ras del suelo . . . (191-192)

Julián decides that the pair must die, but then gallops off swearing that if he ever finds them again, he will kill them both with his cutlass. He swears physical vengeance, but when the opportunity arises does not carry it out. It seems enough that he has cornered them, caused them to fear for their lives, and put their "Señor" to shame.

As the last of the novel's four parts begins, Alvaro,

resurrected and literally rejuvenated, has become "Alvarito," the protagonist of a modern folk tale, "Caperucito." Alvarito makes his way to his grandmother's house, as in the original story, but we note some major alterations: "Alvarito dale que dale hasta el chalé prefabricado de la superurbanización GUADARRAMA . . . INVERSION SEGURA : GRANDES FACILIDADES DE PAGO . . . " (208). The story continues more or less normally until we discover that the modern "wolf" is Julián, the narrator, who has transformed himself into a sadistic moor. Julián commits sodomy on the young boy and then cuts his throat, his most direct act of violence up to this point, but then quickly rejects the method:

> no
> no es así
> la muerte no basta
> su destrucción debe ir acompañada de las más sutiles torturas (210)

Julián prefers to torture Alvaro slowly. He considers first a torture similar to that given by the gods to Prometheus (211), which lasted for some time. His mind then imagines a serpent in pursuit of Alvaro; the snake eventually strangles the life from him (211). Julián imagines Alvaro as a small insect which is promptly devoured by a carnivorous plant (211). Then the narrator imagines one final death, inspired by a painting cited earlier in the novel:

> el joven Alvaro avanza por él con la cara encendida

y los ojos ardientes
no ve la sima
no ve el vacío
sólo ve al otro lado
la seductora y provocante figura de una lasciva mujer
la Muerte
junto a él
sonríe irónica y fría
lleva en la mano un reloj de arena y la arenilla está a punto de escurrir del todo
Alvaro pisa la tabla
avanza
avanza aún
y ya cae
ya se precipita
abajo le aguarda el abismo con las fauces abiertas
morirá
estamos seguros que morirá
entre atroces dolores
si Bond no intervendrá
nadie intervendrá para salvarle
tu odio irreductible hacia el pasado y el niño espurio que lo representa (212-213)

Alvaro succumbs to his erotic desires while Death looks on smiling ironically. In El Jarama, we remember, it is said that not even Tarzan could have saved Luci from the river; here, not even Bond, the modern "cinema" heroic ideal, intervenes to save Alvaro. The only force which does in the end save him from total destruction is the narrator's seeming unwillingness or incapacity to terminate his life once and for all. The narrator does mention that "estamos seguros que morirá," but never actually describes the event; he seems to draw his principal pleasure from torturing his foe.

The culmination of Julián's (the narrator's) mythic adventures involves the desecration of what traditional

Spain without question holds the most sacred: its religion, its churches, and the Virgin and Christ-child. The plan is simple: in the church, "polvos de hachich oportunamente mezclados con la harina durante un segundo de inadvertencia del alcólito provocan súbito ramazo de fiebre sexual" (231-232). The beatas present begin to hallucinate and to tear off their clothing while Julián's men burst in, plundering and raping, "clavan los venenosos aguijones" (232). Julián spots the statue of the Virgin and "en sus brazos, el Nene, con el pelo rubio en tirabuzones conforme a la moda de Shirley Temple de los años treinta . . . " (237). Julián goes to work: "trepas al pie de la estatua y, pausadamente, comienzas a despojarla de sus joyas y adornos" (232). Julián first strips the Virgin of her earrings. At the beginning, she protests because, she says, she had her ears pierced as a child. Julián pulls them off nonetheless and she endures the pain "con dignidad" (233). Julián then begins to work on the emerald rings around the Christ-child's fingers. He finds His fingers too large and, ignoring the Virgin's suggestion that he try "jabón o vaselina" (233), he cuts the fingers off with a pair of scissors. By bringing both statues to life, the narrator gains greater pleasure in inflicting severe pain on them. He lashes out at the two symbols of Catholic Spain, but does not destroy them completely, even though he has plenty of opportunity. Shortly after finishing his work, Julián watches the

ceiling of the church collapse on "los racimos humanos que, entre la sangre, el sudor y el semen, fornican y jadean" (233). Julián has desecrated and inflicted severe pain on the Virgin and Child, but his act of demythification is incomplete, vengeance is fulfilled only as a result of a swift mental transformation.

As the narrator returns to reality and to his apartment, he —and the reader— knows that all he has experienced has been a fantasy, that his vengeance has been mental, that he has undergone a mental odyssey; in no way has Spain been altered, neither spiritually nor morally nor physically. His closing words tell us that "mañana será otro día, la invasión recomenzará" (240). What he has undergone has been, in his earlier words, not a powerful and decisive invasion, i.e., "traición súbita," but an ineffective and often repeated ritual meditation, i.e., "traición meditada," a paradox explained only by the narrator's hashish-generated self-transformation into the legendary "Conde don Julián."

Reivindicación del Conde don Julián represents as much an attempt at the destruction of the myths of modern Spain as the fragmented narration of an individual who tries, in vain, to reject the powerful effect of those myths. Stepping back from the novel, we can explain with the drug's effects other apparent paradoxes in the novel, but we can

also see that the work is a carefully structured, almost symmetrical experience. The number of pages contained in each section forms a close symmetrical balance: Part I - 74 pages; Part II - 36 pages; Part III - 70 pages; Part IV - 36 pages. In part one we see the fragmented individual, in part two, we see his attempts at destroying what he considers a false mythology, his own; in the first half of the novel, the narrator is generally passive, he is an observer; in the second half, he is much more active and aggressive. In the first half, we experience the narrator's reactions to and transformations of external reality; in the second, we experience how his mind spontaneously creates scenes which verbally devastate Spain. In the first half, as himself, he depends on Classical Mythology to explain the irrational elements of the world around him; in the second, as Julián, he attempts to ridicule and demythify the empty mythology which is —much to his distaste— so much a part of him. In the first half, he is not fully under the influence of drugs, he aggrandizes and mythifies common objects and what otherwise has no meaning; in the second half, he is stronger; under the influence of hashish, he mercilessly attacks established socio-cultural myths. The first half is essentially an odyssey in space, the second an odyssey in the mind; both form a modern and very Spanish odyssey as the hero confronts the gods of Spanish history and present-day society. The narrator passes from

fragmentation to a unified spirit and then back to fragmentation. At the novel's end, he sees clearly that his vengeance and unification have been only temporary; the "costa enemiga" is still where it was, as it was, and he has returned to his former self. The use of archetypal patterns, while part of his effort to universalize his experience, ends only in frustration and a seeming inability to "rehusar la identidad, comenzar a cero" (135).

There are two "hells" and at the same time two "wombs" for the narrator, a considerable modification of a basic archetypal process. Spain is the first "womb-hell" and the café (with hashish) is the second. While Spain is sunbaked and scorched, "reino inorgánico quemado por el fuego del estiaje . . . " (12), the café is dark, cool, and comfortable. In Spain, the narrator is weak, in the café he is strong. Spain, nevertheless, has a clear advantage over the narrator: it is a physical and spiritual reality while the hashish provided him only intangible fantasy, dreams from which he is always abruptly awakened.

One of the novel's primary tensions is between reality and desire. This duality furnishes us two possible interpretations of his consistent failure to act and decisively wipe out all aspects of his mother country (if only in dreams). The first interpretation focuses on the area of his desires: the narrator delights in torturing and ridiculing sacred aspects of his country's culture, even if only for a moment,

"por el simple, y suficiente placer de la traición" (134); in this sense, his daily ritual is a source of meaning and fulfillment. The second interpretation seems more satisfactory: reality is always victorious over him, eventually. His attachment to his mother country is as real at the novel's end as it is at the beginning. As in *Tiempo de silencio*, Spanish society has crushed the newly born hero, preventing him from bestowing benefits on his people and denying him an authenticity of being. Against such odds, he is destructively impotent, as seen in his frustration when he finds language completely lacking. As in *Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes*, the narrator (like Orestes) learns that vengeance is futile; like Egisto, however, his ritual dramatization of the act of vengeance constitutes his reason for being. The novel's ultimate message is found in technique: as the narrator's mind can fragment myth, so can a powerful myth shape and fragment his mind, to such an extent that he can never totally destroy —short of destroying himself— that mythology which has become so much a part of his spiritual being.

The presence of myth, legend, superstition, and magic in *Volverás a Región* plays a fundamental role in the creation of the work's total experience. In Benet's novel, myth and myth-related concepts —legend, folklore, and magic— reflect and help explain the irrational aspects of modern

Spanish existence. The absence of a clearly defined mythic pattern in Volverás a Región, such as we saw in the earlier novels, reflects modern Spain's greatest tragedy: the lack of a functioning and effective mythological system and a sense of identity with cultural and historical roots.

By contrast, Reivindicación del Conde don Julián showed that Spain has clung to a long series of unchanging and yet damaging myths which have the effect of fragmenting the individual and not unifying him in the spiritual solidarity that myth so often provides. Volerás a Región, on the other hand, portrays Spain as a mythless society, one which has completely broken with its cultural past. The people of the society which Benet's novel describes are aware that their lives are being controlled by powerful forces but they do not begin to recognize the patterns inherent in those forces.[11]

Volverás a Región consists of four parts: the first provides a general introduction to Región and its hostile geography, fragments of the region's war-torn past, and the slim thread of anecdote contained in the novel. The second, third, and fourth parts consist of a long conversation between a local doctor and a woman with whom he once had an amorous affair. The conversation quickly becomes a complex exposition of the past life of each, evolving in a series of alternating monologues. Each person touches on his

childhood, on the effect of the Civil War on his life, and on his relationship with the other.

As in El Jarama, the reader of Volverás a Región experiences a difference between myth contained in narration and myth found in dialogue. The narration in part one constitutes the bulk of the novel's "myth," as the narrator progresses from subjective personifications of nature to a primitive mythification of Región —a microcosm of modern Spain— and of the irrational forces which control the lives of its residents.[12] The dialogue, primarily in parts two, three, and four, however, reveals that the characters lead fragmented, chaotic lives and, while they perceive the effect of the intervening forces, they endure a "mythless" existence. The residents of Región only partially understand themselves and their own behavior, their past and their present, and their myths and realities. The woman states near the novel's end that "hay algo en nuestra conducta que todavía no obedece a la razón y que, en secreto, confía en el poder de la magia."[13] Unlike the obtuse characters of El Jarama, then, the principal characters of Volverás a Región recognize the existence of irrational or mystic forces which control their lives and destinies, but, like those of the former novel, lack a functioning mythological system which might identify and explain those forces. The mythological system, we gradually feel as the novel progresses, was lost and destroyed with the brutality of the

Civil War. While part one concentrates more on the presentation of Región and its mythic or mystic atmosphere, the remaining parts of the novel focus on the fragmenting effect of geography, history, society, human relationships, and culture on the individual. My focus here will be limited to showing how myth, in this novel, has been fragmented, distorted, and disintegrated in Región. To accomplish this, I shall concentrate my analysis on four elements: a ritual sacrifice as a part of a mythic vision of Región and its "gods"; the "anciano guardián," whose supernatural influence in the region shapes individual destinies; a pattern resembling that of Homer's Iliad; and a magic wheel which seems to collaborate with fate, and which the people passively allow to determine their existence. All four of these elements contribute to the creation of a mythic experience in Volverás a Región, but we must remember that these and all mythic patterns in the novel have for the people of Región faded across time and have lost their meaning; they are four examples of Región's rupture with its cultural past.

In part one, the narrator explains that Región is walled off and divided by its rivers: to the outside they are a "muralla inexpugnable a la curiosidad ribereña" (8) and inside they divide the land, making internal communication difficult if not impossible during most of the year. In his descriptions of the rivers, the narrator initially only hints at a subjective personification; however, his

transformation, as in El Jarama, is a part of a larger scheme which builds to the first important mythic element seen in the novel: the "gods" and a primitive ritual sacrifice. One river "se divide en una serie de pequeños brazos y venas de agua que corren en todas direcciones" (8). The reader sees the personification as vivid, but neither unusual or mythic. Both "brazos" and "venas" are terms commonly used in describing the form and shape of a river as seen from a considerable height. Later in the introduction, however, the narrator confers a more complex personality on the rivers: the Torce, a rogue, and "hacia poniente el Formigoso que, en comparación con su gemelo, observa desde su nacimiento una recta, disciplinada y ejemplar conducta para, sin necesidad de maestros, hacerse mayor de edad según el modelo establecido por sus padres y recipendarios" (40). Región is divided and controlled therefore by two very different rivers whose "personalities" conflict. While the Formigoso is "disciplinada," it seems inflexible and defiant to abrupt change; the Torce, at the other extreme, is equally defiant and totally unreliable.

In spite of the two great rivers, the region is dry and the vegetation is "rala y raquítica" (8), emphasizing that the extremes represented by the rivers are completely counter-productive and do not benefit life of any kind. The winds, too, take their toll: " . . . albares de formas atormentadas por los fuertes ventones de marzo" (8),

implying an intentional torture on the part of the wind. Later, the wind becomes intensified as a special kind of Boreas, a force which like the rivers no one in Región understands or one which has lost its mythic meaning for them: "Nadie es capaz de saber por dónde soplará, qué es lo que va a mover porque no parece obedecer más que a los designios destructivos de un Boreas enemigo que sabe introducirse por las rendijas, soplar un portillo . . . " (45). The personification achieves the effect of creating an omnipresent and menacing force from which no person in Región can escape, but the description, as that of the rivers, comes from the narrator and not from any of the book's characters. This narrator, like the one in <u>El Jarama</u>, understands a great deal more about the mythic forces than do the characters; unlike the narrator in <u>El Jarama</u>, however, he does not seem to understand completely what he describes.

The animation and personification of nature progresses to the creation of a natural deity, one which, as in Sánchez Ferlosio's novel, demands an annual ritual sacrifice:

> Es un lugar tan solitario que nadie . . . habla de él aun cuando saben que raro es el año que el monte no cobra su tributo humano: ese excéntrico extranjero que llega a Región con un coche atestado de bultos . . . [que] va a toparse con esa tumba recién abierta por el anciano guardián, que aún conserva el aroma de la tierra oleada y el fondo encharcado de agua. (9)

Like the Jarama river and the <u>madrileños</u>, the "monte" here requires an annual tribute of an unsuspecting stranger. An

important element which distinguishes the "monte" from the river is the presence of an "anciano guardián" who, with uncanny foresight of fate, collaborates with death and the "monte" by digging the grave of the stranger in advance of his arrival. The "anciano guardián" or "Numa" as he is called, is one of the principal forces which has a substantial impact on the lives of the people of Región.

The narrator has established in the reader's mind the idea of myth and ritual sacrifice in this introduction to Región. When he turns to a description of the alienated residents of Región and to further details about Numa, we begin to see more clearly how the people have forgotten the meaning of their myths and rituals:

> En Región apenas se habla de Mantua ni de su extraño guardián . . . esas pocas noches . . . en que unos cuantos supervivientes de la comarca (menos de treinta vecinos que no se hablan ni se saludan y que a duras penas se recuerdan, reunidos por un instinto común de supervivencia, exagerado por la soledad, o por un viejo ritual cuyo significado se ha perdido y en el que se representan los misterios de su predestinación) se congregan allí para escuchar el eco de unos disparos que, no se afirma pero se cree, proceden de Mantua. Lo cierto es que nadie se atreve a negar la existencia del hombre, al que nadie ha visto pero al que nadie tampoco ha podido llegar a ver y cuya imagen parece presidir y proteger los días de decadencia de esa comarca abandonada y arruinada: un anciano guarda, astuto y cruel, cubierto de lanas crudas como un pastor tártaro y calzado con abarcas de cuero, dotado del don de la ubicuidad dentro de los límites de la propiedad que recorre día y noche con los ojos cerrados. (11)

Although well aware of Numa's existence, the people of Región do not speak of it, not even to warn strangers of his

presence and the menace of the landscape. All of the inhabitants are joined together on this rare occasion not by reason or rational thinking, but by a force which they do not understand: an "instinto común," one which appeals more to a collective unconscious than to an individual one. The narrator speculates further that their unusual congregation may be due to an old and forgotten ritual, one destroyed by war and time, but which misteriously holds the key to their collective fates. It is contradictory to state that no one has seen Numa and then to proceed to describe him, although this is perfectly within the realm of the mythic imagination, i.e., any of the Greek gods. As we see here, Numa is allied with fate as well as with death; he is an omnipresent force which protects the decadence and ruin of the valley. The narrator, in contrast with the inhabitants, seems to understand the cause and effect relationship between Numa and the region. As a result of this discrepancy in understanding, the reader senses that the inhabitants have lost contact with their mythic roots. A large part of our experience in the novel rests on a constant contrast between what the narrator describes and what the characters perceive and understand. While the former attempts to give some sort of explanation, though mythic and not scientific, the latter merely react instinctively.

As the novel progresses, so increases the complexity of the second major mythic element: Numa. In the next

point where he appears in the narration, he is connected with the wind:

> . . . sopló un aire caliente como el aliento senil de aquel viejo y lanudo Numa, armado de una carabina, que en lo sucesivo guardará el bosque, velando noche y día por toda la extensión de la finca, disparando con infalible puntería cada vez que unos pasos en la hojarasca o los suspiros de un alma cansada, turben la tranquilidad del lugar. (12)

Like the wind, i.e., "un Boreas," Numa is ubiquitous and yet invisible. Up to this point, Numa has been described as a collaborator with fate and death. What he actually "guards" seems, in this passage, to be more clearly defined. As well as participating in the exclusion and destruction of foreigners who invade Región, he forbids change, be it of a spiritual or physical nature. Even weariness is his target; nothing may move or change. Numa is portrayed above as a sort of inverse Cupid who knows the hearts and passions of all of Región and who fires his bullet into those hearts with unfailing accuracy to silence the passion and not to kindle it. The doctor, much later in the novel, tries to speculate on a rational explanation of Numa, based on what he has heard over the years. None of his speculations prove satisfactory:

> Su historia —o su leyenda— es múltiple y contradictoria; se asegura por un lado que se trata de un superviviente carlista . . . . Se afirma también que no se trata sino de un militar que todos hemos conocido . . . . (251)

The doctor is much less certain of Numa's identity than is

the narrator. While the doctor postulates several rational (but unsatisfactory) explanations for Numa, the narrator always confirms his irrational, mythic nature.

The last half of part one shifts the narrative focus to an evocation of Región's involvement in the Spanish Civil War, constituting the third lost and forgotten mythic element: a faded reflection of Homer's Iliad. The situation which most resembles the Greek work is the description of the fall of Región in the Civil War: We first remember that Región is surrounded by a "muralla inexpugnable" (8). General Gamallo captures Región, but only after others have failed (53). Gamallo entered Región with but one thought in mind, to search for a "donjuan de provincias" (66) who had stolen his wife from him. The assault on Región is for the reader interminable and colorless. The battles, consisting of a number of small skirmishes, are, almost to the end, indecisive: each side lacks unity and military coordination because of internal conflict. The invading army is eventually victorious and enters the region. The Iliad pattern is implicit, but, in the reader's experience, it is another case which shows that the people of Región have forgotten their own mythology and Classical Mythology as well; they instinctively act out ancient patterns without recognizing or understanding them.

In part one, then, we see a total picture of Región and a partial glimpse of some of its inhabitants. The

narrator mythifies geography and geology, Numa, and Región's history, but, at the same time, contrasts his mythic view with the mythless society which inhabits the region, a fragmented, alienated society which has lost touch with its past. In subsequent parts, we are enabled to see the concrete effect of Región's mythic forces on its residents and their reaction to those forces.

In part two, the woman arrives at the doctor's house and the pair begins to converse. In the course of one of the doctor's long monologues, he talks about his father and of his father's only passion, "la rueda," (124) which is the fourth mythic element I shall study here. The doctor explains that his father often consulted the wheel to learn what was happening in another place to someone he knew, and occasionally to foresee the future. The doctor adds that the wheel was the first to inform him of his father's death, and also predicted his own —the doctor's— death and destiny, a verdict of fate which he placidly accepts:

> Recuerdo que una tarde en que mi padre estaba en guisa de bromear consultó a la rueda sobre mi destino y le respondió: que mis días acabarían en Región, de manera bastante violenta, en la década del 60 y en brazos de mujer; y ésa es una razón —ya no a lo menos importante— que me ha inducido a retirarme aquí a esperar la consumación de mi destino al cual ni me opongo ni me evado. (126)

The doctor, while not questioning his fate, confirms the validity of the wheel's prediction by not fighting it. The subsequent suggestion that the woman is the same as in the

prediction establishes an immediate narrative tension. We feel that, since the woman is present, since she arrived amid omens and signs (13-14), we may imminently witness the doctor's death.

At the novel's end, however, the woman leaves the doctor's house, a deception of the prophecy, and leaves the reader as uncertain about the doctor's fate as the doctor himself. The only "myth" on which the doctor rests his belief has failed, at least for the moment. The failure of fulfillment may be interpreted in at least two ways: that the very few myths that the people do hold sacred are false and the people cannot seem to recognize that falseness, or that the myth is valid and the doctor does not fully understand the wheel's message to him. While believing in the wheel, the doctor is skeptical about Numa's mythic qualities. The narrator, on the other hand, has consistently reaffirmed Numa as myth, and apparently negates the wheel's prediction at the end. The night of the woman's departure, the house is filled with "un sollozo sostenido" (315). We remember that Numa always fires at "los suspiros de un alma cansada" which "turben la tranquilidad del lugar" (12).[14] Morning finally arrives and "con las luces del día, entre los ladridos de un perro solitario, el eco de un disparo lejano vino a reestablecer el silencio habitual del lugar" (315). The scene returns to silence as Numa's shot rings out victoriously, unexplainably reestablishing the peace

and "silencio habitual" of the region. Numa's victory confirms the narrator's persistent judgment of Numa's mythic power and rebukes the doctor's conjectures about him as well as casting a shadow of doubt on the validity of the wheel's prediction.

In mentioning the name of one of Región's other rivers, the narrator summarizes a large part of the novel's experience: "Acatón," the narrator explains, "nombre grecorromano que aún parece pedir esa mitología con que un pueblo pobre en inventiva no ha sabido adornarle" (209). Benet sees the people of Región as having no awareness of their ancient mythic roots and even the mythic name has lost its meaning to the people; to them, a people lacking in "inventiva," it is just another name. Classical Mythology, with very few exceptions, however, is rarely used in the novel, an absence which supports my basic thesis. Although some patterns and allusions may be identified, the reality and meaning are lost or forgotten by the inhabitants of Región, who are shaped by forces that they neither understand nor attempt to understand.

As readers, we experience much of what the book's characters experience: doubt and unexplained superstition. The narrator provides us with more details about myth and reality than do the inhabitants, although he apparently does not understand everything from a rational point of

view. Notwithstanding the benefit of his information and insights, we are still subjected, like the people of Región, to omnipresent entities and forces which we do not rationally comprehend. Myth is, in our experience, always implied but never explained. It is as vague, elusive, and nebulous an element as anecdote and character. Salvador Clotas has made an observation about Benet's second novel which readily applies to Volverás a Región. Una meditación (1970), according to Clotas, is a novel which "reduce la historia a un flúido cóntinuo sin contornos en el que los hechos y los personajes surgen, apenas se perfilan, se desdibujan para caer en la bruma de lo recordado."[15]

Myth, in spite of its elusiveness, performs specific functions in the novel. The omnipresence of Numa creates a circular structure which begins and ends in a silence controlled by the distant echo of his shots, suggesting the inevitable victory of silence, solitude, and the forces of fate and death which he represents. Numa, along with the mysterious "rueda," forms a powerful narrative tension which leads the reader on; but the tension is never completely resolved. Characterization is obviously affected by myth in the novel, especially considering the people of Región as abúlicos to either myth or reality. Explicative myth and primitive rituals vitalize and intensify the novel's style, as they always seem to in novels dealing with the primitive barbarism of the Spanish Civil War. In its

totality, Volverás a Región is a unique mythic vision of a changeless and mythless society, in short, of Post-Civil War Spain and of the present-day Spaniard, lost and apathetic in a world he does not begin to understand.

In terms of novelistic technique, Volverás a Región offers many points of comparison and contrast with Reivindicación del Conde don Julián. The structure of each novel is circular, beginning and ending with the suggestion of the inevitable victory of silence, fate, and oppression. Both novels involve ineffective and meaningless rituals which respond to an intuitive need of the people for order and continuity; both see Spain (history, geography, myths, culture) as not conducive to social unity. Stylistically, each novel is chaotic, and each personifies the forces which tyrannize its respective characters.

The greatest difference in the two novels lies in the relationship of character to myth. Goytisolo's protagonist is aware of and obsessed by the old gods of Spain and viciously attacks them; he is so obsessed by them, however, that he is rendered impotent. Benet presents a different vision of contemporary Spanish existence: abulia, derived from unawareness of racial myth and at the same time from some sort of natural flaw, i.e., the two rivers, their natures in perpetual tension. Spanish mythology and modern Spanish existence, according to each author, however, are

seen as forces which crush the individual, which fragment him, confuse him, and dehumanize him, denying him an authentic existence and, ultimately, the potential for spiritual and intellectual growth.

NOTES

[1]José Ortega, Juan Goytisolo: Alienación y agresión en 'Señas de identidad' y 'Reivindicación del Conde don Julián.' (New York: Eliseo Torres and Sons, 1972), p. 80.

[2]Santos Sanz Villanueva, Tendencias de la novela española actual (1950-1970). (Madrid: Cuadernos para el diálogo, 1972), p. 165.

[3]Kessel Schwartz, "Juan Goytisolo, Cultural Constraints and the Historical Vindication of Count Julian," Hispania, 54, #4 (December, 1971), 960-966 (pp. 960 and 965 respectively).

[4]Ramón Buckley, Problemas formales de la novela española contemporánea. (Barcelona: Península, 1968), p. 163.

[5]Manuel Durán, "El lenguaje de Juan Goytisolo," Cuadernos americanos, CLXXIII (nov.-dic., 1970), 167-179 (171).

[6]Héctor Romero, "Los mitos de la España sagrada en Reivindicación del Conde don Julián," Journal of Spanish Studies: Twentieth Century, Vol. 1, #3 (Winter, 1973), 169-185 (169 and 170 respectively). Other valuable insights on the novel and Goytisolo may be found in any of the entries in my bibliography (See Juan Goytisolo, p. 251), but particularly the special issue of Norte, Año XIII, #4-6 (jul.-dic., 1972).

[7]Juan Goytisolo, Reivindicación del Conde don Julián, Second Edition. (Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1973), p. 158.

Further references to this text will be found in parentheses.

[8]Romero, p. 173.

[9]For more on the "James Bond" myth, see Raphael Patai, Myth and Modern Man (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 291; and Richard C. Carpenter, "007 and the Myth of the Hero," in Journal of Popular Culture, I, #2 (Fall, 1967), 80-85.

[10]Romero believes that "ella permite que el personaje explore su vagina . . . ", p. 171. Schwartz states that "he himself becomes a sexual organ as he takes a vaginal journey and is swallowed by the womb," p. 961. I disagree with both. It is essential that we feel that Isabel, Catholic Spain, is being violated, raped. Schwartz's interpretation implies physical transformation and not mental fantasy based on the sexual act. Moreover, as a sexual organ, he would not be likely to be able to reach the ovaries, which he does.

[11]For other perspectives on the novel, see the studies cited directly in subsequent notes as well as the following: José Corrales Egea, La novela española actual (Madrid: Cuadernos para el diálogo, 1971), p. 209; Edenia Guillermo and Juana Amelia Hernández, La novelística española de los 60 (New York: Torres and Sons, 1970), p. 129; José Batilló, "Volverás a Región," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 284 (feb., 1974), 229-258; Antonio Núñez, "Encuentro con Juan

Benet," Insula, #269 (abril, 1969), 4; Alberto Oliant, "Viaje a Región," Revista de Occidente, 27 (1969), 224-234; José Ortega, "Estudios sobre la obra de Benet," Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos, 284 (feb., 1974), 229-258, and Ensayos de la novela española moderna (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1974); Darío Villanueva, "La novela de Juan Benet," Camp de L'Arpa, No. 8 (nov., 1973), 9-16; Juan Benet, "La violencia de la posguerra," Revista de Occidente, No. 81 (dic., 1969), and La inspiración y el estilo. (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966).

[12]For more on Región as Spain, see Ricardo Gullón, "Una región laberíntica que bien pudiera llamarse España," Insula, #319 (jun., 1973), pp. 3 and 10. Gonzalo Sobejano, states that Región is as much a mythic region as Faulkner's Yawknapatawpa County, Matute's Artámila, and García Márquez' Macondo; see Novela española de nuestro tiempo (Madrid: Prensa española, 1970), pp. 401-402. In this chapter, some of my ideas about myth have been strongly influenced by Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in Mythologies (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), pp. 109-159. Barthes conceives myth not as eternal archetype, as does Jung, but as related to a specific culture and "historical foundation," more the idea of a national unconscious than a universally collective one; see pp. 109-110. I am also indebted to an unpublished essay by Raymond L. Williams of the University of Kansas. Williams' essay isolates and explains three

important elements in the novel: the ontological, the national, and the mythic.

[13]Text: Juan Benet, Volverás a Región (Barcelona: Destino, 1974), p. 301. Further references to this text will be found in parentheses.

[14]Ortega's interpretation of the end, in fact of the entire novel, differs greatly from my own. Ortega, Ensayos, p. 152, believes that the doctor dies in the end. While this exists as a possibility, it is never explicitly stated. In any case, Ortega's reading does not conflict with the one expressed here, as ambiguity is the key to the novel's experience and not absolute fact, thus, giving way to many and varied interpretations.

[15]Salvador Clotas, with Pere Gimferrer, 30 años de literatura en España (Barcelona: Karrós, 1971), p. 52.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of these six Post-Civil War Spanish Novels reveals a trajectory heretofore unrecognized by current criticism. The trajectory consists of two processes: one which parallels the development of Greek Classical Mythology, from explicative myth to epic myth to classical literary myth, and then turns to socio-cultural mythology; and another which reveals a gradual decay, fragmentation, and distintegration of mythic patterns and processes. In El Jarama we see an orderly sequence in an organized rite. The breakdown begins with Primera memoria and arrives at its culmination in Benet's Volverás a Región and Goytisolo's Reivindicación del Conde don Julián. The fragmentation itself is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it is a reflection of a society whose mythology is in the process of disintegration; on the other, the distortion of archetypal patterns is a fierce attack on the system which that society embodies.

An overview of myth and archetype in the New Spanish Novel, taking into account changing novelistic techniques, consists of the following scheme: El Jarama and Primera memoria reflect a "primitive" stage, in terms of mythic development. "Gods" and primitive rituals permeate style and structure, universalizing what might otherwise be seriously limited experiences. The internal changes in this

period are seen in the modification of the archetypal rite of initiation and in the shift from "camera" effects of neo-realism (of course combined with subjective transformations) to a totally subjective narration from the first-person point of view. The emphasis in this period is on the stylistic creation of collaborating deities, on the use of primitive rites as structural bases, and on the view of modern man as still participating actively in those ancient rituals, on an unconscious or conscious level.

The idea of rite of initiation continues with Tiempo de silencio (1962), but the focus is on the initiation of the modern hero. This novel (like Cunqueiro's) remakes and revitalizes an ancient myth, giving it a new and vibrant meaning for the modern Spaniard and modern man. In the process of remaking the old myths, both Tiempo de silencio and Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes modify their models: Tiempo de silencio takes its patterns in part from the Odyssey and in part from several archetypes relating to the passage of the hero, but by distorting the patterns' traditionally positive ending, the novel shows us how Spanish society literally crushes all possible heroes. There is little doubt about the model for Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes; Cunqueiro follows the ancient myth only schematically, however, as he too reshapes the myth for a modern application: vengeance is futile, unjustified, and often is carried out without a full understanding of circumstance,

an implicit message for the Post-Civil War Spaniard. From the first-person point of view of Matute's Primera memoria, Martín Santos shifts to the third-person omniscient in Tiempo de silencio, although a predominantly subjective vision of reality (essential to mythical thought) continues to gain importance in the latter novel. The omniscient narrator of Tiempo de silencio basically limits himself to ironic social criticism and the innermost thoughts of the protagonists are generally presented directly, just as in a first-person narration. Likewise in Cunqueiro's novel, third-person interiorization, which approaches first-person subjective narration, is the key to our understanding of each character's internal conflict. Humor is important to both of these novels: Martín Santos' satire quickly turns to bitter sarcasm and pessimism while Cunqueiro's humor often progresses from absurdity to tragicomedy to pathos. Myth in this stage is much more explicit: Tiempo de silencio reflects the Odyssey, the epic myth stage which followed the explicative in ancient Greece; and Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes deals with the Oresteian myth. Each of these novels shows a greater interest in the effect of the forces of fate on human existence.

The idea of how myth affects our existence is seen to a greater degree in the next group of novels. In the last two works studied, Volverás a Región and Reivindicación del Conde don Julián, we see a continuation of the inward

process begun in Tiempo de silencio. Goytisolo's novel reflects a complete interiorization into the mind of its protagonist. We see the passage of the hero, allusions to Classical Mythology, an odyssey, and attacks on Spanish socio-cultural myths, but all take place not in any type of physical space (as in Tiempo de silencio), but rather in the mind of the narrator. Because all of his power is hallucinatory, he and Spain remain unchanged by his efforts; vengeance is futile as in Un hombre que se parecía a Orestes, and the narrator is yet another "hero" whom Spanish society has crushed. In Volverás a Región, we see another dimension of this process: Spain is a "mythless" society completely unaware of its mythic roots, although the people do respond blindly to mythic forces in Región. Novelistic technique undergoes another major change in these two novels: from a stable although pessimistic view of man, myth, and society in the previous novels, to a fragmented view expressed in chaotic, labyrinthine sentence and narrative structures. Thus, as our experience in the novel begins to fragment, as the traditional novel form begins to disintegrate, so does the mythic pattern contained in each work. While myth and archetype are a part of the narrator's fragmented dreams and desires in Reivindicación del Conde don Julián, they are blurred, forgotten, and lost in Volverás a Región.

In summary, there are three definitely observable stages of myth and of novelistic techniques: the first

stage is a serious vision of man and myth in which the narrator only expresses his attitude indirectly by means of structure and description. In the second, we see the emergence of an ironic narrator, humor, and the use of Classical Mythology. In the third stage, we observe the novel of free-association which is dictated by a semi-conscious or unconscious level of human psyche and fragmented socio-cultural myth.

While this trajectory is exemplified in the novels studied, myth and archetype are not found exclusively in those works. I chose to start with El Jarama because it represents both the culmination of the neo-realistic trend of the '50s and the beginning of the subjective techniques of the '60s and '70s. At the beginning of this century, Galdós became interested in mythic patterns with his novel El caballero encantado (1909). Pérez de Ayala, in his novel Prometeo (1916 —much like Tiempo de silencio in theme) recounts one man's failure in his attempt at becoming a modern mythical hero. As for other novels which fit into the 1956-1970 trajectory: Cunqueiro's novel, Las mocedades de Ulises (1960), reflects the interest in epic myth and in the Odyssey found in the '60s. Señas de identidad (1966), in the same period, may be seen as an odyssey into the past with an interest in an epic structure of wandering and confrontation. Una meditación (1970), by Juan Benet, fits into the scheme of interiorization into the human mind of

the '70s, but more than concentrating on the mythic aspects of existence in Región, it reflects one man's quest into the past for an explanation of his present anguish. The novels of Miguel Delibes in the period present a special problem: his two major novels between 1956 and 1970 are Cinco horas con Mario (1966) and Parábola del náufrago (1969). The first is an attempt at portraying the modern Spanish social myth, in the sense that he presents a composite vision of the spirit of modern Spain from the liberal atheist to the Catholic conservative, although myth is related to thematic content and not to novelistic technique. The second, a much less successful attempt at communicating the modern Spanish experience, is a symbolic parable with a focus of the dictator and the animalized and enslaved modern Spaniard. Among the novels published after 1970 which reflect some interest in myth and archetype I would include Cunqueiro's latest El año del cometa (1972), Torrente Ballester's La saga/fuga de J.D. (1972), and José Antonio García Blázquez' El rito (Nadal 1973, pub. 1974).

The presence of a mythic trend as I have explained it adds a new dimension to well-established views of the Spanish Post-Civil War Novel. Considering Sobejano's scheme of the "novela existencial" and the "novela social," we can add that all of the novels studied use myth to reinforce their social protest and to portray modern man's existential crisis. But even this seems inadequate: it is

not enough to say that "myth" is simply another "tendency," if by doing so we refer to thematic content. This study has attempted to show, by means of a careful examination of the relationship between thematic content and novelistic technique, that these novels rely on myth and archetype to combine social and existential themes into a universal statement on modern man.

The disintegration of the mythic process reflects a loss of values and spiritual peace brought on by the chaos of the Civil War; but the continued use of myth as novelistic technique, even in a fragmented form, shows us that the new novelist is actively engaged in a search, a quest for authentic values, some of which will be found by looking into the past, others of which will be created by ignoring the past and looking only to the future. It is a quest which, I suspect, did not end in 1970 and will continue until the situation in Spain (and in the world in general) has changed dramatically.

As we have seen here, the type of myth varies according to the type of novel which uses it, and, more importantly, each novelist, having selected the type of myth he wishes to use, will twist, distort, transform, and modify that myth according to his own view of existence. A flexible approach to myth in the New Spanish Novel has ultimately shown, I believe, that this new novel is concerned not only with universalizing a particular experience (the

Spanish), but also with an original treatment of the traditional mythic art forms; the new narrative takes a fresh approach to style and structure as it portrays the modern Spanish experience in the general context of human existence in the Twentieth Century.

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