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# The Short Stories Of Agustín Yáñez

In this day of the "Nueva Novela" in Spanish America which finds its authors the object of many interviews and much publicity, their works frequently translated and often under consideration for film versions, it is little wonder that the short story has fallen victim of serious neglect. And yet the short story can lay claim to some of the most important Latin American writers of our century: Quiroga, Borges, Arreola, Cortázar, to name just a few.

In Mexico the short genre is especially rich both quantitatively and qualitatively. And until the resurgence of the novel in the last three decades, it was *the* outstanding genre in Mexico, sharing that distinction with poetry during certain periods. The short story is one facet of narrative cultivated by almost all Mexican writers—often surfacing in unexpected quarters: López Velarde, Usigli, Vasconcelos, the painter Dr. Atl. At the same time Mexicans from all walks of life have dabbled in the genre thus adding a richness and dimension not common in other countries.<sup>1</sup>

Any attempt to study the Mexican short story must of necessity be undertaken by the rather imprecise method of selecting samples. To illustrate, here are some statistics taken from a typical year, 1967. In that year in Mexico there were published: twenty-eight novels, one novelette, eight books of memoirs and seventeen volumes of short stories.<sup>2</sup> This would average out to maybe 170 collections of short stories a decade, at perhaps ten to twelve stories per volume (probably a low figure), some 1,700 to 2,000 stories a decade and at least another couple of hundred published separately in magazines and Sunday newspaper supplements which never find their way into a book. Out of these thousands and thousands of short stories the critic is hard pressed to sort them out and read even a minority of them, let alone discover that gem which will become the next "El guardagujas" or "¡Diles que no me maten!"

Today we are honoring one of Mexico's great prose fiction writers. Practically everyone in this room has read *Al filo del agua* and maybe other novels. Characters such as Don Dionisio, Marta and María, Damián, Padre Reyes and Luis Gonzaga are almost old friends. How many of us, on the other hand, have read a short story by Yáñez? Or for that matter could name any of his stories? Or at the very minimum simply name a collection of Yáñez's short stories? The point I would like to make today is that Yáñez the short story writer is an unknown quantity. There are reasons for this which I will discuss shortly. Let me first underline my thesis with some references to Mexican short story anthologies which have appeared in the last few decades.

Nothing by Yáñez is included in *33 cuentos mexicanos* by Felipe Sánchez Murguía, nothing in *10 cuentos mexicanos* by Joffre de la Fontaine—perhaps Yáñez was considered too old, although Rulfo and Arreola, born in 1918, are included. That may also be the reason for his exclusion from *30 cuentos de autores mexicanos contemporáneos* by Héctor Gally. Nothing either in Jaramillo Levi's *El cuento erótico en México*—and frankly I can't see why! A more serious omission is María del Carmen Millán's exclusion of Yáñez from her multi-volume *Antología de cuentos mexicanos*. Finally we arrive at Emmanuel Carballo's monumental 900 page *El cuento mexicano del siglo XX* from 1964 with its 83 selections by 56 writers; one story by Yáñez is included, but curiously it is listed as a "cuento inédito." If we want to go all the way back to 1946 we can finally meet up with another anthology, this one *Cuentos mexicanos de autores contemporáneos* by José Mancisidor, which includes two stories by Yáñez.

In an interview made in the 1960's with Emanuel Carballo, Yáñez offered some significant thoughts on the writing of novels and short stories. Carballo asks:

—En su bibliografía escasean los cuentos.

—Escasean por una sola razón: porque me gusta acometer obras de mayor aliento. Prefiero la novela.

—¿Cómo concibe la novela?

—La entiendo como una sinfonía que requiere una vasta composición, algunas veces intrincada.

—¿Y el cuento?

—El cuento es una pequeña pieza que requiere una gran condensación. Se trata de una obra compendiosa, sintética, de líneas esenciales muy simples. La novela corta es una composición más amplia. En ella caben ciertos análisis que el cuento no se permite. El análisis en el cuento se da mediante la acción.

—¿Qué personajes son más difíciles de crear, los del cuento o los de la novela?

—Los del cuento. Son más difíciles de crear porque el autor cuenta, para darle vida, con muy pocos elementos. Su carácter debe expresarse en una frase, en una línea, en un gesto. Los desarrollos extensos facilitan la creación de personajes de novela.

—Los *Tres cuentos* son en realidad cuentos?

—No creo que sean cuentos sino novelas cortas. Sin embargo, están difícil precisar donde termina el cuento y principia la novela corta.<sup>3</sup>

Among Yáñez's collections of short stories we can cite: *Flor de juegos antiguos* (1942), *Archipiélago de mujeres* (1943), *Los sentidos del aire* (1964) and the almost new and little studied volume which I would like to spend more time on today, *La ladera dorada* from December of 1978. These above-mentioned dates must be approached with a certain amount of caution, however, since many stories were composed years,

even decades before eventual publication. In putting together his collections Yáñez apparently looked on them as entities rather than haphazard compilations of writings completed by a certain date. In *Los sentidos del aire*, for example, we find exactly twelve stories, each taking place in a different month of the year. (They do not represent symbolically different seasons or periods of a lifetime as do Valle Inclán's *Sonatas* about the Marqués de Bradomín). Another division the author seems to make are those collections which in theme and setting are "Mexican" and those which are "Universal." The debate on "mexicanidad" vs. "universalidad" has been a long and heated one. Carlos Fuentes in *La región más transparente* has a philosopher returning from a round table discussion say: ". . . que si por más mexicanos más universales."<sup>4</sup> The "Contemporáneo" group of the 1920's and 1930's had long argued this point. In the mid fifties Emmanuel Carballo had used a rather over-simplified blueprint to point out the two directions he saw the Mexican short story taking: Arreola was the great stylist of classic Spanish using universal themes and settings, Rulfo (in the short story, not the novel) was the realist with rural Mexican environments. This dichotomy of approaches would be recalled constantly in future criticism. Fuente's writings in *Los días enmascarados* (1954) were compared to those of Arreola while Tomás Mojarro's short stories in *Cañón de Juchipila* were said to be of the Rulfian school. Mojarro felt no hesitation in acknowledging the debt:

Me gustaba que los críticos me incluyesen entre sus discípulos. Y es que, probablemente, existen entre Rulfo y yo algunas afinidades. Las anécdotas de mis cuentos se parecen a los que cuenta él en los suyos. Yo se las oía a mi padre y a la gente de Jalpa; Rulfo quizá se las oyó a sus parientes y a los viejos campesinos de su pueblo. Cuando leí sus cuentos reconocí mis temas y me sentí deslumbrado por la manera en que los contaba. Ante todo, Rulfo vale por la forma, por la técnica.<sup>5</sup>

Yáñez at different periods of his career has seemed to prefer one school over the other. Certain stories in *Los sentidos del aire* duplicate the time and setting (i.e. rural Jalisco) of *Al filo del agua*. In fact, several of these stories include characters and episodes which will appear with slight variations in the famous novel. Exactly the opposite is true of the selections in the recent *La ladera dorada* with such universal characters as: Adam and Eve, Zeus, Ulysses, Don Quixote and Faust. If not forewarned the unwary reader might find it impossible to distinguish the nationality of the book's author.

Yáñez's first volume of short stories, *Flor de juegos antiguos*<sup>6</sup> was published in Guadalajara in 1942 as part of the fourth centennial celebrations on the founding of the city. It contains pieces composed between the years 1931 and 1939. Curiously other stories written in the 1920's would not appear in book form until 1964. Children's games in

the streets of Guadalajara make up the unifying element of every selection in *Flor de juegos antiguos*. The ten to twelve year old protagonists (one is named Agustín!) relate activities centered around two important times of the year: Nochebuena and Canículas (school vacation and harvest). The two sections are each introduced by a "Composición de lugar" which contains no characters or plot, only a lengthy description of the setting. There can be little doubt that Yáñez is foreshadowing a technique which he will put to excellent use in *Al filo de agua*. I refer specifically to the "Acto Preparatorio" describing the "Pueblo de mujeres enlutadas" which prefaces the famous novel. Among the activities pictured in the stories are street games, a picnic excursion and Christmas festivities.

In "Episodio de las campanas" an excited boy dressed as a shepherd cannot refrain from ringing his bells at inappropriate times. They are taken from him and he is threatened with not being able to participate in the breaking of the piñata. Also from the same youthful point of view is "Episodio de la voz sin dueña, que pide posada" where a boy in shepherd's costume is enchanted by the voice of one of the "pastoras." He refuses to look at her for fear it will break the spell; she might be old or ugly. The children are playing the game "pájara pinta" in the story "Episodio de la pájara pinta a la sombra de verde limón." The boy is about to be kissed by a pretty new girl in the neighborhood (as per the game's rules) when his mother calls him to come inside!

Perhaps the masterpiece in the whole volume, and certainly a story deserving more critical attention, is "Episodio de cometa que vuela." Here an orphan boy swells with pride as he readies his new kite, the best in the neighborhood. He "borrows" his mother's special waxed thread, but loses it and the kite when the thread breaks. His mother never once scolds him. He realizes that she will have to work even harder at her sewing machine into the late night to make ends meet. His thoughts wander to the death and burial of his father as he stares at the evening star—it is serene as are his mother's eyes.

Yáñez's next book of short stories, *Archipiélago de mujeres*<sup>7</sup> is a curious blending of both the native and the world-wide perspective. The principal characters are all women, thus the title of the book. The heroines are Mexican, but the stories parallel and often use the names of famous women in history or fiction: Melibea, Juliette, Doña Endrina, Desdemona, Isolda, and Doña Inés (from the Don Juan plays). In the first story, "Alda o la música," Yáñez recreates the Romeo and Juliette tragedy. A Mexican sports star secretly falls in love with his best friend's sister. They are separated and she dies upon receiving an erroneous account of the athlete's drowning. Only after her death is the sports figure aware that she had loved him with a passion, too.

"Melibea," the title of the second story is also the name of a girl in a remote Mexican village. The young student narrator returns to his hometown for the summer vacation in a scene very similar to certain chapters in *Al filo del agua*, and while chasing the escaped pigeon of his mother he sees Melibea, a childhood friend who has grown up. Next

follow his lovesickness and a series of frustrations in trying to see her again while avoiding her suspicious father. Fortunately, a servant in Melibea's household who had formerly worked for the narrator's mother comes to the rescue and acts as the couple's go-between.

The final story in the volume and the last that we shall have time to look at, is "Doña Inés o el amor." This piece possesses much less of the flavor of a small Mexican town. It concerns a repentant Don Juan Tenorio now happily married and looking forward to the birth of his first child.

The next volume of short stories, *Los sentidos del aire*,<sup>8</sup> was published in 1964, twenty-one years after *Archipiélago de mujeres* and seventeen after *Al filo del agua*. The date of publication is deceptive, however, since the volume included Yáñez's first published story, "Baralípton" from 1930 and his earliest unpublished piece "Vigilia de la Natividad" written in 1924 when he was just twenty years old. Other stories in *Los sentidos del aire* carry dates as recent as 1963 and several contain two dates suggesting an early composition and a later polishing and revision.

We are fortunate with this volume to possess Yáñez's own comments on the theme and structure of individual pieces and how they came to be composed. Such is the case of "Baralípton" the story of university students, one of whom is about to receive his degree in medicine. Yáñez explains: "Lo comencé a escribir el día de los Difuntos del año 29. Todavía me gusta . . . representará la inquietud de otoño, la fiesta de Muertos."<sup>9</sup> When asked about the style Yáñez ventures: "Su estilo es un tanto nervioso, muy cortado. Abundan en él los puntos y los signos ortográficos, signos que por esos años se usaban poco."<sup>10</sup> When Carballo asks about the inspiration for the story, the reply is: "Posiblemente algunas de las obras de Benjamín Jarnés y de varios de los escritores españoles que podríamos llamar de la *Revista de Occidente*. Hay también un reflejo personal de los días en que me recibí de abogado, de la desorientación que este acontecimiento me produjo."<sup>11</sup> One delightful episode recalls how a student kept a female skeleton in his room—as his mistress.

¡Sí, tres años ha vivido con J—soltero—en casta compañia! Bendita.—Por la primera vez, en esta noche J besó la fría frente con devoción.—Bendita compañera casta. Deliciosa había de ser como amante; más deliciosa que Esta, Esa y Aquélla: menos y más mujer: dócil en la pasión, fría en el capricho, ¡tan fría!<sup>12</sup>

The student of the Mexican novel will immediately recognize a very similar episode in the picaresque *La vida inútil de Pito Pérez* by José Rubén Romero, a compatriot of Yáñez from the neighboring state of Michoacán. Romero's book came out eight years after Yáñez's story. No suggestion of borrowing need be considered; similar pranks by medical students with skulls and other human parts have a long and jocular history.

"Vigilia de la Natividad" from 1924 tells the story of Gregorio Pérez, a spoiled child, pseudo-intellectual and occasional writer who eventually is forced to work as a department store clerk. Yáñez tells us that Gregorio is "el primer esbozo del personaje Luis Gonzaga Pérez, que figura en *Al filo del agua*."<sup>13</sup> The principal character in "Aserrín de muñecos" also feels trapped in his small town but loves to read foreign literature and travel books. His errors in pronunciation of foreign places and names eventually leads to his embarrassment and withdrawal from society. His escape through books and daydreaming of foreign places anticipates still another character, María, from Yáñez's most famous novel. "Sangre de sol" (1929) with its Revolutionary setting also reminds us of the above-mentioned novel. It tells the tragic story of two brothers of unbridled passion similar to that of Damián Limón. They had joined the Revolution, but on different sides. Yáñez never names the bands, but only states that one sang the "Valetina" (Zapata) and the other "La Cucaracha" (Villa).

From 1950, but revised in 1962, is "Niña Esperanza," undoubtedly one of Yáñez's short masterpieces. The author says: "Recojo en él la impresión que me causaba cuando era niño y vivía en un barrio de Guadalajara, la muerte de mujeres jóvenes."<sup>14</sup> Don Agustín's genius can be seen in his choice of point of view: a ten-year-old boy who is curious and yet sorrowful over the death of a beloved neighbor, and who at a young age is trying to come to grips with the tragedy of death—especially of good people, of young people. In speaking of the story's style the author comments: "Lo primero que hice fue desechar palabras y giros que no correspondieran a un niño tapatío de los años diez. Partiendo del habla infantil del protagonista, me serví del lenguaje coloquial al que busqué, sin adulterarlo, sus íntimas resonancias estéticas."<sup>15</sup>

As a final selection for discussion I have chosen "Las avispas," still with a rural setting, but this time with an older man as protagonist—a considerable change from practically all of Yáñez's other stories populated with youthful characters. "Las avispas" was written in 1963 when Yáñez was fifty-nine years old, which may explain the age of the protagonist, an aloof and proper school teacher. Just one time he makes a fool of himself in public and is driven mad by his vengeful students, the "avispas." The theme of insanity, the reader will recall, plays an important role in *Al filo del agua* with not just one, but two characters: Luis Gonzaga Pérez and Padre Islas.

*Los sentidos del aire* certainly must rank as a key volume in Yáñez's literary career and in the history of the Mexican short story. But here, as in the case of the novel *Las vueltas del tiempo*, the fact that it was published late, many years after its composition, meant that its influence on other short story writers in the country was probably minimal.

Yáñez's last book of short stories, *La ladera dorada*,<sup>16</sup> was published in December of 1978 making it but twenty-two months old at the time of this symposium. Its initial printing was 5,000 copies, about average

today for a volume of short stories in Mexico. In reading the selections one is immediately struck by a new facet of Yáñez which has only been hinted at previously. With its preoccupation with style, an ironic humor and its universal themes we might almost believe we had in front of us a text of Arreola. Gone is Mexico, gone is the rural setting and gone also is the adolescent perspective. What are Yáñez's new sources of inspiration? The Bible and Christian tradition in seven of the twenty selections, Greek legends in four more and classics from Spanish, English, German and Italian literatures in five others. Several are of indefinite classification and only one might be called truly Mexican in its theme and setting. We are aware of just how far the pendulum has swung when recalling that in the mid 1950's Luis Leal in his *Breve historia del cuento mexicano* had classified Yáñez under "El Cuento de Ambiente Provinciano."<sup>17</sup>

Now let us briefly examine selections from several of the categories. One of my favorites relates the sexual obsessions of an upper class Egyptian woman whose frequent unhappy affairs finally lead her to a famous psychiatrist who uses dream therapy. The woman is none other than the wife of Potiphar and he the Biblical Joseph who was sold into Egypt. At least, that is the way I would have told it—with an O'Henry ending. That is not Yáñez's purpose, however; in fact, he gives it away in the story's title: "El adivino de sueños y la mujer de Putifer." All is told from the perspective of the wife who hears of the dream interpreter, obtains an interview and finally recognizes Joseph. Yáñez in a mood reminiscent of "The Lady or the Tiger" then offers the reader three options for a possible ending.

A delightful piece brimming with humor and irony as "Adán en valle de lágrimas o el original pecado." Adam is now 930 years old and is wearied by his wife whom he sometimes calls "Eva" and other times "La Costilla." A thousand years of nagging: "—Que si tú, lo de allá, la serpiente, la manzana, Caín . . ." He recalls events from the Garden—the story of the apple, he tells us, is not true: "una siesta cuando solazábamos inocentes deliquios, bajo el Arbol llamado de la Ciencia del Bien y el Mal, en medio del Edén, descubrí en los ojos de la Costilla extraño fulgor: eso sí, como de serpiente, y ella dice que halló en mis ojos, en ese momento, igual serpentino relámpago; desnudos hasta entonces ignorantes de rubor, miramos que nuestros cuerpos eran diferentes."<sup>18</sup> A second section of the story in a more serious vein is "Plegaria de Adán en el Limbo." All ends happily, however, as in a kind of Auto Sacramental, Christ opens the gates of spirit prison and all the problems of the garden and life are immediately forgotten.

Other short stories on religious or Biblical themes treat Job, Susanna and Daniel from the Apocryphal portion of the Old Testament and a dance of death has the same format of the medieval pieces but includes such modern figures as a nation's president, a general, a banker, a labor leader and an uninspired poet.



Next, several examples or classical themes. The story "Ocaso de Zeus" begins:

Las cosas van de mal en peor para don Júpiter, que tomó aquí este nombre después de que lo corrieron de Grecia. Muy al principio no le gustó el cambio de nominativo, ni las siete colinas que le deparó el piadoso Eneas; pero cuando a millares, las águilas romanas lo pasearon en triunfo por el mundo e impusieron su culto, quedó más contento que allá en el Olimpo.<sup>19</sup>

Making use of a variety of newspaper quotations, inscriptions found in catacombs and even a letter by Justo Sierra written to his wife in 1911, Yáñez documents the decline and fall of Jupiter and his replacement by a new God, one from Galilee.

"Dyonisos contra Hércules" details the revenge that Dionysus (or Bacchus) takes upon the chaste Hercules aided in part by Aphrodite. The famous warrior is challenged and taunted into seducing the fifty daughters of King Thespio, all on the same night. With considerable effort our hero accomplishes his labor, what we might facetiously caption: his labor of love. "Ulises o sirenas" is a monologue of the Greek hero directed to Helen of Troy, his secret love. He is disillusioned with the aging Penelope; in his lengthy voyages he had always been dreaming of Helen, not home.

From modern literature Yáñez reworks the narratives of Faust, Don Quixote and Yorick. the latter, the king's jester in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, appears in "El hombre que renunció a su historia," a micro short story of only one page which Yáñez dates February of 1978 making it one of his last compositions before his death. Here Yorick fears aging and resorts to plastic surgery to restore his youthful appearance. The results are tragic; the public has come to love his wrinkled old face and will no longer accept him as a character actor. The last lines recall Hamlet's famous words while at the same time underline the new theme Yáñez has introduced: "Oh, Garrik, gran Garrik, vanidoso Garrik."<sup>20</sup>

"Fausto: la nobel arte de amar" follows the life of an aging scientist (apparently in the twentieth century) who continues practicing alchemy but is also trying to split the atom. While Yáñez does not locate the story in Mexico, it does recall the earlier *Archipiélago de mujeres* where he had reworked well known European stories but relocated the action in another time and place. Fausto is liberated from his laboratory and regains his youthful outlook on life by a woman who teaches him sports, social graces, and most importantly, love. She is called Diótima de Mantinea whom tradition says was an Athenian priestess who instructed Socrates on the doctrine of love. When Fausto becomes independent and leaves Diótima for other women, Yáñez begins calling her Jantipa, the name of Socrates' domineering wife. Jantipa-Diótima even consults with Mephistopheles about enforcing the contract Fausto has

signed in blood swearing his eternal love. The story concludes on a fateful note as both characters die alone and unloved.

Perhaps the most significant piece in *La ladera dorada* is "La boda de Don Quijote," but one more evidence that Avellaneda in the seventeenth century and Montalvo in the nineteenth are not the only writers motivated to write a sequel to Cervantes' masterpiece. Yáñez composed the story in 1960, but chose not to include it in his earlier collection of 1964, *Los sentidos del aire*. In 1966 it was finally published in the *Revista de la Universidad de México*.<sup>21</sup>

Alonso Quijano awakens refreshed after suffering three days from a fever; he has not died in spite of malicious rumors spread by one Miguel de Cervantes. Immediately Quijano hits upon the one element needed for his life's fulfillment, marriage. Sancho Panza is sent to Toboso to begin negotiations with the Lorenzo family. The hidalgo's priest argues persuasively that the old man should not wed, but Quijano is at his polemical best in offering reasons, both natural and divine, for the marriage institution. Arrangements are finally worked out in spite of a moody Miguel de Cervantes who refuses to serve as witness while expressing a prophetic warning: "más le valiera haberse muerto porque así nadie le quita la fama de valiente y esforzado."<sup>22</sup> Once married, Aldonza soon becomes insufferable; her relatives take over the estate and Quijano feeling himself on the point of insanity asks to be taken to a "casa de salud" where he spends his last days morosely awaiting death.

Still needed from students of literature is an in-depth critical analysis of this Quixote compared with those which have gone before. Yáñez seems to have succeeded well in capturing the feeling of archaic language as well as presenting an authentic characterization of the knight and his squire. The latter still regales his listener with an unending string of popular sayings: "pescado que se duerme se lo lleva la corriente," "nadie sabe lo que carga el sayo sino él que lo lleva," "dos cabezas en una almohada, más valen mañas que fuerzas," "nadie tienda más la pierna de cuanto fuere larga la sábana," etc.

Several other short stories can only be commented upon briefly. "Los viejos ganosos" is a retelling of the book of *Daniel and Susanna* in the Apocryphal section of the Bible. Interspersed with long quotations from the Bible are songs by fauns, duets by sartyrs and "Delirios" singing the praises of erotic love. In the end Daniel (of lion's den fame) proves that Susanna is innocent of adultery as charged by two lecherous old men who in turn had designs upon the woman. Yáñez concludes with a note of irony; in spite of Susanna's virtue, she suffers sexual frustration because her husband is impotent. "Muertes paralelas" is unique in *La ladera dorada* for its Mexican theme. One group of swimmers (at Acapulco?) agrees for financial gain to dive into the sea from a high cliff. Several are killed. The second part of the story follows some Mexican *voladores* who perform in New York City. One fall from the ropes and

the crowd goes away satisfied. Two additional selections in the book almost defy classification. "Equilátero, Isósceles and Escaleno o de la eternidad" is a long dialogue between three triangles. They debate on the human race and the importance of triangles in the world. "Ondas" consists of several score of short humorous telegrams based on real or legendary events:

Huelga musas contra despotismo Apolo—  
Amputáronle brazos—piernas diosa Schiva—  
Babilonia—puerta—Dios—jardín lascivias—paraíso—turistas—Visítela—  
Descartes en Suecia formula nuevo principio físico metafísico ético—For-  
nico, luego existo—Academia requiérele demostración perspectiva Premio  
Nobel—  
Dios es mundial—enuncia famoso teólogo brasileño<sup>23</sup>

As we come to the end of this rapid overview of some two dozen short stories by Agustín Yáñez we are reminded of the long period of time they span—fifty-five years, about two thirds of don Agustín's lifetime, his first writings and practically his last. The themes are varied, some very national-regional, later ones reflecting a more universal view. Several pieces anticipate characters and theses which will surface in the novels. Unfortunately, many stories were not published when written and few are yet known to the public. Indeed some themes reflect his pioneer nature. Whereas many critics have lauded the spontaneous writings of young university student writers (I am thinking in particular of the La Onda group: Agustín, Sainz, García Saldaña) with their focus on the teenage and adolescent problems of sexual awareness, peer acceptance, agonies over future careers. Yáñez, in contrast, looks back on his youth with the perspective of a mature adult rather than a young man recalling events only a few years distant. Yáñez's setting is not the capital, but the provincial towns and cities of Jalisco. There is a nostalgia and innocence of times long past.

Granted, much of the value of Yáñez's stories resides in their training ground for his most important labors as a novelist. Nonetheless, Agustín Yáñez is an imposing short story writer with a number of miniature masterpieces well worth the time and effort of any serious student of literature.

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## NOTES

1. Luis Leal, *Breve historia del cuento mexicano*. México: *Manuales Studium*, 1956, p. 5.
2. Emmanuel Carballo, "1967: Novela y cuento," "La Cultura en México" in *Siempre*, 758 (3 enero 1968), p. II.
3. Emmanuel Carballo, *El cuento mexicano del siglo XX*. México: *Empresas Editoriales*, 1964, pp. 46-47.
4. Carlos Fuentes, *La región más transparente*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958, p. 358.
5. Carballo, *El cuento mexicano . . .*, p. 92.
6. Agustín Yáñez, *Flor de juegos antiguos*. México: Grijalbo, 1977.
7. Agustín Yáñez, *Archipiélago de mujeres*. México: Ed. de la UNAM, 1943.
8. Agustín Yáñez, *Los sentidos del aire*. México: Grijalbo, 1977.
9. Carballo, *El cuento mexicano . . .* p. 45.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Los sentidos del aire*, p. 244.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
14. Carballo, *El cuento mexicano . . .* p. 47.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Agustín Yáñez, *La ladera dorada*. México: Grijalbo, 1978.
17. Leal, *Breve historia . . .*, p. 144.
18. *La ladera dorada*, p. 40.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
21. "La boda de Don Quijote," *Revista de la Universidad de México*, XXI, 1 (septiembre 1966), pp. I-VIII.
22. *La ladera dorada*, p. 130.
23. *Ibid.*, these samples were taken from between pages 253 and 269.