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Land Narrative and Mexican Literature: Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones Lejanas

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Spanish

by

Salvador Garcia Vigil

September 2021

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2021

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On success, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote it was to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children...the appreciation of honest critics...to appreciate

beauty...to leave the world a bit better...and to know even one life had breath easier because you have lived. In my research of land and its stories—that I define as land narratives—I found all, respect, affection, and beauty.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Land Narrative and Mexican Literature: Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones Lejanas

by

Salvador Garcia Vigil

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Spanish
University of California, Riverside, September 2021
Dr. Christina Soto van der Plas, Co-Chairperson
Dr. Iván E. Aguirre Darancou, Co-Chairperson

This study proposes an analysis of land, as a literary and historical notion, in a selection of mid-twentieth century Mexican novels: Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), *El gallo de oro* (1980), Agustín Yáñez's *La tierra pródiga* (1960), and Juan José Arreola's *La feria* (1963). And proposes these novels as representational paradigms of the relationship between land and landownership in Mexico from the Revolution into the 1980's. In addition to "land narrative" this research offers an array of historical contributions to the analysis of traditional and cultural representation of land in Mexico's literary history. This investigation also proposes a re-interpretative reading of historical conceptions of land and property in midcentury rural Mexico. Land narrative in this context, offers a new perspective of Mexico's literary land history after its Revolution. This novel approach to the topic of land narrative proposes both new terms and approaches for understanding the intelligibility of midcentury literature and its conceptualization.

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Introduction

“Land is the only thing in the world that amounts to anything...for ’tis the only thing in this world that lasts...the only thing worth working for, worth fighting for—worth dying for.” (53)

Margaret Mitchell
Gone With the Wind (1936)

In Mexican literature and history the legacy of the hacienda, and its cultural heritage enterprise, remains only in narratives inspired by the existence of people that once lived within and around the lands that historically comprised the hacienda system of the country, before and after the Mexican revolution. The Mexican revolution not only changed the system of governance of the country politically, it also changed the agrarian landscape. The revolution, the new constitution and agrarian reforms brought atonement to the injustices and inequality of the hacienda system along with the opportunity for the creation of a new identity and literature that is uniquely Mexican. The most important legacy of the fractioning of the hacienda was the possibility for all citizens to have land—and this theme is ubiquitously presented in the literature of the time.

The years comprised in this study, 1955-1980, are extremely important because they encompass the literature of the post-revolution and the fractioning of the hacienda into *pequeñas propiedades* as well as the privatization of the hacienda system. In literature, authors like Juan Rulfo capture in their narratives the creation of a new identity that results from the historical memory of land, paired with the new reforms brought forth by the revolution and the years of the post-revolution. Land narrative and its definition in the context of this study can be defined as the story of land in literature—a study to

understand agrarian land in Jalisco through the perspective of its narrative. The definition of land narrative as the story of land in narrative comprises also its inclusion in history and society. In addition, land narrative can also be understood as the analysis of land within literature and how it is described and plotted within narrative and other literary genres. Through analyzing land in certain social and historical narratives I aim to question the importance of land within literature and history as well as how characters claim land. These “land claims” are particularly relevant for my dissertation and I will focus in three specific aspects: land and individual land claims in Mexican narrative, land and land claims within Mexican society, and the historical representation of different land claims throughout history.

Within land narrative, my unique contribution to the field is that my study combines both an analysis of the story of land and of its possession within narrative. In relation to the work of other scholars in the field of literature, my research can be said to stand between traditional and postmodern research methodologies. My work is best described as a novel approach to canonical Mexican literature that ultimately offers a valuable reevaluation of traditional works. The rediscovery of the literary canon is important for the study of literature. My vision of the literary field is the result of my multifaceted academic background in literature, political science, and history. Hence, my approach to land in narrative tells a different story from that of conceiving of the environment/land merely as an environmental force and notions of environmental imagination and how it plays a role in cultural formations and is prevalent in eco-critical approaches such as the ones by Lawrence Buell, Marco Portales, Rachel Carson and

Jonathan Bate, among others.¹ In sharp contrast to environmental criticism, I propose that land narrative conforms its own literary context, raising awareness and significance beyond a subtle critique. Therefore, placing land narrative and its analysis within literature shapes a unique form in which land is not a “spirit,” but a force that holds a very important position within narrative, not merely that of a setting or location where events take place. The importance of land within the components of land narrative—in the literary, historical, and social contexts—establishes land as the narrator and/or as a central character within the plot. Parallel to my definition of land narrative, but distant from land, studies of language, narrative, like that of Yvette Jiménez de Báez, that offer a study of language and the customs of the land, falling within the field of sociolinguistics, as well as more traditional critiques that address land in literature. Land as the narrator and the narrated, the subject of the narrative, land narrative is perhaps the most singular critical contribution I make to the field of Mexican literature. My research is different from traditional literary critiques because my investigation revisits canonical conceptions of Mexican narrative that overlook land to further enhance how land is understood in its many aspects and unique authorial voice.

Central to land narrative are the analyses of Sara Poot-Herrera focusing on the work of Juan José Arreola. Her scholarship highlights the importance of the collective narrative of a township, and the origin of such, fragmented, land narratives in Juan Rulfo.² In conversation with this collective “origin,” my study builds and puts forward

¹ For more on ecocriticism see Portales, Marco, and Lawrence Buell. “The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture”.

² For more on the importance of a collective origin see Poot-Herrera, “*La feria*, una crónica pueblerina”.

the concept of land narrative—which ties narrative to origin and land. Land narrative is the result of the chronicles of “origin” in a town and my analysis further delves into considering land in narrative as a character—a plot within the plot of narrative. Through this approach, this study establishes how different characters, including land, weave a narrative and tell their own stories. Furthermore, my study reevaluates the critical studies of spoken narrative within sociolinguistics and land narratives,³ evident in Juan Rulfo and Juan José Arreola.

Land narrative and its creation is captured and further explored throughout my study. Ultimately, this dissertation is informed by a plethora of scholarly studies on land in narrative both recent and traditional. Such as analyses of land narrative that venture onto the linguistic field—in the various instances in which dialogue and land conflate in narrative, taking into account the work of scholars such as Covadonga Lamar-Prieto and her research on the Spanish of California,⁴ as well as canonical studies like those of Yvette Jiménez de Báez, and contemporary critiques within a fictional frame such as that of Cristina Rivera Garza—*Había mucha neblina o humo o no sé qué: Caminar con Juan Rulfo* (2017).⁵ This investigation is a complete—literary, historic and linguistic—story of land in narrative. And among the various canonical and recent studies of Mexican literature, this dialogue ventures into the importance of land in narrative.

³ For more on narrative and language in *Pedro Páramo* studies see Jiménez de Báez, *Juan Rulfo, del páramo a la esperanza: una lectura crítica de su obra*.

⁴ For more on Covadonga Lamar-Prieto’s study on the Spanish of California see her article “Y al español de California no se lo tragó la tierra”.

⁵ For further readings on geography/land and Juan Rulfo see Cristina Rivera Garza, *Había mucha neblina o humo o no sé qué: caminar con Juan Rulfo*.

Ultimately, I hope to reevaluate land in literature—through further investigating what I define as land narrative. Land and its importance in Mexican culture—narrative, history, and society—as I experienced growing up in a rural agrarian town in Mexico, as well as how it is represented in film, literature, and most importantly in *cuentos of el campo* were narratives shaped individuals, particularly the inhabitants of rural areas like me, beyond socioeconomic status and education. Such narratives marked my childhood. And it was not until many years after, in graduate school that I decided to investigate the importance of land as a national myth of Mexican culture.⁶ The importance of social and political movements like the revolution in the narratives of *novelas de la revolución* such as *Las manos de mamá* (1937) made me wonder in why one of the main causes of the revolution, land according to many historians,⁷ was so scarcely studied in the field of literature. To go beyond the *novela de la revolución* and explore land in post-revolutionary narrative is the main interest of this study. The works of Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), and *El gallo de oro* (1980) reflect the evolution of land in contemporary Mexican literature. These two works, along with Agustín Yáñez's *La tierra pródiga* (1960), and Juan José Arreola's *La feria* (1963) are key works for researching land and its narrative in the last decades and instances of revolutionary reforms and ideology, prior to the industrial complexity of globalization. Rulfo, Arreola,

⁶ For more on the Mexican myth—el mito de lo mexicano see Parra pp.28-37.

⁷ For more studies on land and the revolution see Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacán*; Gamio, *Forjando Patria*; Gledhill, *Casi Nada: A Study of Agrarian Reform in the Homeland of Cardenismo*; Navarro, “La ideología de la revolución mexicana”; Kuri, *A Pueblo Divided: Business, Property, and Community in Papantla, Mexico*; Ruiz, *The Great Rebellion: Mexico, 1905-1924*.

and Yáñez write about land and the culture brought forth by the reforms and what the armed period of the revolution meant at a time that was the forefront of a new era. These works are remnants of a long-gone era in narrative. And from this perspective, my research veers from traditional narrative instances in Mexican literature to include multidisciplinary approximations into the understanding of literature.

The multifaceted nature of this research is informed by my vision of the literary field. My literary critique represents the culmination of extensive research and my initial passion for land that allowed for a dialogue between my subsequent formation and studies focused on Mexican history, politics, and literature. These diverse fields are part of this investigation and together they offer a reexamination of land in Mexican narrative—land narrative—that have become nowadays *ruidos. voces. rumores. canciones lejanas* that tell the stories of people and land. Juan José Arreola's *La feria* (1963) is accurately described as the chronicles of a small town by Poot-Herrera in her book *Un giro en espiral. El proyecto literario de Juan José Arreola* (1992) where she argues that Arreola presents the varied and important narratives of land claims in mid-twentieth century Mexico. From the beginning of the novel, it is evident that land and its claim in Arreola's narrative will delve into the importance of land for the people of Zapotlán. Beyond time and space, fictional land claims are still at the forefront of land narratives, the same way fairs and their tradition never die.

Chapter one of this dissertation offers a critical approach to the narrative of Juan José Arreola's *La feria*. In *La feria* Arreola devices a new gradient of the (*nueva*) *novela de la revolución* that *litteraturiza* the post-revolutionary turmoil of the nation to write

about a land discourse from the perspective of Zapotlán's land *crónicas*.⁸ The analysis of land narrative in *La feria* offers a "literary" and intellectual history of land in midcentury Mexico. This narrative directly or indirectly raises an awareness of land in many aspects that can be studied by analyzing its critique, land imaginary, and the inclusion of social history in Arreola's novel. In this context, *La feria* proposes a historical narrative of Mexican literary production, and it can also be considered to be a historical analysis of Mexican land and its historiography. Through this core idea of land narrative, the first chapter of this study contemplates the critical scholarly readings of *La feria* since its publication. My approach to land in *La feria* uses a plethora of literary and historical readings of the rendering of land in midcentury narrative, along with how we conceive of Mexico's post-revolutionary land discourse and policies from which previous *novelas de la revolución* became a trend within Mexican literature. In addition, as already mentioned, this study also addresses the conception of land as property and its *literaturización* in the *crónica pueblerina* of *La feria*. The literary approach to land in this narrative chronicle as being part of the (*nueva*) *novela de la revolución* intends to address the importance of property in contemporary Mexico. The "plots" of the chronicles of the many townspeople represented in *La feria*, are their literary plot and the rhetoric principle that gives voice and validity to people and land of Zapotlán. In fact, the word "plot" has two meanings in land narrative: it can be understood as a plot of land, a parcel or divided territory, and as the core narrative structure, as the act of "plotting". In this context, land

⁸ For more on the *crónica pueblerina* within Arreola's land narrative see *Un giro en espiral. El proyecto literario de Juan José Arreola*. Sara Poot-Herrera observes that Juan José Arreola's *La feria* original manuscript was dated "Enero de 1954" (145).

in *La feria*, is the main character to be explored in its many aspects. The analysis of *La feria* as social and historical narrative, questions the importance of land (and its claims) in three components of its narrative: land and its claims in Mexican narrative, land and its claims within Mexican society, and land and its claims throughout history.

Chapter two postulates that land narrative and its legacy are intimately related within Mexican land and its literary production, society and history. In *Pedro Páramo* (1955) land narrative and its components exemplify the importance of land in literature. A clear example of land and its importance in narrative and nation/land is that many scholars consider that *Pedro Páramo* is an indispensable and unparalleled book in the tradition of Mexican literature. The second chapter of this dissertation intends to offer a qualitative understanding and an analysis of *Pedro Páramo* within Mexico's rural land narratives and their legacies. In *Pedro Páramo*, land signifies life for all characters, and yet its fate lies only in the hands of Pedro Páramo. The legacy of Pedro Páramo in the novel represents the historical structure beyond the reality and fiction of Mexico, according to Rulfo. This narrative style of writing and describing land incorporates the voices and stories of everyone that once made up the powerful mosaic of land in Mexico—and in this case Jalisco, in particular. In this chapter, I will argue that *Pedro Páramo* is made up of land and its historical legacy—the hacienda and its legacy after the Revolution. Historical legacy is presented in the narrative as fragmented noises, voices, rumors, and distant songs (*ruidos. voces. rumores. canciones lejanas*) that seem to be the only remainders and reminders of how the relationships of power between the land and society worked in previous times and how they have been since transformed and even

ruined or turned into ghosts. This shifts the tone of the narrative towards that of a mystery novel and to the uniquely Mexican folklore of death and how it is intimately related to land. Sounds, voices, rumors and songs are the tales of the land. The narrative in *Pedro Páramo* serves to give voice to the remnants of the Mexican *hacienda*—how land has been conceived of since the Revolution—as voices and stories lost in the land are the voices of Pedro Páramo and of all of those like Dolores whose *querencia*, love and longing, remained wasting themselves in their forever abandoned and ruined lands.

A crucial aspect of this study is the importance of land in *Pedro Páramo* and its role within the social historic analysis of its narrative. The proposed analysis of *Pedro Páramo* ultimately synthesizes more than a topographical understanding of land narrative. Land and its social and historical contexts are inseparable from narrative—land narrative—in *Pedro Páramo*.

La tierra pródiga (1960) is not a minor novel among the works of Agustín Yáñez. This novel is rather an astounding example of the story of land and its historical and social development in Jalisco and its coastline. Yáñez, in his narrative, explores the many facets of land as and of its development and exploitation. Chapter three of this study contemplates Agustín Yáñez's *La tierra pródiga* under a new light—within the fictional approximation of land narrative and rural land and its transitioning conception of “literature” that evolves alongside costal expansion and the exploitation of Jalisco's coastal development. This novel offers a balance of time and of the canonical perception of the land narratives in the aftermath of the Revolution, and this dissertation intends to address the winds of modernization that clash with tradition in the narrative of *La tierra*

pródiga. This chapter delves into the explicit reformulation of the canonical after *la novela de la revolución* and the *nueva novela de la revolución*. Within this perspective, the literary production after the canonical novels ventures into modern imaginaries going beyond the crossroads of land and the ideologies of the revolution. Throughout the vast lands of Jalisco's coasts, Yáñez also presents the dogmas, traditions, and challenges of characters that exploited and profited from its development. Agustín Yáñez masterfully convenes a narrative of land that distances from the canonical and begins building the literary imaginary of future development. Beyond a basic analysis of its characters, this chapter approaches land within its narrative—as an omnipresent and prodigiously giving character. Within a paradisiac and transitory landscape and visions of a Garden of Eden, the characters of the novel not only flourish but also exploit the bounty of the land, beyond exploitation and development. In this context, Yáñez's characters and actions personify the development and future of Mexico's coast as well as man's fascination with the stewardship and the development of land and allow for a novel literary form. The analysis of land narrative in *La tierra pródiga* follows a qualitative methodology to study the social and historical instances of land in narrative. Ultimately, the study of land in the narrative of *La tierra pródiga* reinforces the importance of land and its current and future development.

Chapter four, the last chapter of this study, focuses on the last of Juan Rulfo's novels, *El Gallo de oro* (1980), which conceives the apotheosis of land narrative within Mexican literature at the beginning of the 1980's. *El gallo de oro* explores the excesses of land in narrative. This chapter analyzes and qualifies land within the complete works of

Mexico's most important contemporary author, Juan Rulfo—that with only three novels revolutionized twentieth century Hispanic literature. Furthermore, this chapter intends to better understand the conceptualization of property and tradition in *la nueva novela de la revolución* after *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo*. As indicated, in order to ponder the land narratives in Mexico, this study follows the depiction of land and property in the historiography and literary conscience of contemporary Mexican literature to understand the literary approximations to land thought as an artistic production within the notion of “surplus”. The notion of surplus in Rulfo's narrative plays a crucial role because within the cyclical story of men, and land, there remains only the excess. The way in which characters and narrative itself deals with this excessive element is what drives the plot forward.

El gallo de oro, in this context can be considered as a surplus among the works of Juan Rulfo and it is influenced by the folk traditions of land. It is also a reading of the excesses in which land as property determines the value of the plot of characters. Hence, land narrative in this chapter is inherent of surplus, and of wealth. Subsequently, land in *El gallo de oro*, Rulfo's last novel, entertains a narrative theme about land and the conceptions of legacy, inheritance, value, and the cycle of land and people. This dissertation focuses on land and its social and historical constructs in the narrative of *El gallo de oro*. My qualitative study ultimately reappraises land and its historical and social importance within narrative.

Under these perspectives, this investigation about land in narrative aims at understanding land and culture through the fiction and historical fiction of Mexican

literature and the narratives that conflate in it. This ultimately proposes the understanding of land and culture through land narrative, for example the approximation to land and land existence, and the representation of land as a canonical instance of *Mexicanidad*, identity and legacy as presented in *Pedro Páramo*, *La feria*, and *La tierra pródiga*. The cultural rendition and story of land in narrative is therefore inherent of the ruidos, voces, rumores, canciones lejanas that make up the meaning of identity and culture in Jalisco and the rest of Mexico.

Chapter I

Juan José Arreola: An Analysis of Land in *La feria*

Historical Background in *La feria*

Juan José Arreola's first and only novel *La feria* (1963) is a story about land and its narratives. "Somos treinta mil..." is the first line of the first story of the novel, and it marks the beginning of a series of explorations along the lines of what I will call the "land narrative" of Zapotlán. This narrative comprises a long-fragmented account of various "plots" that begin in the same manner as others, such as the ones by the Tlayacanques (the naturals or indigenous peoples of Zapotlán) who traditionally narrate the history of their lands: "somos treinta mil...Desde que Fray Juan de Padilla vino a enseñarnos el catecismo, cuando don Alonso de Ávalos dejó temblando estas tierras" (Arreola 7). These narratives are related to one another. Sara Poot-Herrera in her detailed and pioneer study of Arreola's works *Un giro en espiral. El proyecto de Juan José Arreola* (1992), notes that *La feria* is formed by 288 fragmented narratives.⁹ Arreola publishes these narratives amidst one of the most prolific decades for Mexican narrative, beginning with Miguel León-Portilla's *Visión de los vencidos* (1959).¹⁰ *La feria* is followed by a series of other works that include Elena Garro's *Recuerdos del porvenir* (1963), José Emilio Pacheco's *Morirás lejos* (1967), and Elena Poniatowska's *La noche*

⁹ According to Poot Herrera *La feria*'s narrative takes off from the inspiration of Charles Péguy's poem "Presentation de la Beaunce à Norte Dame de Chartres: nous sommes la piétaille (145)" According to her, Arreola develops lands conflict drawing from this quote.

¹⁰ For more on the author—Arreola—and the literary context in which he writes see Del Paso, *Memoria y olvido de Juan José Arreola*.

de Tlatelolco (1968) and *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* (1969). In this context, *La feria* is a key component in how we can rethink Mexico's land narrative.

In the 1960's Mexican Literature followed different trends that built from works written in the prior decade such as Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), Arreola's *Confabulario* (1952) and other works like those of Rosario Castellanos, Guadalupe Dueñas, Elena Garro, Amparo Dávila, Jorge Ibargüengoitia, Augusto Monterroso, Carlos Solórzano, and Ricardo Garibay. Margo Glantz, in "Onda y escritura: jóvenes de 20 a 33," describes two trends that according to her were the main literary tendencies of the 60's: "la Onda" and "escritura." These trends were the literary equivalence of the biblical genesis, as literary modernity expanded in numbers and build conflicts among the two generations of the decade.¹¹ Described by Glantz as a decade of *Ondas narrativas* the sixties are best described as modernizing with each year that passes, considering the incremental increase of narratives and styles. Such characteristics in Arreola allow for the continuation of the *Onda* in the context of *La feria*, while still being related to the themes of the Mexican Revolution and retaining the denomination of *nueva novela de la revolución*. In this sense its still possible to read *La feria* as contemporary novel of the Mexican Revolution. *La feria*, as the majority of rural texts written in the decade of the 1960's, still clings to the distant themes of the Mexican Revolution. These revolutionary themes are about the inherent agrarian conflicts that resulted from the Hacienda system. Characters like those of Jesusa Palancares in *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* (1969) by Elena

¹¹ For more on la onda see Glantz *Onda y escritura en México: jóvenes de 20 a 33*.

Poniatowska, and Artemio Cruz in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1963) by Carlos Fuentes, reminiscence on the Revolution and the direction in which it spun their lives. As noted by Ramón Eduardo Ruiz's book *The Great Rebellion* (1980) Mexico's Revolution can also be understood as quell of rural conflicts and discontent, these rebellions, for the most part, where the result of hunger and the *campesinado*'s search for better life. Reminiscent of Mexican history, Arreola's 1963 story includes the narratives voices of these campesinos in *La feria*.¹² It is within these narratives that the Revolution is reevaluated and conceptualized as the narrative of a town such Juan José Arreola's Zapotlán or Elena Garro's Ixtepec. *La feria* is hence an overall reflection of Mexico's historical narratives that developed in rural towns after the Revolution.

Nueva Novela de la Revolución

Parallel to land ideologies of Mexico's midcentury, the narratives of Arreola's *agricultores* and characters in *La feria* offer a post-revolutionary reading and history that contemplates rural land in Mexico after the Revolution. As a *nueva novela de la revolución*, *La feria* delves into the history of the Revolution as displayed by the narratives that followed the event. According to Esperanza Jefferson, "*nuevas novelas de la revolución*" are novels written about or with themes of the Revolution during and after the actual event (Jefferson 22). The moment and context in which they were published is what gives such novels their denomination as *nuevas novelas de la revolución* or just *novelas de la revolución*. The categorization I am proposing limits the term *novelas de la*

¹² For more on the historical context of the *La feria* see Díaz-Guerra "Historia y ficción en *La feria*, de Juan José Arreola".

revolución to those written between 1915 and 1937. These dates correspond to the publication of Mariano Azuela's first draft of his novel *Los de abajo* in 1915, and Campobello's publishing of *Las manos de mamá* in 1937. *Nuevas novelas de la revolución* is hence the term I will use to refer to novels written after the start of Mexico's *ejidal* land reform that put an end to the armed period of the Revolution. But, beyond years of publishing and the historical context, there are other aspects that differentiate the *nuevas novelas de la revolución* from the *novelas de la revolución*, such as the philosophical ways of dealing with the themes of the conflict within the text, either dealing with them as an intertextual reference or distancing from the Revolution, which also leads us to further contemplate the changing philosophical ideals and models of the nation in both periods.

I describe *La feria* as a *nueva novela de la revolución* because in a many ways Juan José Arreola wrote the history of how the Revolution swept through Zapotlán, thus recalling the most important event inspired by the national dreams of *tierra y libertad*. Furthermore, the inscription of the Revolution in the context of *La feria* tells us of how the promise and ideals of national land reforms was still an issue at the time. The Revolution in Arreola's text is one of the biggest land inspired events in the literature and history of Mexico as *La feria* continues to inspire readers through its rural land chronicles long after the armed conflict in the country. Lastly, Juan José Arreola's *nueva novela de la revolución* describes the Revolution through personal experience, as he is one of the few Mexican writers that witnessed the Revolution and writes about the historical echoes of the conflict in his novel, reflected as one of the main events of Zapotlán's history.

Summary

La feria is as a midcentury novel made out of many narrative fragments. It is the story of a series of events taking place in the rural town of Zapotlán for six months and leading up to the climax marked by the fair of the town. *La feria* is written in different narrative styles all revolving around the land of the town. Such stories incorporate the individual town peoples' plots into a broader historical narrative of friars, *virreyes*, priests, politicians, lawyers, *done*s, gentlemen, a collective of naturals, and damsels, all with a claim or jurisdiction to the lands of Zapotlán. Land, in this context, is the possession that distinguishes and gives narrative to characters through the various stories of their rural existence. In particular, within *La feria*, the story of the *agricultor* is crucial, as I will later explain, for our understanding of how land was historically plotted in Zapotlán during the 1950's.

My use of the term "plot" can be understood in two ways. The first one is related to the narrative and the characters' journey while the second use of plot signifies, literally, a parcel of land. *La feria* is both, in the first sense, a narrative comprising the plot or story of Zapotlán's characters and, in the second sense, a novel that talks about the private property, *pequeñas propiedades*. Arreola's narrative in this context describes a historiographical conceptualization of agrarian land in which 10.2 percent were owned by *campesinos* denominated *pequeños propietarios* because they owned at last 5 hectares but no more than 100, while 89.7 percent of the population owned less than five hectares, and only 0.3 percent owned more than 1,000 hectares (Whetten 176). Arreola's unnamed *campesino*, the most important character of *La feria* has a plot of 53 hectares making him

a *pequeño propietario*. This character is one of the most important one in the novel, because he is the archetypical model for the *campesino* in Mexico.

The end of *La feria* is marked by Zapotlán's fair itself.¹³ In the middle of the explosive narratives about the impossibility of further land reforms, we hear a cathartic explosion abruptly ends the celebration and an unknown voice, which could be understood as the *vox populi*, shatters the hope of the town to attain land as the Mexican agrarian reforms had promised. Zapotlán's plaza is filled with everyone in town, gathered in front of the indigenous Tlayacanques grand *castillo pirotécnico* (fireworks show), and an explosive catharsis occurs all at once, caused by trolls dressed as "Viejos de danza, con máscaras de diablo. Unos llevaban... machetes otros más, pistolas que disparaban al aire" (Arreola 198). This fizzles Juan Tepano's hope of being recognized by the town as a respected landowner. With a grand show, he had hoped that the town would see that the Tlayacanques could be *gente de razón*, but instead his grand statement of equality goes off in flames. Disillusioned and saddened, Tepano describes the scene: "La llamarada pronto se levantó al cielo, más alta que la Parroquia... El estallido fue general y completo... Una hora después, no quedaba nada más que un montón de brasas y pavesa, entre las que de vez en cuando tronaba todavía algún cohete retardado" (Arreola 199). Arreola ends his novel with a painful yet atoning resolution. Juan Tepano saddened but alive and hopeful, like the nameless *agricultor*, is ready to wait until the next year when the fair will be once again celebrated. As part of the dialogue and narratives that close

¹³ For more on Zapotlán and its fair see Alemany Bay "Tres tonos para narrar la fiesta", and García Meza "Tres miradas sobre Zapotlán".

Zapotlán's fair, the *vox populi* in the mode of a parable offers us a fair resolution of how the land is parceled in accordance with the religious way of life and rules.

—Yo no soy Dios, yo soy un hombre como todos ustedes, un artesano, un carpintero de obra blanca... No se los digo por asustarlos, pero no carguen sobre el suelo todo el peso de su cuerpo. Este pueblo está fincado sobre un valle de aluvión y sus tierras fértiles son puramente superficiales: ocultan una colosal falla geológica y ustedes están parados sobre una cáscara de huevo... Hagan otra vez la feria del año que viene, pero sean un poco más angelicales, y no gasten toda la pólvora en infiernitos (Arreola 196).

Comparable to a parable and the trade of Jesus Crist, this narrative warns the people of Zapotlán not to rely on *tierra* for salvation, as putting all one's hopes in land will only doom them. In this context, the superficiality of land is inherent related to what happened to *don* Gaspar, the lawyer, who can be said put all his efforts, hopes and desires in attaining Zapotlán's land made of "cascara de huevo" digging his way into hell.

Fragment(s)

Arreola's narrative, more than that of his contemporaries Rulfo and Yáñez, can be categorized as a novel made up by interconnected fragments. Although *La feria* is considered by many literary critics as a fragmented narrative (Poot-Herrera 147), it can also be said that its narrative has coherence and continuity. Certainly, fragmentation as the model for a novel is not the only influence for *La feria*, as noted by Campos:

las letras mexicanas, si bien aún se mantenían dentro de una temática social y costumbrista, iniciaban ya un proceso de ruptura con la misma a

partir de una reformulación en su tratamiento, con base en las nuevas aportaciones técnicas exploradas en *Al filo del agua* (1947), *El llano en llamas* (1952) y *Pedro Páramo* (1955), obras en las cuales se reflejaba la influencia de ciertas innovaciones narrativas de corte vanguardista, producto de la lectura de John Dos Passos y William Faulkner, por ejemplo (Pereira: 18-23). El conocimiento y asimilación de los senderos recién descubiertos por donde se encaminaba el género diversificó las maneras y las fórmulas del distanciamiento de la realidad y la participación cada vez más apremiante de un lector-autor de la obra (Campos 237).

La feria's unique fragmentation, developed throughout its story, can be said to be organized and follow a sequenced narrative influenced by the experimental style of Faulkner and Dos Passos. However, unlike Faulkner and Rulfo, Arreola's style is not necessarily confusing and challenging for the reader. Instead, Arreola's narrative is stylistically fragmented and deals mostly with day-to-day occurrences and the usual superstitions of a rural town. The style in which Arreola writes the lives and existence of individuals forges a new narrative literary style in Mexican literature.

Chronicle(s)

La feria expresses a plurality of voices that tell the story of Zapotlán's plots. It is these (fragmented) stories that make up what I call "land narrative" in *La feria*. Sara Poot-Herrera in her scholarly work on Juan José Arreola writes a classic study of *La feria* that serves as a foundation in which she examines the structure of the novel as a *crónica*

pueblerina and the many traditional concepts of what she defines as *escritura arreolesca*. Following this important scholar of Arreola, Seymour Menton in his study of *Juan José Arreola* (1963) cements the importance of Arreola in Latin American and US academia, examining Arreola's unique and eclectic style. These eloquent critiques of this peculiar, fragmented novel serve as foundation to contemplate the analysis of land under a new light, in context with the whole of its pages and critics that propose the exploration of a Mexican land, culture, and history. Such narrative mode is the reason why in her article "*La feria, una crónica pueblerina*" Sara Poot-Herrera considers Arreola's *Feria* as a fragmented novel in the form of a town's chronicle:

La feria, como festividad y como novela, es el espacio físico y textual que representa el orden importante. En la fiesta se remarca la desigualdad social y se acentúan las relaciones jerárquicas entre los personajes, que ocupan durante los festejos el lugar que les corresponde según su rango o jerarquía social, situación que se recrudece con el tiempo (1028-1029).

Arreola's fragmented narrative in this sense distinguishes the inequality among its characters according to the size of their plots and the continuity of their fragmented narrative through these same "plots." The importance of Arreola's characters is determined by the measure and importance of their "plot" because historically the quantity of owned lands determined the power that distinguished individuals held in Mexico's rural towns. The land narratives of the characters of the *campesino*, Tepano, and Gaspar, leading to Zapotlán's fair, gives them a place in the celebration and in the six months of preparation towards the event. As I said before, the hierarchy of the characters

in *La feria* and its celebration is marked by the size of the “plot” of each character, and this is also evident in the length of what they narrate. A character is thus more important if he owns more land, and this will in turn grant him the space for a longer story in the novel. Along these lines, according to Poot-Herrera the “open” textual space in the narrative invites characters to have a voice through which anyone can contribute to the creation of Zapotlán’s history:

El espacio textual se abre a cada momento y permite la entrada de un sinnúmero de voces que van armando, por medio de historias colectivas e individuales, la historia de Zapotlán, espacio físico donde ocurren las acciones. Los fragmentos se convierten en piezas fundamentales de la novela, y su distribución responde tanto a las reglas de un juego preestablecido como a mecanismos internos que el texto por sí mismo va creando (1020).

Yet not everyone’s “plot” is the same size or has the same continuity and the concept of “textual space” that can be interpreted to refer to that land is what distinguishes the characters in Zapotlán. In this agrarian context, land in *La feria* serves as a fragmented space and ultimately a catalyst for conversation that invites a town to say and express all their concerns and ideas about land. This happens in terms of social classes and the importance of characters as the individual narratives of land, as well as of their “plots” as fragmented stories telling us of how characters use land. *La feria*’s fragmentation is ultimately a structural metaphor of Mexico’s land, which cracks itself open when it is dry

and yet maintains its shape, like Arreola's narrative that writes itself on Mexican land.

Thus, the fragmentation of the novel acquires different modes of literary presence:

El fragmentarismo en *La feria* adquiere diferentes modalidades. No sólo le da su peculiaridad al texto, sino que los fragmentos son, a su vez, partes, cortes de documentos, historias, discursos, visiones, diálogos, distribuidos discontinuamente en el espacio textual, que resulta también fragmentado... Los 288 fragmentos de *La feria* marcan surcos en el espacio textual y dan cabida a una municipalidad de elementos heterogéneos, que, por un lado, le dan su unidad al texto y, por otro, ofrecen una imagen completa de Zapotlán en el contexto de su historia (Poot-Herrera 1020).

As Poot-Herrera says, Arreola discusses the history of Zapotlán using the modalities of working the land in his description of how history is shaped as an agrarian plot. In the quote, Poot-Herrera states that the narratives of *La feria* are historical fragments of the spaces of Zapotlán. Beyond agreeing, I say that these fragments also offer a historical reading of the traditions and future of Zapotlán's land and characters. The variety of fragments that make up *La feria* offer a well-made narrative of agrarian land in the history of Zapotlán and rural Mexico. And in this context *La feria* conceptualizes a plethora of fragmented voices that ultimately serve as individual narratives of rural land that tell the complete story of *agricultores* and other characters, plots through an array of manners that coincide and revolve around land.

Characters, voices and plot in *La feria*

Written in first person, the individual narratives of *La feria* are conveyed in various voices and individuals.¹⁴ The many characters of *La feria* plot their stories through narratives about how they live off of the land. Among the most predominant characters in the narrative of Arreola's novel are Gaspar Ruiz de Cabrera (the towns' lawyer), Juan Tepano (the voice of the naturals of Zapotlán), and a nameless *agricultor*. This *agricultor* is Arreola's representation of Mexico's paradigmatic midcentury farmer or *pequeño propietario*. Through his story one learns the struggles and livelihood of landowners in Mexico after its agrarian reforms. This is important because land reforms in Mexico after the revolution allowed for the country's agrarian atonement according to Emilio Kourí in his article "La promesa agraria del artículo 27". *La feria* offers a conceptualization beyond statistics of *pequeños propietarios* and Arreola portrays their land as a woven story of actions that are part of their life.

La feria is made up by the actions of its characters towards their land, in which the plot of the novel is an eternal battle for land ownership. We can even say that Arreola makes of this custom a philosophical dilemma. In Arreola's philosophical conception all kinds of people try to attain land, by all possible means. Being a *campesino* is a way of life and not a technical skill or a profession, and yet it is understood as a common practice in Mexico. In the same way, for characters in *La feria* land is their life purpose. The relation of men to land as portrayed by Arreola idealizes the rural experiences of people. These experiences ultimately paint rural life as an idyllic relation between man and land that at the end of the fair becomes as an explosive and enigmatic paradigm. In *La feria* the clear-cut notion of a *campesino*'s relation with land is complex and goes

¹⁴ For more on discuses and voices see Campos "El aplazamiento de la voz: dialogismo y simultaneidad en

beyond a simple rural narrative. In this sense, in *La feria* the characters are more intricate than the usual historical representations of the Mexican *campesino*, who indeed has to go through complex life dilemmas. This feature of Arreola's work allows for the revaluation and vindication of people and land in relation to their previous historical and literary representations.

The characters of *La feria* relate to each other through their plot's narratives. These various narratives range from general events, history, gossip, work, and day to daily life events in an agrarian rural town. These narratives can also be described as a literary discourse individually made by each character. In reading *La feria*, one ultimately understands each character through their individual story. The following is an analysis of a selection of characters that in *La feria* that serve as examples of the enigmatic paradigms of Mexican provincial characters. My analysis of these paradigmatic characters emphasizes their views on land ownership.

In *La feria*, we find out about most stories through gossip. But, most importantly, Zapotlán's rural gossip serves to foreshadow the policies and quality of life that pertain directly or indirectly to people and their *tierras*.¹⁵ Through their individual features and voices, the characters denounce the injustices and the disparity in the distribution of land in Zapotlán:

...Don Fulano tiene muchas tierras, así de labranza como huertas que el cabildo le ha dado y dizque él ha comprado de personas particulares. Son

La feria de Juan José Arreola" and Troncoso Araos "La feria discursiva de Juan José Arreola".

mucha cantidad y las tiene usurpadas y tomadas con mal título y derecho, porque las personas de quien las ha habido no se las podían vender porque las tales personas no tenían facultad para ello (Arreola 28).

The disparity of land distribution exposed as a social critique by Arreola is made not by a particular character but by the generalized gossip. Arreola uses the indeterminate personal noun “fulano” to refer to no one and everyone. And yet, this no one and everyone is referred to as a “Don,” a kind of title of honor bestowed upon him by his land ownership. Through generic characters, Arreola describes Zapotlán’s agrarian existence. This too is the case of the nameless new *agricultor* that does not have a name and that can potentially be any *campesino*.

Arreola portrays the generalized despair of the characters prior to the celebration of the fair. When the fair finally takes place, one-character states that all year “we” wait for the fair which is supposed to be a celebration of good businesses, love, or tradition—“Todo el año parecemos coheteros, nomás pensando en la feria y llenándonos de pólvora la cabeza para que a la hora de la hora, todas las ilusiones se nos ceben (Arreola 171). Zapotlán’s fair seems to be the only goal and thing to look forward to for the characters that have had a labor-intensive year. And yet, it seems that even during the celebration something seems to wither their happiness. In the quote, the character is saying that all year long they think about the fair and store explosive materials, like thoughts and plans in their heads, for the grand celebration. However, the fantasy of having a moment of

¹⁵ When referring to land as *tierra(s)*, I will use the term *tierra(s)* in Spanish to refer to the economic context and productivity of land, as it has a connotation of wealth and a social status, different from how the term “land” is understood in English.

catharsis will probably be frustrated and nothing grand will happen or change. The tension that does not explode and plans of acquiring property that get postponed, ultimately defeats the characters' hopes for land. Yet, at the end of the novel, in the moment of celebration, characters comically decide to settle for waiting for the next year of the fair to attain something. As an example of this process, we can see how at the beginning of the fair the nameless *campesino* realizes that he will not be able to harvest because his purchase of land was not legal, and so he returns to his old job as a shoemaker. In the context of *La feria*, the previously mentioned fire powder refers to the illusion that characters had that in the end is defeated.

One example of the different perspectives of how individuals celebrate during the fair is that of *don* Salva, the town's vendor that hopes to lure Chayo, a young woman that used to work for him. Don Salva sends her gifts of fabrics (for new dresses) in the hopes of her love:

Desde que Chayo no fue más a su tienda, a don Salva se le iba el suelo de los pies, y el tema de sus insomnios tuvo un cambio decisivo. Ya no se pasaba las horas en bodas imaginarias, desflorando a cuanta muchacha se le venía a la cabeza. Se la pasaba, por decirlo así, con el alma de rodillas frente a una virgen de hierro. “Y pensar que yo la tenía cerca de mí todos los días, que la veía de frente y de perfil mañana y tarde, y le mandaba hacer esto y lo otro, que me preguntaba y me respondía”. A don Salva casi le salían las lágrimas. Acariciaba en la imaginación las telas de flat y de chermés con que se imaginaba verla vestida. “Mañana le voy a mandar de

regalo tres cortes para que los estrene en la feria. ¿Pero dónde tenía yo la cabeza? Tan fácil que era hablarle en la tienda. Y ahora ¿qué dirán las gentes cuando me vean rondando la casa de don Fidencio el cerero?”
(Arreola 175),

Don Salva intends to celebrate the fair with Chayo by telling her he loves her, thus following the traditions of the land. However, don Fidencio, Chayo’s father, secludes his daughter (“*a piedra y lodo*”) behind stone and mud to keep her from what he describes is a celebration of debauchery.¹⁶ In this case, Don Salva is another example of how the fair as a climax fails, as his intentions of celebrating with Chayo fail. Although neither Don Salva nor Chayo are landowners, they hope to celebrate as such, given that such a possibility is based on the money that the harvest brings to Zapotlán. Don Salva hopes to sell as much clothes and things as he can, for the town to use during the fair, in order to buy his own happiness by buying off Chayo and her family. Chayo like the other girls in town hopes to find a man other than don Salva, and yet his interest in her, make don Fidencio seclude her during the fair.¹⁷ Their actions reflect the greed and hopes of characters without land. Although they are part of the low middle class, don Fidencio, does not want Don Salva for his daughter Chayo. Instead, he wants to seclude her daughter, “save her” and “store” her in the hopes of marrying her off to a landowner.

¹⁶ Poot-Herrera, in *Un giro en espiral*, delves deeper into the debauchery and debacle of *La feria*, entertaining the double meaning *risqué crónicas* and citing Matthew from the bible among other biblical mentions starting in (page 186) *La feria*, Lugar de citas y encuentros.

¹⁷ For more on the role and representation of women in *La feria* see Jurado Valencia “Representación de la mujer en la narrativa de Juan José Arreola”.

Another story of *La feria* in which *tierras* brings out the worst in characters because of their greed is that of the town's lawyer *don* Gaspar. His death and funerary parade reflect how even nature rejects his persona:

La tierra del Panteón estaba hecha un lodazal. Alrededor de la fosa todos buscaban los sitios menos húmedos y se subían a las tumbas. Don Abigail se acercó reservadamente al profesor Morales, a propósito de la oración fúnebre:

—Mire, profesor, ya quedamos muy pocos y todos estamos cansados. ¿Por qué no la publica mejor en el periódico?

A la hora de bajar el cajón, todos se acercaron para echarle al licenciado su puñito de lodo. Para no mancharse los dedos, Celso arrojó una florecita, de parte de doña María la Matraca. El señor cura dijo las oraciones rituales y echó sobre la tumba unas gotas de agua bendita que se confundieron con la lluvia (53).

In the scene, rain is mixed with holy water and a group of people that would rather be home than burying the lawyer symbolize nature's wrath on the life of a man that did not live according to tradition. The environment and religion are mixed together as a sign of the symbolic punishment for the usury of the scrupulous lawyer. As doubt of his salvation, along with the rain, even the soil takes vengeance by becoming mud. In the scene, the few people that stayed for the lawyer's burial throw handfuls of mud, and the muddy ground seems to reject the body of the dishonest lawyer. Notice in the following

quote how before the burial, the funerary parade seems more in line with a postmortem act of public humiliation:

—¡Ven Jacinta ayúdame a meter todas las jaulas! ¡Jesús mil veces! Qué tormenta se vino ...Y el pobre Licenciado que han de ir llegando con él a la Plazuela de Ameca. Si siquiera les hubiera agarrado el agua al ir pasando por el santuario... Así podrían guardarse y el difunto saldría ganando. Un rato más en la casa de Dios antes de que lo echen al pozo (Arreola 49).

The sarcasm with which Chonita refers to the dead lawyer as “*pobre*” paired with her ironic remarks about the rain “*Jesús mil veces*” reflect her and the towns lack of empathy towards *don* Gaspar. Chonita’s sarcasm and actions ultimately scorns the dead lawyer. It is as if everyone in Zapotlán does not care about his death or how the lawyer died. No one clarifies the causes of his death almost as if he is better off left dead. Without any solemnity, the lawyer is thrown into a cold ditch, and they bury him in the cold mud before everyone in the town gossips about his deplorable life and his love for money. Even the caged birds in a house seem to better fare the rain, as they are rushed inside away from the rain, faster than the body of the lawyer.

The lawyer’s plot in *La feria* is that of an individual of low class with a lack of professional ethics. Among the many stories of *La feria* and *don* Gaspar, one exposes the dirty dealings in which Ruíz de Cabrera illegally attains *tierras*:

...porque el licenciado Gaspar Ruiz de Cabrera me dio la noticia de esa tierra y yo en su nombre y para él supliqué se me concediera, quedé que

consiguiéndola le haría declaración y traspaso de ella, y demás de esto el susodicho licenciado pagó las costas de las diligencia para sacar y despachar el dicho título, y por mi trabajo y solicitud que puse en el negocio me ha dado setenta pesos de oro común, de lo cual me doy por contento y pagado a mi voluntad (Arreola 25).

Paying others to get his hands on land is the only way the lawyer can attain property from those that sell it (but would never sell it to him). Through this swindle, the narrative of *La feria* evidences that the lawyer is of little trust, just as those that deal with him. The use of legal jargon in the voice of the person that the lawyer uses to attain land further cements the consequences of a post revolutionary legalistic rural bureaucracy that implements land reforms among *campesinos* and *caciques*. The transaction that don Gaspar does with a naïve and illiterate *campesino* or with Juan Tepano is done in bad faith on the side of the legal apparatus. And even though the *campesino* or *natural* appropriates the legalistic language of don Gaspar, he is also swindled out of the land that is already deeded to his name. It is unclear if the land in question is part of the agrarian reform or if it is in anyway subsidized or if it benefits from public works of irrigation, electricity, or sewage. The underlying thematic of Arreola's narrative only states that the land in question is far more valuable than the accorded sixty pesos, and that the legal concession is initially made out to a third party as it cannot be carried out directly by the legal worker. This can be inferred because the private seller does not want to sell to don Gaspar or because the concession of that parcel is not intended for the bureaucracy. From this we can only

doubt if the *campesino* or *natural* is aware of the transaction or if he is really happy, settling down for merely sixty pesos.

Returning to the collective narrative of Zapotlán's naturals, land still divides the town in the post-revolutionary context of the midcentury.¹⁸ In their coherent fragmented stories of their "plots" Juan Tepano is the voice of Tlayacanques as he describes the history of a land, they consider their property. Tepano is also the intermediary between Tlayacanques and the *gentes de razón* of Zapotlán. His narrative is an ordered and organized account of the collective grievances of the Tlayacanques, that at times seems to be individualistic or reclusive.

—Nada de remoto caso. Como no podíamos quedar conformes, luego nos pusimos a reclamar, y para que es más que la verdad, nos dieron la razón, pero no la tierra. Lo que sea de cada quien, el señor don Porfirio, como todas las autoridades antiguas, dijo que se nos hiciera justicia. Y desde entonces nos han dado largas. El pleito se paró en 1909 porque vino la revuelta y luego los cristeros y tantos otros trastornos...Fíjese, a nosotros de nada nos ha servido el agrarismo, nomás hemos visto pelear a los hacendados y a los agraristas, que algo salen ganando unos y otros. Pero de la Comunidad Indígena nadie se acuerda, y nosotros somos los meros interesados, los primeros dueños de la tierra...(Arreola 27-8).

¹⁸ For more on the history of land parcelization and indigenous land claims in the context of Mexico see Kourí, *A Pueblo Divided*.

The name Juan Tepano pays homage to another Juan Tepano, a native of the Easter Islands that accompanied the last King Simeon Riro Kāinga to Valparaíso in 1898 to air his diplomatic grievances against the lands that the Chilean government had annexed from the Easter Islands. Tepano ultimately served as an informant to the Europeans in Chile, as a Malinche in his own right. Juan José Arreola's Tepano is also a sort of translator, a Malinche, and from his narrative it can be deduced that he has close ties to the lawyer and has acquired legal notions and vocabulary which he uses to convey his speech.

The stories of the Tlayacanques through voice of Juan Tepano are Mexico's midcentury narratives of antebellum and post-revolutionary land discourses within the literature of rural Jalisco, as well as a window into Zapotlán's Pre-Hispanic and other Colonial historical periods in Latin America. Tepano's "individual" claim to the *tierras* of Zapotlán is clear in all the layers of history and their voices. In his speech, it is made clear that regardless of the futility of the Tlayacanques collective claim and turmoil that the collective faces during the different contexts within Zapotlán's history, Tepano with his own voice is willing to deal with don Gaspar. Tepano's narrative discourse is that of a person that has had years of close contact and the guidance of a lawyer. He is ultimately a character of high stature within the narrative and context of Zapotlán and its naturals. At the end, his story has a tragic result because he fails to attain land, perhaps due to his siding with the towns' dishonest lawyer that mysteriously dies before closing the deeds over various land claims that involved everyone in Zapotlán.

In the stories of other characters, land continues to be ever present in the plot-centered narratives of *La feria*. Supernatural occurrences and other traditions following folk tales are also inseparable from land and its narratives. In *La feria* this fantastic narrative idealizes oral tradition. For example, we read of how a soul tells a boy where money is buried in a neighbor's house. Here, land serves as place to hide (save) money in its depths and also to enrich those who own the land:

—Yo desde chico he sido muy perseguido por las ánimas del Purgatorio. Hace mucho, cuando vivíamos por el Becerro de Oro teníamos una vecina enferma. Hay que ayudarse entre vecinos. Yo iba a preguntarle antes de dormirme si algo se le ofrecía. Una noche me mandó que le trajera agua caliente. Y cuando la estaba calentando en la cocina, me habló un ánima y me dijo dónde estaba el dinero, allí nomás, en un pesebre del corral. Se lo dije a la señora y ella ya no necesitó el agua caliente para su dolor. Se levantó de la cama, me dio una barra de albañil y tumbamos el pesebre. Había un cazo de cobre con tapadera, muy pesado. Entre los dos lo arrastramos a su cuarto. La señora lo destapó y me dijo que eran puras monedas viejas de las que ya no circulan. Al otro día se fue a Guadalajara y volvió con buena ropa. Hizo su casa de nuevo, comía muy bien y compró muebles y animales. Y no me dio ni un sagrado quinto (Arreola 163).

Souls that communicate with the living from places like the Purgatory and tell the living characters of elusive buried treasures add to the mystique aura of the land and its

characters in *La feria*. More than beliefs and treasures, land buries in its depths the past and present hopes of the characters, but also of a whole historical period where *campesinos* and *pequeños propietarios* had hoped to gain something out of the land they received after the Revolution.

Tierra, land in *La feria*

In Zapotlán, *tierra* (land) is what gives people's stories a "plot" and a valid narrative, as land functions as an impetus and catalyst for their stories. These stories of rural life can be read as a constant companion to rural culture in general and as central to the narratives of those whose "plot" is about an agrarian land within a country that at the time was experiencing modernization and a rural exodus into the city.¹⁹ Works such as *La feria* locate such land phenomena at the point where history and literature intersect, and where peoples' land "plots" serve as a medium to document the life and literary tradition of rural Mexico through a fragmented narrative. This, in turn, articulates an experience of how the country has been driven by its desire to codify the land and its universal aspiration as a national "plot". By using Mexico's post revolutionary social history as a theoretical frame to read *La feria*, this chapter offers a new understanding of the relation between land, history, and literature which will prove to be crucial for the conception of property in relation to its historical function as well as in literature as a device and representational object. Reading *La feria*'s land mentions as historical and literary goes beyond a theoretical reading of land, situating "land and property" in a perspective

¹⁹ In midcentury works such as *Pedro Páramo* the phenomena of rural to urban exodus is evident, for example, when Damiana Cisneros tells Juan Preciado: "—Tiliches—me dijo ella—. Tengo la casa toda

beyond fiction and narrative. Ultimately this study is a historical approximation to *La feria*'s stories that also yields a qualitative reading of peoples' plots which goes beyond fiction and a novel.

The land "plots" of people bestow individuals with a literary theme for their narrative. And yet, as Poot-Herrera notes, *La feria* "Al no ser un texto convencional, en el sentido de que es un discurso lineal, sino un texto fracturado histórica y textualmente, es necesaria la búsqueda de significados sugeridos por la adopción de una escritura discontinua" (146). In this sense the textual fragmentation of Arreola's narrative hides the historical significance of land within the novel. Throughout *La feria* Arreola develops his unique style which Poot-Herrera describes as "*escritura arreolesca*" and which she defines as a fresh style of writing. This also how Seymour Menton describes Arreola's style, an eclectic style of writing the Mexican experience and culture,

the author's eclectic spirit; the existentialist's despair tempered by the Mexican's magic realism; the burlesquing of erudition and science; the reaction against the excessive commercialization of the world; the dim view of marriage; the symbolic use of animals; the interest in portraying people and events from all periods of history with a variety of styles--all of these things presented with the subtle touch which is so characteristic of Arreola (Menton, "Juan" 305).

entilichada. La escojieron para guardar sus muebles los que se fueron, y nadie a regresado por ellos" (Rulfo 12).

Reading *La feria* is experiencing the life and culture of a rural town.²⁰ Juan José Arreola's *La feria* as well as his entire work were well received by literary critics from the beginning and they were described as repetitive ideas told in "fragments", but they were also described as coherent stories having a continuity. *La feria* is in this sense a prime example of a redefined *Arreolesque*²¹ writing that is adequate for the search of land and of its narrative.

Religion

The role of Arreola's characters and of their "plot" depends on fortune and on their land, but it is also heavily rooted in a complex catholic religious tradition that relies on *tierra*. A worldly experience based on tertiary world view, that locates land-earth between heaven and hell.²² This tradition forces men to live a moral life kept in check by society, but most importantly on the standards socially defined by the quantity of owned land. The spiritual life of the characters is in this sense directly or indirectly dependent on land, just as it was historically in the micro cosmos of Zapotlán it was a property of the catholic church that at the time owned the majority of the land in Mexico. Arreola portrays this dynamic of land and religion in his historiographical recollection of ecclesiastical land reforms that affected Zapotlán throughout its long history:

²⁰ For more on culture in *La feria* see Anderson "Creating Cultural Prestige".

²¹ Poot-Herrera observes that *Bajtín* can be used to interpret the concept of "fair" that can be substituted for the notion of "carnival" that in Zapotlán's fair allows for free contact that annuls laws and daily life limitations. Arreolesqué hence refers to the *risqué* that Arreola creates in its narrative and also how Poot-Herrera defines Arreola's style of narrative as *escritura arreolesca* (*Un giro* 9, 211).

²² For more on religion in *La feria* see Zacarías "Lo sacro en la obra de Juan José Arreola", and Mora Valcarcel "Juan José Arreola: *La feria* o 'Un apocalipsis de bolsillo'".

—La estatua de don Benito Juárez le da la espalda a la Parroquia desde el parque. Mírela usted. Cuando los cristeros estuvieron a punto de entrar a Zapotlán, alguien les dijo que la iban a tumbar. Pero no se les hizo. Los beatos odian a don Benito porque les quitó las propiedades a la iglesia, pero se les olvida que ellos se aprovecharon de la situación, comprando barato lo que se llama bienes de manos muertas. Todo pasó a manos de estos vivos, casi siempre con la promesa de que a la hora de su muerte se lo iban a heredar a la iglesia. Le voy a poner un ejemplo. El año de 1846, un señor Cura cuyo nombre no viene al caso, anticipándose a las Leyes de Reforma, le vendió a un rico de aquí casi todos los terrenos de la Cofradía de Nuestro Amo, como si fueran suyos. Sabe usted, toda esa parte de llano y monte que ahora se llama el Rincón del Zapote. Y todavía hay quienes se asusten porque don Benito está allí en el parque, dándole la espalda a la Parroquia (Arreola 25).

As we now Juárez in his policies *Leyes de Reforma* reforms separate church and state, expropriating the vast lands of the church where its power and wealth resided. The statute of Juárez is cast aside to represent how Juárez gives its back to the church as an institution. Simultaneously as one of its last efforts to defend its power, the church places the statue in a place where it can be forgotten.

For the unnamed *agricultor* different spiritual themes and reforms seep into his land and his knowledge about land are based on his faith.

Ya con mi tierra acabada de rayar, se me presentan, como a todos los agricultores, dos posibilidades: sembrar en seco, o esperar a que llueva para que la tierra esté bien mojada. Si uno tiene fe en que pronto viene el temporal, vale la pena anticiparse y exponer la semilla al daño de cuervos, tililes y tuzas. Si se retrasa el temporal, o no llega en firme, las milpas no nacen como se debe. Pero si en término de una semana cae una buena tormenta, se viene muy pronto y pareja la nacencia. Ni qué decir que yo voy a anticiparme. Creo que seré el primero que se arriesga. Ya me anda por ver brotar las milpas. Además, oí decir que cuando se siembra sobre mojado, la milpa también nace dispareja, porque la operación dura entre quince y veintidós días y cuando ya hay plantas listas para la escarda, otras apenas empiezan a nacer. Prefiero confiar en la Divina Providencia, y mientras llueve, le revolveré unas piedras al Credo. Voy a poner a todos los mozos a que espanten a los cuervos y a que maten a los tililes y tuzas con escopeta (Arreola 33-4).

In Zapotlán agrarian occurrences like rain and a good harvest are dependent on faith. Land and religion in this context merge two traditional institutions, the church and the land in terms of it being a legal property. Church and land force people to live according to their traditions and rules and those that do not follow their dogmas risk becoming a pariah and the shame of the community. As the quote says, this rule is even true for the birds that the *agricultor* described: if they do not respect the peaceful relation between men and land, the peaceful growth of grains, they are under the risk of being killed. From

the narrative of Arreola's farmer, the reader can conclude that in Zapotlán land and its harvest function more through faith than as natural causes. The religious rhetoric obviously inscribed in the rural knowledge of the *campesinado*, through the divine nomenclature: *Credo, Divina Providencia*.

Historical layers of tierra in *La feria*

In *La feria*, historical themes of land are approached through the various noteworthy historic chronicles of Zapotlán's land and various other historical events, and objects found in its soil. Arreola's *La feria* encompasses Zapotlán's Pre-Hispanic, Colonial, Independent, Revolutionary, and contemporary historical periods through the narratives of what individuals "dig out" of Zapotlán's geological layers of soil. Such objects or as Arreola calls them *monos* are perhaps the archeological idols of the Tlayacanques, that in *La feria's* plot serve as examples of how Zapotlán's geological layers unify the plots of the various characters over time. Land, in this sense, is a clear example of a unifying "character" in Zapotlán, in which its land hides the history and culture of the inhabitants in its depth. In the novel, the story of a boy highlights the interconnectedness of land in a larger context.

—Ahora tengo muchas relaciones, pero ya no se las doy a nadie. En la misma casa en que vivo hay dinero enterrado, pero está muy hondo. Mandé llamar un pocero y lo puse a escarbar al pie de un naranjo. Cuando iban ya más de siete metros le dije que parara. "Pero si todavía no hay agua". "No le hace, ya saldrá. Hasta ahí pago". Y desde el día siguiente yo le seguí dando solo. A los nueve metros empecé a sacar monos. Puros

monos de barro, unos quebrados como éstos, miren: éste tiene una culebra enrollada en la cabeza, éste está tocando un pito. Otros tienen las manitas así adelante como perro. Otros tienen copetes de danzante, Pero nada de dinero, puros monos. Si los pagan bien los sigo sacando, si no, mejor los dejo enterrados.

Ahora no queda más remedio que ponerme al pie del otro naranjo (Arreola 164).

More in line with written narratives, the finding of cultural objects (money and idols) buried in the land, produces a record of how characters assign objects to traditional customs of burring valuables. Individuals throughout the history of Zapotlán entrust land to cover their precious objects.

Beliefs and objects are not the only things rooted in the land of a town, its traditions and most importantly its celebrations and fair are deeply tied to the land of Zapotlán, and it is this fair what gives title to Arreola's novel. The fair is a celebration directly related to the land and its people. And it is in the culmination of the towns' fair that the narratives of various people apathetically collide in an explosion that clashes the experiences of *indios*, *agricultores*, and *pobladores* and their story "plots" in relation to their *pequeñas propiedades* which were fractioned from the vast lands of the *Hacienda*.

Knowledge within a rural discourse

La feria is in this sense is a "grassroots" narrative that describes an organic mass movement regarding Zapotlán's disparity in land ownership that is based on popular and traditional discourse within people's narrative. Zapotlán's land movement is independent

of urban land policies and ordinances. I am using grassroots as a political movement that springs organically. Rasmus Klocker Larsen in his article defines a grassroots movement in the context of Vietnam's rural development as a majority movement of civil participation with intentions of democratic governance (Larsen, 316). By grassroots narrative I mean that the demands and protests in the narratives of *La feria* are organized organically around the community of Zapotlán in an effort to develop the rural sector and a democratic Mexico. In the novel, the grassroots land protest springs organically in the rural setting and community, from the people and their stories that are not institutionally organized or planned. This leads me to say that *La feria*'s narrative is an "organic narrative" in the sense that the stories do not have an external motive, whereas from the fifties onwards an urban novel with urban themes arises, from the context of Arreola this notion remains parallel in the sense that we have a writer in a city writing about a rural setting. The Zapotlán's civil movement of the rural sector in terms of grassroots, that is observed in *La feria* points to a shift towards opportunities of democratic development rather than to land reform.

The agricultural inexperience of the unnamed *agricultor* offers a window into rural land knowledge and its acquisition. The wide cultural conceptualization of land knowledge in *La feria* hence is a through course of his venture and new business experiences in the rural sector of Zapotlán, a setting where people are inherently knowledgeable of land and its culture. In a fragment of this farmer's narrative in *La feria*,

land in rural Mexico is an ample field of employment and specialization.²³ Following this narrative, jobs like those of *peones* (field hands) and *mayordomos* (overseers) are widely desired and paid directly with grain or *pesos*.

Contraté para trabajar la tierra a un mayordomo, con sueldo de un peso diario. Él a su vez apalabró ocho peones o gañanes con paga de cincuenta centavos pelones, porque como yo no tengo maíz ni frijol de cosechas anteriores, no pude contratarlos a base de ración, o sea una medida de maíz y un litro de frijol diario, más veinticinco centavos en efectivo. El trato fue verbal, y cada uno recibió diez o doce pesos como acomodo, que deberán restituir abonando cincuenta centavos a la semana. El gañan que recibe este dinero se llama a sí mismo vendido y no puede trabajar ya de alquilado, como hacen los que no tienen acomodo y trabajan libremente por días o semanas.

Una vez formada la cuadrilla, vamos a proceder a la limpia de la tierra, que es de rastrojo porque fue sembrada el año pasado. Las que no lo han sido se llaman descansadas y son preferidas por medieros y parcioneros, que esperan de ellas, como es natural, mayor rendimiento (Arreola 11-2).

Agrarian diction in this fragment is consistent with land's knowledge and its predominance in the *tierra* in the mostly rural sector of Zapotlán. The culture of land in

²³ Joseph, Gilbert and Daniel Nugent in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* write about the development of a modern state in the second half of twentieth century Mexico.

this *costumbrista* narrative gives an adequate name to a pastoral life. *Frijol* and *maíz* are the commodities of rural land that forge a bucolic economy where *cuadrillas* (crews) can be paid with grain the same as *pesos* and a workers' word is more valuable than a contract. In this way, workers that sell their labor have the grand responsibility of upholding their verbal and informal agreements. The exploitation of land in the rural sense of Zapotlán is a narrative of *laissez-faire* culture, but most importantly a story of organic self-sufficiency, where land provides everything and establishes an order in the role that each of the characters play in the text. Arreola's unnamed *agricultor* acquires a common understanding of land beyond agriculture. Land and its traditions are, in this context, more valuable than a contract.

Body

La feria's arreolesque style of writing complements the multifaceted notions of land in Zapotlán's fair and history. Poot-Herrera organizes the various narratives of Arreola into the category of *La feria, juegos y fuegos de artifico* a play of words that defines her study of the novel's narrative as that of fun and games, but also marking her interpretation of *La feria* as an analysis of fiction using the ponds of "fuegos" to mean "juegos" and "artificio" to mean "fiction or art".

La feria es...la microhistoria de Zapotlán hecha texto. El autor (historiador de alguna manera) se esfuma y cede lugar a voces que hablan por sí mismas desde variadas situaciones. Todas estas voces asumen un presente en su enunciación, hacia este tiempo concluyen las múltiples temporalidades que funcionan en el texto. El pasado histórico simula un

presente, y el presente actual asume su propia temporalidad. Sin embargo, este juego de presentes en la historia y en la escritura pone en su lugar cada uno de los acontecimientos y, de este modo, logra vislumbrarse una sucesión detrás de la simultaneidad que muestra causas y efectos, coincidencias y contrastes, y más que nada, una visión que descubre y sabe diferenciar lo inamovible y lo cambiante para ponerlos a funcionar en un juego dinámico de temporalidades (178-9).

Poot-Herrera observes the historical artifice in the narrative of *La feria*, that distinguishes the novel as a work of literary and historic importance, where land is a symbolic diachronic of Zapotlán and its characters. The temporality the narrative creates a fictional circular chronological history of the land in Zapotlán. In this sense *La feria*'s narrative recovers a repetitive history of land and the events that happen in it throughout the years:

El texto deja abierta la posibilidad de la recuperación de los sucesos y, en un intento por recoger los hilos que teje y corta, reúne en un fragmento su solución inmediata. Poco antes de concluir, da rienda suelta a una variedad de voces que hablan al mismo tiempo de la feria y el problema de tierras, desde una clase triunfadora que se siente legitimada por un poder divino. La polifonía de voces se da a través de breves preguntas y respuestas emitidas por una visión consiente de su clase, que habla con burla y prepotencia (Poot-Herrera 167).

The importance level of voices in *La feria* defines characters and establishes legitimacy. The difference in the voices of these characters gives validity to what they propose. Most

of what these voices get across are solutions to problems of land. Ultimately characters' plots are a land narrative that describes the land ownership of Zapotlán.

Zapotlán's land history in *La feria* crosses the fine line of reality to fiction in order to recover a general history of the rural lands of Jalisco as well as of the larger context in Mexico:

Los apuntes del agricultor marcan pausadamente los días, las semanas, y los meses que transcurren; al mismo tiempo, enmarcan el año que se desarrolla en el texto, respecto al anterior y al siguiente...historias individuales, entre otras, enmarcan junto con las que colectivamente vive el pueblo, la atención al calendario que registra la microhistoria de Zapotlán (Poot-Herrera 178).

The micro history of *La feria* and its land narratives describe the personal and human experiences present in the writings and stories of characters like Arreola's nameless farmer. In this sense land narrative offers a universal understanding of how *tierra* conditions characters in their day-to-day life. Land is in literature a factor that conditions characters far more than any literary style. The physical experience of Authors like Arreola is seen in the entirety of their works, but more noticeably in their land narratives, narrative explicitly about the physical and artistic prevalence of land in literature.

In *La feria*, land ownership in correlation to social status is among the most important factors contributing to the climax of the plot of the novel. Furthermore, the literary narratives in *La feria* rescue traditions unique to rural Mexico that Arreola describes in detail. Close to the end of *La feria*, in the fair of the town various land

related conflicts take hold as the collective of Tlayacanques are in charge of the religious festivities:

El problema de la posesión de las tierras se liga con la fiesta anual que se celebra; aun en su situación actual de desposeída, la comunidad indígena hace a un lado su problema fundamental y se hace cargo de la fiesta religiosa. Ser rico o ser pobre para estos personajes es tener las tierras o carecer de ellas (Poot-Herrera 157).

The lack of land for the characters of *La feria* is the utter equivalent of being “dirt” poor. Juan Tepano ultimately voices this social context, as he is the one that denounces the lack of land of the indigenous collective. Lacking land, in this sense, deems the Tlayacanques uncivilized as noted by Poot-Herrera, and as Tepano considers only non-indigenous groups as reasonable:

Por boca de Juan Tepano se sabe también cuál ha sido la organización de los indígenas desde siglos atrás...es primera voz en el texto y representa la mirada del pasado y el presente respecto a Zapotlán, específicamente a las situación de los indígenas frente a los que ellos llaman “gentes de razón”. Desde un principio este personaje se presta a sí mismo (Poot-Herrera 154-5).

The true unifying feature of all of the different groups in the novel, other than the fair, is their desire and claim for land in Zapotlán. One of these claims is that of Juan Tepano who, as we saw before, adopts a legal tone in his discourse. Poot-Herrera in her book *Un giro en espiral* observes that in *La feria* Juan Tepano speaks using the terms of someone

that has been in contact with lawyers for a long time: “Juan Tepano nos lo estuvo contando todo, lentamente, usando los términos como quien lleva mucho tiempo de hablar con abogados y huizacheros, lentamente, mientras acariciaba su antigua Vara de Justicia, hecha de manera incorruptible...” (155). From this we can deduce that Tepano is in collision with a character of moral turpitude, like the lawyer of the town Gaspar Ruíz de Cabrera. This subtle nexus gives a negative association to the Tlayacanques and their legal battle for land. Arreola’s narrative does not specify if these relations between the Tlayacanques and the lawyer are the product of forceful greed or deceit from the lawyer, Tepano, or both.

The various narratives in the novel follow a chronological order of events that lead to the town’s fair and to its explosive end.²⁴ Many of the stories are about the feuds over land and the quarrels between those that contended the ownership of land. This analysis will follow the story of a man that buys a plot of 53 hectares of land and narrates his experience throughout Arreola’s novel as his narrative becomes the predominant story of Zapotlán, along with a few others that this study has also addressed. The most complete narrative in *La feria* is the story of this unnamed man and how he becomes an *agricultor* and landowner. *La feria* follows the narrative of this nameless character that from shoemaker and poet attain a parcel of many hectares, and losses everything during Zapotlán’s fair. In *La feria* the actions of this character offer an important read of *tierra* and its importance in rural Jalisco, with macro tones that blanket the country.

²⁴ For more on orality and narrative in *La feria* see Jimenez de Báez “Rulfo en diálogo con Arreola y Fuentes”, en *El cuento mexicano* (Homenaje a Luis Leal), and Olea Franco “Rulfo y Arreola (otra vuelta de tuerca)” en *Pedro Páramo, diálogos en contrapunto*.

In *La feria* the way in which this man acquired a better position is considered a feat as would be that of any farmer living in rural Mexico at the turn of the midcentury. His story starts with a particularly long fragment where he establishes himself as a new landowner and farmer:²⁵

¡Ya soy agricultor! Acabo de comprar una parcela de cincuenta y cuatro hectáreas de tierras inafectables en un fraccionamiento de la Hacienda de Huescapala, calculada como de ocho yuntas de sembradura. Esto podré comprobarlo si caben en ella ocho hectólitros de semilla de maíz. La parcela está acotada por oriente y sur con lienzo de piedra china, abundante allí por la cercanía del Apastepetl. Al poniente, un vallado de dos metros de boca por uno y medio de profundidad sirve de límite. Al norte, una alambrada es el lindero con mi compadre Sabás. Este lienzo es de postes de mezquite, que a tres metros de distancia de cada uno, sostienen cuatro alambres de púas, clavados con grapas y arpones. Los arpones son alcayatas de punta escamada para que no salgan, y hechizas. Las forjan los aprendices de herrero con desperdicios de fierro y las entregan a los comercios a centavo y medio la pieza.

Esta aventura agrícola no deja de ser arriesgada, porque en la familia nunca ha habido gente de campo. Todos hemos sido zapateros. Nos ha ido bien el negocio dese que mi padre, muy aficionado a la

²⁵ For more on land ownership after the agrarian policies of the Mexican Revolution see Kourí “*La promesa agraria del artículo 27*”.

literatura, hizo famosa la zapatería con sus anuncios en verso. Yo heredé, y me felicito, el gusto por las letras. Soy miembro activo de Ateneo de Tzapotlatena, aunque mi producción poética es breve, fuera de las obras de carácter estrictamente comercial.

Aunque bien acreditado, mi negocio es pequeño, y para no dañarlo con una arbitraria extracción de capital, preferí hipotecar la casa. Esto, no le ha gustado a mucho a mi mujer. Junto a mi libro de cuentas agrícolas, que estoy llevando con todo detalle, se me ocurrió hace estos apuntes. El año que viene, si Dios me da vida y licencia, podré valerme por mí mismo sin andar preguntándole todo a las gentes que saben.

Lo único que me ha extrañado un poco es que para la operación de compraventa han tenido que hacerse toda una serie de trámites notariales muy fastidiosos. El legajo de las escrituras es muy extenso. Tal parece que esta tierra, antes de llegar a las mías, han pasado por muchas otras manos.

Y eso no me gusta (Arreola 8-9).

The proud owner tells the story of the measures of his plot, who are his neighbors, and thus provides us with a complete insight into his life. Through his exciting narration this *agricultor* or farmer states that he is the first in his family to venture into the field of agriculture. Although fond of his previous job as shoemaker and retailer, his narrative conveys that he is happier as an *agricultor*, giving him an air of feeling more successful regardless of the risk. In the tone of his narrative there is also hope of becoming independent if his agrarian venture succeeds in a year. The only thing he is nervous about

is how the land changed hands and it seems as though he cannot stand anyone touching his land, as he is describing it as a precious and prized commodity. *Tierra* in *La feria* is a commodity worth more than air. Characters like the nameless *agricultor*, the Tlayacanques, the lawyer, and Chayo all hope for land ownership in various ways. From Chayo's hopes of marrying well (someone with lots of land) to stealing it like Don Gaspar, everyone desires of owning land are set at different levels. These levels of desire span from minor to pathological. Don Gaspar dying for *tierras*, can be seen as transitory compared to the instant nature and demand for land of the Tlayacanques that have lasted for centuries.

Arreola makes a subtle social commentary of land and its transactions, using the change of hands as metaphor of the *Laissez-faire* historical context of Mexico's rural sector during the 1950's and the revolutionary periods and land policies, as costume and faith in rural towns such as Zapotlán permeate into the thought and actions of *campesinos* like those of Arreola's new *agricultor* that, from the time of tilling to harvest, lives without questioning the traditions of the land.

A partir del día del acabo, las labores quedan a merced del tiempo y de la voluntad divina, desde agosto hasta octubre. Todos pedimos, de rodillas en la iglesia, y al echarnos las cobijas antes de dormir, lluvias buenas y espaciadas, con veranillos de sol fuerte. De tierra, agua, sol y aire se hacen las mazorcas. Esto lo saben todos los que siembran año con año los campos de Zapotlán, pero para mí es un milagro. Y no creeré en él hasta que tenga en la mano los primeros granos de mi cosecha (Arreola 144).

Arreola's new *agricultor* sees the process of exploiting the land as a miracle. The thought of grains being made out of earth, water, and sun is something well known by *farmers* in Zapotitlán.

In *La feria*, the land economy of Zapotitlán is at the center of its narratives, just as in the rest of rural Mexico. Land figures as a source of abundance, fertility, and the single source of food as described in the story of the new landowner farmer:

Estamos haciendo la limpia con guango, machete corto y ancho, de punta encorvada. El cabo o agarradera es tubular, de la misma pieza y un poco cónico para encallarle un palo como de medio metro y poder blandirlo horizontalmente a derecha e izquierda y hacia abajo como guadaña. Así se derriban los rastrojos que quedan en pie y las plantas aventureras que en estas tierras florecen, como el moco de guajolote y el chicalote. El primero produce una semilla leguminosa que abona la tierra; es signo de fecundidad su abundancia (Arreola 13).

This new landowner portrays a land of hope and abundance as he describes the fertile cycle of his new acquired land made up of 53 hectares. His detailed account of legumes and land preparation leads his story to focus on the traditional standards of rural land. In this context, Mexico's midcentury urban modernity seems to lag behind rural knowledge as we can read in the next paragraph:

La limpia duró tres semanas. Ya hacen falta los bueyes. Hoy tomé en renta ocho yuntas, comprometido a pagar por cada una ocho hectólitros de maíz en cosecha, desgranado, herneado, y limpio, de buena clase y puesto a

domicilio del arrendador. Todo se multiplica por ocho: compré ocho arados de fierro, de los llamados de un ala, pues aquí ya casi no se trabaja con arados de palo (Arreola 16).

The absence of mechanical farm equipment testifies to the simple life and rural tradition of farming that depends on oxen to till the land of Zapotlán. The rude existence of animal agriculture is also inherent of self-sufficiency and of rural progress. Rural progress in Zapotlán is described as knowledge. With nothing other than land and rural knowledge, characters create a booming town with various professions and services. Life and services in Zapotlán run like a clock.

Traditional agriculture in this sense has a value not only of thriftiness but also of things well done, as noted in the precision of the till and the sowing of the seed in the story of Arreola's farmer.

Una vez terminado el deslome, hemos procedido a cruzar, esto es, a arar la tierra en sentido inverso al de los surcos. Cada hilo va rompiendo como veinticinco centímetros de tierra, que voltea en el ala de arado. Van las yuntas al sesgo, una detrás de otra, en escuadrilla, lo que se llama ir en reata. Hay otro sistema, que a mí no me gustó, en el que cada yunta va por separado abriendo su besana. No me gustó, porque hay que calcular muy bien las besanas para que no les queden becerros: le dicen así al espacio de tierra que queda sin arar en medio de la besana y que debe ser cerrado en una o dos vueltas. Esto da por regla general, uno o dos surcos malhechos en cada tramo de veinte o treinta metros. Y yo no quiero malhechuras.

En este segundo fierro se da como en dos semanas; al terminar, ya podremos tener lista la tierra para rayarla y sembrarla. Sólo en terrenos muy duros o engaramados es necesario dar otro fierro sesgado. Cuando se aproxime el temporal, según las muestras de nubes, vientos y otras señales que estoy aprendiendo, procederemos a rayar la tierra (Arreola 24).

Through the story of the new *campesino* and his acquisition of land and knowledge, the narrator captures the likes of a forward town at the forefront of rural knowledge and a rural world without technologies such as weather systems and tractors. Manpower paired with animals and *tierra* is in this sense is an unstoppable force of nature that, literally, forges the history of Zapotlán. Agrarian knowledge in this context also signifies power and specialization beyond new technologies. From the point of view of this narrative, human greed is the only ill in the pastoral fields of rural Mexico after the Revolution.

Ultimately, what brings forth demise to Arreola's new *agricultor* is not known or in doubt, but perhaps his fall is due to his doubts about the land. Yet, with his story, Arreola resolves the biggest conflict of land and the question of who really is an *agricultor*, which is in fact the timeless conflict of Zapotlán. With this example, Arreola notes that a *campesino* is not made, but born and that in his blood he carries the love for the land, proposing that land can only be inherited in Zapotlán. The stronger belief in his craft of making shoes next to his inexperience as a *campesino* allow others to meddle with the measurements of a land he is not likely to defend “—Alcé los ojos y vi un hombre que tenía en la mano un cordel de medir y le pregunté qué andaba haciendo. Me dijo: “Voy a medir la tierra para ver cuánta es su anchura y cuánta su longitud” (Arreola

145). The insecurity of a weak-hearted *agricultor* only wanting his land for business keeps Arreola's farmer at bay from litigators measuring it. Although there is something going on with his land and that of others, the *agricultor* sits in disbelief watching a public official measure it. This instance is the quintessential rural question of who should own "land" that is at the forefront of midcentury post-revolutionary ideologies in Mexican literature.

—A mí me pasó lo mismo. Siempre me voy temprano a la labor y ahora vi a dos individuos a caballo con traza de cazadores, siendo que allá por lo mío no hay nada a que tirarle. Me guarecí en el rancho y vi que andaban recorriendo todo el lindero. Se me hicieron muy sospechosos. Uno era se aquí, creo que uno de los tlayacanques por más señas. El otro era fuerano y si no me equivoco creo que es el ingeniero que les mandaron de no sé de dónde. Les pregunté a los mozos y me dijeron que ayer también los vieron.

—Sí, fíjese nomás que andan por todo el llano midiendo las tierras a cordel.

—Y yo, imagínese, apenas acabo de comprar mi potrero, y me aseguraron que eran tierras inafectables (Arreola 145).

Arreola's new farmer, like others, believes what the seller had assured him, that his land would be unaffected by any disputes. And in the whole of Zapotlán's land disputes belief and disbelief play an important role as a land of tradition and customs, where the weight of the *hacienda* and the ideologies of respect and admiration for those with land are still

“king” among the *campesinado*. One of the clearest examples of how land is related to the culmination of Zapotlán’s fair and apotheosis of people’s “plots” is the sad realization (during the celebration) of the new *agricultor*, that he will not be able to celebrate his harvest.

Pues ya estaría de Dios que no viera yo los primeros ni los últimos granos de maíz de mi cosecha.

Hoy sábado, al hacer la raya, le vendí a mi compadre Sabás el potrero con la labor en pie, en menos de lo que me costó. Ya habíamos empezado el corte de hoja, operación muy importante y que me dejó sin describir, porque éste es el último de mis apuntes. Sea por Dios.

Resultó que aparte del peligro que hay por lo de la comunidad indígena, el Tacamo estaba en litigio entre dos hermanos. Y el que me lo vendió no era dueño de todo. Ayer me citaron en el juzgado, y yo no soy para esas cosas. Mi compadre, que es colindante, ya tenía pleito anterior con estos herederos y va a jugarse el todo por el todo. Al fin que él tiene mucha experiencia y muchos intereses que defender. Allá él.

Con lo que recibí, apenas me ajustó para pagar mis deudas y la renta de Tiachepa, que se la dejé al dueño como tierra de agostadero.

Vuelvo a mis zapatos. Por cierto que lo único positivo que saqué de esta aventura es la ocurrencia de un modelo de calzado campestre que pienso lanzar al mercado para sustituir a los guaraches tradicionales. A ver si tengo éxito y puedo pagar pronto la hipoteca de la casa (Arreola 179).

The climactic resolution of people's narratives during the fair leaves our new *agricultor* like the rest of the town, resolute and only aware about the value of the land. At the end of *La feria* all characters realize that the celebration of the land in Zapotlán's fair is uneven and "unfair" like the skirt of a fat lady that is wide at the waist and smaller at the bottom.

—¿Qué tal estuvo la feria?

—Como las enaguas de la tía Valentina: angostas de abajo y anchas de la pretina.

—Yo me divertí como Dios manda...

—A mí me robaron la cobija.

—Y las tierras ¿se las van a devolver a los indios?

—El año de la hebra y el mes del cordón...

—Primero me cuelgan del palo más alto.

—Para eso hay arriba y abajo.

—Dios Nuestro Señor dispuso que nosotros fuéramos de arriba y que los indios cargaran con las andas...

—Al fin y al cabo que ellos también se divierten mucho por debajo...

—Ahora les hemos parado todos los pleitos y juicios...

—¿Y el Día del Juicio Final?

—Ya tenemos todos nuestros papeles arreglados, con la debida anticipación (Arreola 196-197).

Arreola's metaphorical "skirt" resolution alludes to the conformity of a town with a traditional hierarchy that is allocated in the land of a town, as many voices expose that land will never be given away. At the end of the fair Arreola makes the difficult realization that human kindness has its limits, and regardless of the good or bad morals of Zapotlán's characters, no one wants to give up resources for any reason. In the land narrative of *La feria*, Arreola describes characters regard to *tierras* as living in a dog-eat-dog world. This is the case of the sickly woman that once discovers gold buried in her property forgets about the poor boy that helped her during her sickness.

Conclusion

For the characters and inhabitants of Zapotlán the fair represents, as already mentioned, the culmination of the various land conflicts and traditions of a town. The "plots" of its characters reach a resolution as the fair ends. *La feria* in conclusion is a fragmented narrative that fits accordingly with contemporary works such as *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and *Al filo del agua* (1947), as Arreola's fragmented novel is a compilation of stories about land in the context of contemporary Mexico and reminiscences of the post revolution through its historical land narrative. People's narrative and concepts of *tierra* in *La feria* offer an explosive conclusion to a town's spatial history. In this resolution of *La feria*, narratives of land are the fireworks that in a spiral movement that go round and round, illuminating and whistling, like the voices that are heard as the fireworks begin at the end of the novel. In conclusion, as Poot-Herrera notes, the town inserts itself in the narrative of the country.

La feria es la crónica de una catalanidad pueblerina, con un trasfondo histórico al que se alude desde el presente de la historia. Desde una actualidad muy viva, el contexto oscila entre el presente y el pasado, a partir de un hilo conductor que es el problema de las tierras: se invoca el origen indígena, la Colonia, la Independencia, la Reforma y la Revolución. Cada una de estas etapas históricas es vista de diversas maneras, siempre en relación con la vida de la localidad. Por una parte, *La feria* inserta la historia de Zapotlán dentro de la historia de México y ofrece una visión acerca de cómo repercute en el lugar cada uno de los episodios históricos del país; por la otra, se limita sólo a un tiempo actual y al espacio pueblerino para desarrollar su historia cotidiana (1027-1028).

To these closing remarks, this chapter concurs with the notion that land is the drive for *La feria's* narrative and the recurring history of Zapotlán that alludes to an indigenous origin and a colonial and revolutionary past. In Midcentury Mexico that same drive to attain land is apparent, within the narrative of the *agricultor*, the Tlayacanques, and everyone in the town. And as a whole the stories of *La feria* are a universal rendition of agrarian land or *tierra* in the space of rural settings like those of Zapotlán, Yoknapatawpha, or Comala. I have proposed several terms with which we can further our reading of *La feria* such as “land narrative”, “nueva novela de la revolución”, “grassroots narrative”, “land knowledge” and my innovative use of “plot”. By providing these new terms I hope to have given new ways of approaching canonical Mexican literature that had not been read in the context of land. Land narrative in the context of Arreola’s narrative exposes a

grand experience of Mexico's rural existence. Land and rural traditions in *La feria* blanket a classical literary tradition at the forefront of our literary contemporaneity.

Chapter II

Pedro Páramo: Narratives of Land and Legacy—Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones Lejanas

Pedro Páramo (1955) presents a historical and fictional narrative of land in Jalisco that approaches the realities of legacy in Mexico through land and its possession. The analysis of this heritage is that of the hacienda and its legacy after the revolution, which aims at understanding land and legacy through considering Mexico's agrarian realities in narratives of the twentieth century. This historical legacy is presented in the narrative as fragmented *Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones lejanas*, that is, noises, voices, rumors, and distant songs that seem to be the only remainders (and reminders) of how legacies of power within land and society functioned in the times of the hacienda up to the revolution and how they have since transformed land and land relations—ruined or developed hacienda lands.²⁶

Pedro Páramo offers a bucolic reading of a space lost and forgotten in the history of twentieth century Mexico, in which Juan Rulfo writes about the end of the golden years of the *hacienda* through narratives of ruin and the Mexican revolution. Through its narrative, the novel encompasses an endless sense of remorse and atonement trapped in the ruins and lands of Comala and la Media Luna. Critics acclaim *Pedro Páramo* as the

²⁶ For more on land and space in *Pedro Páramo* see Adam "Landscape and Loss in Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*", Edison "*Pedro Páramo* o el libro como rizoma", Finol "Imaginario de la corporeidad: cuerpo, silencios y tiempos en *Pedro Páramo*, de Juan Rulfo", Kenny "Heterotopic Enclosures: Mexican National Spaces in Luis Buñuel's *El Ángel Exterminador* and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*", Hernández-Rodríguez "El fin de la modernidad: *Pedro Páramo* y la desintegración de la comunidad", and Covarrubias Ramírez, "Territorial Multifunctionality and Tourism. Sociocultural, Economic and Environmental Implications in Emerging Rural Destinations. A Case Study in Comala, Colima".

quintessential novel of the *cacique* and his tragedy, fall, and death signaling the end of his legacy. Its narrative is an inspiration for lesser-known Mexican authors of his time like Fuentes as well as for international authors of the Latin American boom.²⁷ *Pedro Páramo* is a clear example of how Rulfian land narrative describes soil through Mexican folklore and its pastoral, almost bucolic, scenery. The novel is a story of tragic legacies, a bildungsroman, and ultimately the best work of Juan Rulfo's narrative. Yet most importantly, *Pedro Páramo* is the quintessential example of land narrative in Mexican twentieth century literature (that paves the way for other (land) narratives to explore the legacies and history of land and its space in literature.

In *Pedro Páramo* land is imperative for all characters, and yet its fate lies only in the hands of Pedro Páramo. The narrative opens with the search of land as inheritance by Juan Preciado. The legacy of Pedro Páramo in the novel is not that of the "hacienda" as such a structure does not exist in the historical reality of Mexico by the time Rulfo is writing, but that of a new style of writing and describing land through a narrative that incorporates the voices and stories of everyone that once made up the powerful mosaic of the *hacienda*. In this chapter, I argue that *Pedro Páramo* is made up of land and its historical legacy—the hacienda and its legacy after the Revolution. My claim is that this historical legacy is presented in the narrative as fragmented noises, voices, rumors, and distant songs (*ruidos. voces. rumores. canciones lejanas*) that languish as the only remainders and reminders of how the relationships of power between the land and society

²⁷ See Sara Poot Herrera's *Un Giro En Espiral: El Proyecto Literario De Juan José Arreola* for more on how *Pedro Páramo* influenced novels like *La feria* (1963).

worked in the previous times of the revolution and how they have been since transformed and even, ruined or turned into ghosts.

Upon the death of Juan Preciado, who goes to Comala in search of Pedro Páramo—his father—the narrative shifts to a fragmented narrative of voices in first and third person. Buried in what seems to be an honorary spot next to Susana San Juan—Pedro Páramo’s platonic love—Juan Preciado ultimately begins to understand the legacy of his father as he listens to the stories, *voces*, *ruidos*, *rumores*, *canciones lejanas* about Pedro Páramo and the lands of la Media Luna and Comala, as he rests in the cemetery next to Susana San Juan.

Subsequently after Juan Preciado’s death—Dorotea la Cuarraca is also buried in the same grave in which he rests. Dorotea la Cuarraca’s dialogue with Juan explains the reasoning behind the doom of the hacienda and that of Pedro Páramo’s legacy. Aware of who Juan is, la Cuarraca consoles him once again even after death. Her reverence towards Juan and the legacy of landowners he represents is still respected by Dorotea beyond death. She tells Juan about how the hacienda was left behind, after everyone left. Dorotea la Cuarraca is the last to outlive and witness of the doom of the *hacienda*. Suggesting a sense of atonement for not having carried out his legacy, she tells Juan that he died not by the lack of air in Comala but rather called upon death by the murmuring of voices from another world that raised from the soil.²⁸ Voices of souls of whose words Juan (at that moment) could only make out “Ruega a Dios por nosotros” (63), pray to

²⁸ For more on death in *Pedro Páramo* see Wind “Spiritual/Spectral ‘Structures of Feeling’ in Andrey Platonov’s Soul and Juan Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo*”, and Boldy “The Use of Ambiguity and the Death(s) of Bartolome San Juan in Rulfo’s *Pedro Paramo*”

God for us. These voices—of la Media Luna ghost's serve to render a set of idyllic beliefs, and legacies that set up a varied narrative of illusions of love—matched and unmatched, but most importantly of land and its role in life as death, best described as an immortal legacy.

Time after time land and rain within the narrative of the novel describe an agrarian legacy across time and space. Blanketed by the warmth of the sandy soil and falling rain over his grave, Juan Preciado begins once again hearing the voices and gossips of la Media Luna and Pedro Páramo. And with la Cuarraca by his side Juan starts a conversation about their illusions and failed legacies.

—Ya te lo dije en un principio. Vine a buscar a Pedro Páramo, que según parece fue mi padre. Me trajo la ilusión.

—¿La ilusión? Eso cuesta caro. A mí me costó vivir más de lo debido.

Pagué con eso la deuda de encontrar a mi hijo, que no fue, por decirlo así, sino una ilusión más; porque nunca tuve ningún hijo. (64)

Juan and la Cuarraca carry on a dialogue about the illusions that withered their lives. The illusion of Juan was to find Pedro Páramo and it was a child for la Cuarraca. Dorotea delves deeper into illusions and life suffering. Her life is not unlike those that could not leave the hacienda to go live in other places. Dorotea la Cuarraca stayed behind futilely dreaming and wanting to have a child:

Y de remate, el pueblo se fue quedando solo; todos largaron camino para otros rumbos y con ellos se fue también la caridad de la que yo vivía. Me senté a esperar la muerte. Después que te encontramos a ti, se resolvieron

mis huesos a quedarse quietos. “Nadie me hará caso”, pensé. Soy algo que no le estorbo a nadie. Ya ves, ni siquiera le robe espacio a la tierra. Me enterraron el a misma sepultura y cupe muy bien en el hueco de tus brazos. Aquí en este rincón donde me tienes. Sólo se me ocurre que debería ser yo la que te tuviera abrazado a ti. (65)

The life of la Cuarraca, as she tells Juan, did not annoy nor trouble anyone. Dorotea’s oneiric existence was only to serve the hacienda in exchange of charity.²⁹ Of the many workers of la Media Luna only Dorotea lived to reach old age and have a hunched back, after Pedro Páramo doomed everyone in Comala to die of hunger with his actions.

Dorotea la Cuarraca by then was too old to have joined the revolutionary forces or leave la Media Luna. As she tells Juan, she did not even take up space in the plot of land that was her grave in the cemetery of la Media Luna, being buried in the same grave as he was. The loyalty of the women and men that stayed behind prove be the last vestiges of the hacienda in the twentieth century, a bleak remainder of an extinguished legacy.

The relation of Juan with la Cuarraca is different than the one she had with his brother Miguel Páramo. Juan is sincere with Dorotea, and la Cuarraca sees in him the child she could not have. Sharing a tomb, both wonder about *el cielo*—heaven—buried in the warm, humid, and soft soil of Comala and la Media Luna:

—Allá afuera debe estar variando el tiempo. Mi madre me decía que, en cuanto empezaba a llover, todo se llenaba de luces y del olor verde de los

²⁹ For more on characters dreams in Pedro Páramo see Ramos Rocha “Pedro Páramo y el sueño transformante del ser Centenario de un sueño llamado Juan Rulfo”, Lee “The Cost of Dreams of Utopia:

retoños. Me contaba cómo llegaba la marea de las nubes, cómo se echaban sobre la tierra y la descomponían cambiándole los colores... Mi madre, que vivió su infancia y sus mejores años en este pueblo y que ni siquiera pudo venir a morir aquí... Es curioso, Dorotea, cómo no alcance a mirar el cielo. Al menos, quizá, debe ser el mismo que ella conoció.

—No lo sé, Juan Preciado. Hacía tantos años que no alzaba la cara, que me olvide del cielo... Además, le perdí todo mi interés desde que el padre Rentería me aseguró que jamás conocería la Gloria. Que ni siquiera de lejos la vería... Fue cosa de mis pecados; pero él no debía habérmelo dicho...

—¿Y tu alma? ¿Dónde crees que haya ido?

—Debe andar vagando por la tierra como tantas otras; buscando vivos que recen por ella. (69-70)

An answer to what happened to the souls and legacy of the characters in *Pedro Páramo* is voiced by la Cuarraca, when she reassures Juan that her soul is haunting the living in the lands of Comala—seeking atonement, wandering a land still part of the hacienda and its legacy.

La Cuarraca's insight of land being an expiatory place distant from heaven, *el cielo*, far of Comala can be explained literally as it was forbidden to her by *el padre* Rentería. He assured her that she would not see heaven, even from afar as result of her

Neocolonialism in Juan Rulfo's 'Pedro Páramo' and Cormac McCarthy's 'All the Pretty Horses'" and Hart "Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* and *The Dream of the dead Father*"

actions and mortal sins. Also offering a sharp contrast to the same sins that are pardoned to those with land and money, because Miguel, who made her sin, is ultimately absolved and she is not. This unjust benevolence is evident in the sins of Miguel Páramo, Eduvijes Dyada, Susana San Juan and la Cuarraca by el padre Rentería is a reminder of the injustices to those that lacked land before the Revolution.

The voice of la Cuarraca tells Juan more about the end of the *hacienda*, and of how the revolution and *crísteada* swept through la Media Luna. In Dorotea's narrative nothing not even the revolution ended the hacienda except for the internal ideological wars of the *hacendados*, meaning that their lives and those of others ended tragically because of absurd ideologies of superiority and absurdity such as those of Pedro Páramo as result of Susana San Juan's death.

—¿Eres tú la que ha dicho todo eso, Dorotea?

—¿Quién, yo? Me quedé dormida un rato. ¿Te siguen asustando?

—Oí a alguien que hablaba. Una voz de mujer. Creí que eras tú?

—¿Voz de mujer? ¿Creíste que era yo? Ha de ser la que habla sola. La de la sepultura grande. Doña Susanita. Está aquí enterrada a nuestro lado. Le ha de haber llegado la humedad y estará removiéndose entre el sueño (83).

—No creas. Él la quería. Estoy por decir que nunca quiso a ninguna mujer como a ésa. Ya se la entregaron sufrienda quizá loca. Tan la quiso, que se pasó el resto de sus años aplastado en un equipal, mirando el camino por donde se la habían llevado al camposanto. Le perdió interés a todo.

Desalojó sus tierras y mando quemar los esteros. Unos dicen porque le

agarró la desilusión; lo cierto es que echó fuera a la gente y se sentó en su equipal, cara al camino. (85)

Dorotea explains to Juan that Pedro Páramo and his disregard for his lands and workers brought an inevitable doom to la Media Luna's bucolic lands. La Cuarraca blames the doom of the hacienda on Pedro Páramo. Without passing a judgment on Pedro Páramo, she tells Juan that his fathers' intransigence to not accept Comala's lack of reverence to Susana San Juan's legacy and death and his wrath/rancor were the only cause for their doom; as his scorched earth policy is in response to the celebration of Comala on the day of Susana San Juan's death.

—Desde entonces la tierra se quedó baldía y como en ruinas. Daba pena verla llenándose de achaques con tanta plaga que la invadió en cuanto la dejaron sola. De allá para acá se consumió la gente; se desbandaron los hombres en busca de otros “bebederos”. Recuerdo días en que Comala se llenó de “adioses” y hasta nos parecía cosa alegre cosa alegre ir a despedir a los que se iban... Yo me quedé porque no tenía adonde ir. Otros se quedaron esperando a que Pedro Páramo muriera, pues según decía les había prometido heredarles sus bienes, y con esa esperanza vivieron todavía algunos. Pero pasaron años y años y él seguía vivo, siempre allí, como un espantapájaros frente a las tierras de la Media Luna.

—Y cuando le faltaba poco para morir vinieron las guerras esas de los “cristeros” y la tropa echó rialada con los pocos hombres que quedaban.

Fue cuando yo comencé a morir de hambre y desde entonces no me volví a emparejar.

—Y todo por las ideas de don Pedro, por sus pleitos del alma. Nada más porque se le murió su mujer, la tal Susanita. Ya te has de imaginar si la quería. (85-86)

Dorotea's narrative on what came to be the end of la Media Luana describes as a great rebellion, seen after Susana San Juan's death.³⁰ Juan Rulfo's narrative in this context is in line with the idea that the revolution was Mexico's great rebellion of *campesinos* against the chains of the *hacendado* determinative to the end of the *hacienda* and its uphold. Up to the rebellion of Comala, Pedro Páramo could have been said to be unaffected by the revolution or the *cristeros*, as he always sided with the victors playing a picaresque defense to save his lands. The rebellion in face of Susana San Juan's death ultimately leaves questions of what the meaning of reverence and ceremonial clout in terms of legacy is, after the revolution. As result Pedro Páramo engages in a futile war of repercussions for those that rebelled against the costumes of the hacienda regime.³¹ Even in his last disposition as an *hacendado*, Pedro Páramo spares no one who rebelled, except those that remained faithful to la Media Luna and Susana San Juan and those that had no place to go or where too poor and rooted in Comala like Abundio that could not go searching for a new life. The others, those who rebelled, left Comala, displaced by the rancor of Pedro Páramo, for their indifference.

³⁰ For more on the great "rebellion" that ended the hacienda and overthrew the old regime see Ramón Eduardo Ruiz's *The Great Rebellion: Mexico 1905-1924*

Pedro Páramo miró como los hombres se iban. Sintió desfilar frente a él el trote de caballos oscuros, confundidos con la noche. El sudor y el polvo; el temblor de la tierra. Cuando vio los cocuyos cruzando otra vez sus luces, se dio cuenta de que todos los hombres se habían ido. Quedaba él, solo, como un tronco duro comenzando a desgajarse por dentro. (115)

Alone in the light of the fire beetles, Pedro Páramo finds himself alone in the concurrence of his memories of Susana and his dreams of her love. In the dust and marching steps upon the lands of la Media Luna, Pedro Páramo, sees his last wish fulfilled and in sorrow yearns upon Susana San Juan calling her to come for him.

Pedro Páramo estaba sentado en un viejo equipal, junto a la puerta grande de la Media Luna, poco antes de que se fuera la última sombra de la noche...Se había olvidado del sueño y del tiempo: “Los viejos dormimos poco: casi nunca. A veces apenas si dormitamos; pero sin dejar de pensar. Eso es lo único que me queda por hacer.” Después añadió en voz alta... “¡Regresa, Susana!”...y entre abrió los ojos, en los que se reflejó la débil claridad del amanecer. (125)

Reminiscent of his illusions, and by a disillusioned legacy Pedro Páramo encounters his death at the hands of Abundio Martínez. His death is a tragic death and marked by a Greek-like tragedy event. Yet the main cause of Pedro Páramo’s disillusionment and death was Susana San Juan’s unrequited love. At a young age Bartolomé San Juan,

³¹ For more on new revolutionary outlooks and disdain for the hacienda, see Katz, *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*.

Susana's father, takes her from Comala and away from Páramo. Pedro Páramo sends for her once he is a powerful man, and although he is never loved, Pedro respects Susana until the day of her death. Pedro adores Susan despite she lost her senses when she goes mad after being lowered into a mine by her father (Bartolomé San Juan) to retrieve a treasure and a human skull turns to dust in her hands. This event is also the story of a tragic legacy. After Susana San Juan's death, Pedro Páramo loses his platonic love and he is not worried about what is going on around him, not even about the Revolution.

From within the grave where they are resting, Juan Preciado and la Cuarraca hear other voices of the dead that are buried on their side, but mostly they listen to the bitter and troubled remains of the lives of Susana San Juan, her mother and their faithful servant, Justina Días.

Siento el lugar en que estoy y pienso... Pienso cuando maduraban los limones. En el viento de febrero que rompía los tallos de los helechos, antes que el abandono los secara; los limones maduros que llenaban con su olor el viejo patio. El viento bajaba de las montañas en las mañanas de febrero. Y las nubes se quedaban allá arriba en espera de que el tiempo bueno las hiciera bajar al valle; mientras tanto dejaban vacío el cielo azul, dejaban que la luz cayera en el juego del viento haciendo círculos sobre la tierra, removiendo el polvo y batiendo las ramas de los naranjos. Y los gorriones reían; picoteaban las hojas que el aire hacía caer, reían; dejaban sus plumas entre las espinas de las ramas y perseguían a las mariposas y reían. Era esa época... Mi madre murió entonces... Los gorriones jugaban.

En las lomas se mecían las espigas. Me dio lástima que ya ella no volviera a ver el juego del viento en los jazmines; que cerrara sus ojos a la luz de los días... ¿Te acuerdas, Justina? Acomodaste las sillas a lo largo del corredor para que cuando viniera la gente a verla esperara su turno. Estuvieron vacías. Y mi madre sola, en medio de los cirios... Tu y yo allí, rezando rezos interminables, sin que ella oyera nada, sin que tú y yo no oyéramos nada, todo perdido en la sonoridad del viento debajo de la noche. Planchaste su vestido negro... Nadie vino a verla. Así estuvo mejor. La muerte no reparte como si fuera un bien. Nadie anda en busca de tristeza. Tocaron la aldaba. Tú saliste.

—Ve tú —te dije—. Yo veo borrosa la cara de la gente. Y haz que se vayan. ¿Que vienen por el dinero de las misas gregorianas? Ella no dejó ningún dinero. Díselos Justina... Y tus sillas se quedaron vacías hasta que fuimos a enterrarla con aquellos hombres alquilados, sudando por un peso ajeno, extraños a cualquier pena. Cerraron la sepultura con arena mojada... Sus ojos fríos, indiferentes. Dijeron “Es tanto.” Y tú les pagaste, como quien compra algo, desanudando tu pañuelo húmedo de lágrimas, exprimido y vuelto a exprimir y ahora guardando el dinero de los funerales... Y cuando ellos se fueron, te arrodillaste el lugar donde había quedado su cara y besaste la tierra y podrías abierto un agujero, si no te hubiera dicho “Vámonos, Justina, ella está en otra parte”. (80-82)

The characters' emotions in the hacienda are condemned to be buried helplessly and covered within the land they had or lacked. Justina misses her mistress so much that after her death if not for Susana she would have unburied her. Justina kisses the dirt where her mistress face was buried wanting to stay there by her side. Susana's memory, reminiscing of the lemon blossoms, fern fronds, sparrows playing, all the wind of February, recall her bitter loneliness that coincided with her mother's death and the liveliness of land abandoned to dry after everyone left Comala. The empty chairs and sky offer clear images to the stillness of land in contrast with peoples' tragedies.

The losses of Susana San Juan are what make her life human they are also what define her legacy as the daughter of Bartolomé San Juan—the owner of la Andromeda, a mine close to Jalisco's coast. Her memories and narrative are those of a land legacy cut short. And although she is bathed in luxuries and love by Pedro Páramo, Susana ultimately suffers the loss not only of her family's mine (during the revolution) but also the deaths of her mother and of her only true love and husband Florencio. Afflicted by those losses and a hopeless legacy, Susana, already mad, dies not loving Pedro Páramo, who hopelessly makes her his wife.

Susana suffers a horrible death, looked after by Justina and Pedro Páramo—to whom she remains indifferent and cold up to the end. Even during her worse suffering Susana is unable to love Páramo and only recalls her love for Florencio.

—En el mar sólo me sé bañar desnuda —le dije. Y él me siguió el primer día, desnudo también, fosforescente al salir del mar. No había gaviotas; sólo esos pájaros que le dicen “picos feos”, que gruñen como si roncaran y

que después de que sale el sol desaparecen. Él me siguió el primer día y se sintió solo, a pesar de estar yo allí.

—Es como si fuera un “pico feo”, uno más entre todos—me dijo—. Me gustas más en las noches, cuando estamos solos los dos en la misma almohada, bajo las sábanas, en la oscuridad.

—Y se fue. (101-102)

Susana San Juan and Florencio’s love story in the beach is a truncated legacy and a sign of spoiled illusions. With the death of Florencio all of Susana’s happiness and hopes of love and legacy are ruined.

—Florencio ha muerto, señora.

¡Qué largo era aquel hombre! ¡Qué alto! Y su voz era dura. Seca como la tierra más seca. Y su figura era borrosa, ¿o se hizo borrosa después?, como si entre ella y él se interpusiera la lluvia. “¿Qué había dicho? ¿Florencio? ¿De cuál Florencio hablaba? ¿Del mío? ¡Oh!, por qué no lloré y me anegué entonces en lagrimas para enjuagar mi angustia. ¡Señor, tú no existes! Te pedí tu protección para él. Que me lo cuidaras. Eso te pedí. Pero tú te preocupas nada más de las almas. Y lo que yo quiero de él es su cuerpo. Desnudo y caliente de amor; hirviendo de deseos; estrujando el temblor de mis senos y de mis brazos. Mi cuerpo transparente suspendido del suyo. Mi cuerpo liviano sostenido y suelto a sus fuerzas. ¿Qué haré ahora con mis labios sin su boca para llenarlos? ¿Qué haré de mis adoloridos labios?”

Mientras Susana San Juan se revolvía inquieta, de pie, junto a la puerta.

Pedro Páramo la miraba y contaba los segundos de aquel nuevo sueño que ya duraba mucho. (106-107)

The harsh and rude narratives of Susana San Juan, during her dying anguish, are a bitter critique to the legacies of the *hacienda*. Susana's words are meant to be renunciation to the legacy of spirituality and traditions. Only wanting the body of her dead husband is bold critique to religious faith and ultimately failing her new marriage and legacy at Pedro Páramo's side. Uncertainty in *Pedro Páramo's* narrative is highlighted within the foggy memories and anguish of Susana San Juan. Such uncertainty is similar to the individual doubts that someone can have about the past and life in context of the hacienda. Ultimately that uncertainty defines the grasp and contemporary understanding of the hacienda and its legacy in the extend of land narrative.

Susana San Juan and Justina's dialogue as heard by Juan and la Cuarraca ultimately reach and end with the narrative of Susana's death in la Media Luna. On the night of Susana's death, she tells Justina that she can hear the rotation of the earth while in her delirious suffering Pedro Páramo contemplates Susana—his mad Susana who up to her death remains un-kind to his love, yet always yearning the legacy of Florencio. Before Susana San Juan dies, and Pedro Páramo begins the funerary preparations, she tells Justina to leave and stop weeping, as her tears are the only thing that Susana cannot stand. The death of Susan is ultimately a death by a thousand cuts to Pedro Páramo and to Justina her loyal servant. With her death, the last benevolence Pedro had for Comala

ends, as the celebration of the Immaculate Conception coincides with the death of Susana and people unknowingly begin to celebrate.

For Pedro Páramo, Comala's celebration for the Immaculate Conception celebrates the death of Susana San Juan. For this reason, Pedro Páramo decides to end the legacy of a Comala—letting those that inhabit it die of hunger. Susana was the reason for accumulated unbelievable amounts of land and wealth for Pedro. Pedro Páramo's dream of land, wealth and love seem to be engraved in his fate as life itself. Susan San Juan in this sense incorporates what Helen represented for Paris in Greek mythology. Susana can be said was the face that launched Pedro in his journey to amass a fortune of at least a thousand hectares (the minimum number of hectares needed for the denomination of land to be called a hacienda). And for Justina, Susana represented her only purpose and reason, the legacy she had assisted since before Susana, as she had served Susana's mother.

Prior to Susana's death and the arrival of *el padre* Rentería to administer her the last rites, Susana converses with Justina about hell and death. Susana recurs to the themes of birds and the sadness of killing them. The death of Susana is a public affair, that Justina attends to preparing for the arrival of Doctor Valencia, *el padre* Rentería, and the women that stand by awaiting the worst and praying.

En el comienzo del amanecer, el día ve dándose vuelta, a pausas; casi se oyen los goznes de la tierra que giran enmohecidos; la vibración de esta tierra vieja que vuelca su oscuridad.

—¿Verdad que la noche está llena de pecados, Justina?

—Sí, Susana.

—¿Y es verdad?

—Debe serlo, Susana.

—¿Y qué crees que es la vida, Justina, sino un pecado? ¿No oyes? ¿No oyes como rechina la tierra?

—No, Susana, no alcanzo a oír nada. Mi suerte no es tan grande como la tuya.

—Te asombrarías. Te digo que te asombrarías de oír lo que yo oigo.

Justina siguió poniendo el orden en el cuarto. Repasó una y otra vez la jerga sobre los tablones húmedos del piso. Puso los vidrios en el balde lleno de agua.

—¿Cuántos pájaros has matado en tu vida, Justina?

—Muchos, Susana.

—¿Y no has sentido tristeza?

—Sí, Susana.

—Entonces ¿qué esperas para morirte?

—La muerte, Susana.

—Si es nada más eso, ya vendrá. No te preocupes...

—¿Tú crees en el Infierno, Justina?

—Sí Susana. Y también en el Cielo.

—Yo sólo creo en el Infierno —dijo. Y cerró los ojos. (115-116)

Susana seems to brace for hell, a hell no different than the prison of being the love interest of Pedro Páramo. In her madness she lures Pedro closer as she is unable to love anyone but Florencio (her dead husband) to witness the sorrow she still feels for Florencio, the love of her life. Aware of this and listening behind her door, Pedro Páramo does not acknowledge Susana's desire nor her living yearning for Florencio. Ultimately, Susana San Juan's death represents the last blow to Pedro but most clearly to Justina, whose only legacy was the dedication to serve the San Juan family.

The death of Susana San Juan's legacy is sensationalized by the narrative of two women—whose gossips are a story of the legacies of Comala and la Media Luna—that remain as voices to be heard by Juan Preciado.

The death of Susana is perceived in Comala as the death of a queen, similar to the extinguishing light of a single candle in a window of a palace announcing the death of a king:

—¿Ve usted aquella ventana, doña Fausta, allá en la Media Luna, donde siempre ha estado prendida la luz?

—No, Ángeles. No veo ninguna ventana.

—Es que ahorita se ha quedado a oscuras. ¿No estará pasando algo malo en la Media Luna? Hace más de tres años que está aluzada esa ventana, noche tras noche. Dicen los que han estado allí que es el cuarto donde habita la mujer de Pedro Páramo, una pobrecita loca que tiene miedo a la oscuridad. Y mire: ahora mismo se ha apagado la luz. ¿No será un mal suceso?

—Tal vez haya muerto. Estaba muy enferma. Dicen que ya no conocía a la gente, y dizque hablaba sola. Buen castigo ha de haber soportado Pedro Páramo casándose con esa mujer.

—Pobre del señor don Pedro.

—No, Fausta. Él se lo merece. Eso y más...

—Con tal de que no sea de verdad una cosa grave. Me dan ganas de regresar y decirle al padre Rentería que se dé una vuelta por allá, no vaya resultar que esa infeliz muera sin confesión.

—Ni lo piense, Ángeles. Ni lo quiera Dios... Mire usted, ya se ha vuelto a prender la luz en la ventana. Ojalá todo salga bien. Imagínese en qué pararía el trabajo que nos hemos tomado todos estos días para arreglar la iglesia y que luzca bonita ahora para la Natividad, si alguien se muere en esa casa. Con el poder que tiene don Pedro, nos desbarataría la función en un santiamén. (119)

The narratives of the two women contemplate the clout and power Pedro Páramo has over their own legacies and those of the town. Fausta tells Ángeles that if Susana San Juan had died, their entire legacy, efforts, and those of the town—preparations for the Christmas celebrations—would be extinguished like a match that is thrown into the sea.

Other voices and words of the revolution come from a man called Rodolfo, that from their grave Juan and la Cuarraca hear, the voices tell the story how Pedro Páramo quells the effects of the revolt in la Media Luna. As noted by Rodolfo, Pedro Páramo a man in the fall of his life by then, appeases the movement in the region to strategically

save his hacienda, the same way he once had saved it from the brink of bankruptcy in his youth. The experience of Pedro Páramo and how he deals with the rebels, describes a resourceful, witty, and quixotic man after all. Upon the disparity of that situation and the death of Fulgor, Pedro Páramo still worries more about Susana San Juan and her long lost love instead of contemplating the idea of losing his lands to the revolution and the *cristeros*.³² Pedro Páramo loses everyone at the end—his father, Susana San Juan, his children, and even his only true friend and most loyal worker Fulgor Sedano, except his lands. Land is the only thing Pedro Páramo is left with at the end of the novel.

To quell the revolution, after Fulgor's death, Pedro Páramo resorted to el *Tilcuate*, a truculent and dandy man of the hacienda, who always remained loyal to la Media Luna. *Tilcuate* never stops calling Pedro Páramo *patron* and tells him that he would do him the favour of combating the revolutionaries without pay or incentives just to serve him and be part of the revolution. Pedro Páramo puts him in charge of manning la Media Luna, giving him a small ranch parcel called la Puerta de Piedra.

—Necesito hablar cocon el patrón.

—Yo soy. ¿Qué quieres?

—Pues nada más esto. Mataron a don Fulgor Sesedano. Yo le hacía compañía. Habíamos ido por el rumbo de los “vertederos” para averiguar por qué se estaba escaseando el agua. Y en eso andábamos cucuando vimos una manada de hombres que nos salió al encuentro. Y

³² For more on Mexico's Revolution and *Cristeada* see Ceballos Ramírez “Sobre Moisés González Navarro, *cristeros* y agraristas en Jalisco”, Pellicer “Economía poética de Pedro Páramo: de la Revolución a la

entre la mumultitud aquella brotó una voz que dijo: “Yo a ése lo coconozco. Es el administrador de la Media Luna.”

—A mí ni me tomaron en cuenta pero a don Fulgor le mandaron soltar la bestia. Le dijeron que eran revolucionarios. Que venían por las tierras de usted. “¡Cocórrale! —le dijeron a don Fulgor—. ¡Vaya y dígale a su patrón que allá nos vemos!” Y él soltó la cacalda, despavorido. No muy de prisa por lo pesado que era; pero corrió. Lo mataron corriendo. Murió cocon una pata arriba y otra abajo.

—Entonces yo ni me momoví. Esperé a que fuera de noche y aquí estoy para anunciarle lo que papasó.

—Y qué esperas? ¿Por que no te mueves? Anda y diles a esos que aquí estoy para lo que se les ofrezca. Que vengan a tratar conmigo. Pero antes date un rodeo por La Consagración. ¿Conoces al *Tilcuate*? Allí estará. Dile que necesito verlo. Y a esos fulanos avísales que los espero en cuando tengan tiempo disponible. ¿Qué jaiz de revolucionarios son?

—No lo sé. Ellos así se nonombran.

—Dile al *Tilcuate* que lo necesito más que de prisa.

—Así lo haré, papatrón. (99-100)

At face of adversity and constant losses, Pedro Páramo can be described as callus of felling and immune to tribulation. Not even revolution shakes him. Pedro Páramo

Cristiada”, and Naiman “La enunciación colectiva de los muertos como reescritura de la historia mexicana en Pedro Páramo de Juan Rulfo”.

encounters circumstances of the revolution with resourcefulness to save his property dispatching Damacio el Tilcuate to deal with the rebels. Pedro Páramo not only sends a man he trusts to join the revolt—he inactivates him by giving him a small ranch of his property. As a way to save la Media Luna, Páramo gives *Tilcuate* a small but substantial property and cattle that ensure the land legacy of both, as *Tilcuate* would fiercely defend his property from bandits and rebels. The tribulation that Pedro Páramo confronts makes the reader realize that he was not a coward, as he does not leave for Europe or the US like many of the *hacendados* of the time who frequently leaved once conflict erupted to Paris or even New York.

Pedro Páramo seems to be part of the land, pragmatically indifferent to the fear of impending doom. Later in the novel, Rulfo metaphorically compares Pedro Páramo and the land, as his *pedazos* (limbs described as pieces) start to die—the same way each of his *tierras* (widely referred to as *pedazos*) fall in for the lack of use. Pedro’s love for the lands of la Media Luna goes unsaid, more than a demanding *patrón*, Pedro Páramo does what he demands of others, always reminiscent of Susana San Juan. Even as he dies and falls apart like his lands—Pedro Páramo reaches towards the cemetery where Susana San Juan is buried.

Pedro Páramo volvió a encerrarse en su despacho. Se sentía viejo y abrumado. No le preocupaba Fulgor, que al fin y al cabo ya estaba “más para la otra que para ésta”. Había dado de sí todo lo que tenía que dar; aunque fue muy servicial, lo que sea de cada quien. “De todos modos, los ‘tilcuatazos’ que se van a llevar esos locos” pensó. (100)

Having fed and sited the rebels on his table is an act that tells a lot about the person Pedro Páramo represents. Juan Rulfo hence implies that Pedro Páramo more than an *hacendado* can be read to be a simple man who valued romantic love more than money or property—a man capable of sharing a meal with anyone regardless of social stature.

The dissolution of Pedro Páramo with life and his lands or Comala is not as result of the revolution. Pedro Páramo can quell the revolution that sweeps through la Media Luna but is unable to make others revere Susana San Juan during her funeral, let alone bring her back from the dead.

—¿Quién crees tú qué es el jefe de éstos? —le pregunto más tarde al *Tilcuate*.

—Pues a mí se me hace que es le barrigón ese que estaba en medio y que ni alzó los ojos. Me late que es él... Me equivoco pocas veces, don Pedro.

—No, Damasio, el jefe eres tú. ¿O qué, no te quieres ir a la revuelta?

—Pero si hasta se me hace tarde. Con lo que me gusta a mí la bulla.

—Ya viste pues de qué se trata, así que ni necesitas mis consejos. Júntate trecientos muchachos de tu confianza y enrólate con esos alzados. Diles que llevas la gente que les prometí. Lo demás ya sabrás tú cómo manejarlo... Entre paréntesis: ¿te gustaría el ranchito de la Puerta de Piedra? Bueno, bueno pues es tuyo desde ahorita. Le vas a llevar un recado al licenciado Gerardo Trujillo de Comala, y allí mismo pondrá a tu nombre la propiedad. ¿Qué dices, Damasio?...

—Y mira, ahí de pasada arráte unas cuantas vacas. A ese rancho lo que le falta es movimiento.

—¿No importa que sean cebuses?

—Escoge de las que quieras, y las que tantees pueda cuidar tu mujer. Yo volviendo a nuestro asunto, procura no alejarte mucho de mis terrenos, por eso de que si vienen otros que vean el campo ya ocupado. Y venme a ver cada que puedas o tengas alguna novedad. (105)

Pedro Páramo barterers a bit of land and cattle for the protection of his *hacienda* and in the crucible of the movement to outsmart the revolutionaries. Pedro Páramo protects his legacy and even outsmarts the rebels but he is unable to secure the love and legacy of Susana San Juan.

Páramo is ultimately a man of a high economic stature that raised himself with his own means. He is a man haunted equally by great luck and great misfortunes. In the shadow of the revolution, Pedro Páramo continues to make wins of his losses. Upon being approached by *Tilcuate* for money, Pedro Páramo suggests him to storm Contla, a neighboring town he describes as abounding with rich men.

Ahi le traigo setecientos hombres y otros cuantos arrimados. Lo que paso es que unos pocos de los “viejos”, aburridos de estar ociosos, se pusieron a disparar contra un pelotón de pelones, qué resultado ser todo un ejercito.

Villistas, ¿sabe usted?

—¿Y de dónde salieron esos?

—Vienen del Norte, arriando parejo con todo lo que encuentran...

—¿Y por qué no te juntas con ellos? Ya te he dicho que hay que estar con el que vaya ganando.

—Ya estoy con ellos.

—¿Entonces para qué vienes a verme?

—Necesitamos dinero, patrón...

—Ahora te me vas a poner exigente, Damasio?

—De ningún modo patrón. Estoy abogando por los muchachos; por mí, ni me apuro.

—Está bien que te acomidas por tu gente; pero sonsácales a otros lo que necesitas. Yo ya te di. Confórmate con lo que te di. Y éste no es un consejo ni mucho menos, ¿pero no se te ha ocurrido asaltar Contla? ¿Para qué crees que andas en la revolución? Si vas a pedir limosna estás atrasado. Valía más que mejor te fueras con tu mujer a cuidar gallinas.

¡Échate sobre algún pueblo! Si tú andas arriesgando el pellejo, ¿por qué diablos no van a poner otros de su parte? Contla está que hierve de ricos. Quítales tantito de lo que tienen. ¿O acaso creen que tú eres su pilmama y que estás para cuidarles sus intereses? No Damasio. Hazles ver que no andas jugando ni divirtiéndote. Dales un pegue y ya verás cómo sales con centavos de este mitote. (114-115)

By the time *Tilcuate* visits Pedro Páramo, the last conflicts of the revolution are bands of *bandidos* that take towns and make justice at their own hands. The idea of Pedro Páramo, suggesting *Tilcuate* to ransack Contla is ironic, as the ransacking of La Media Luna is

what he wants to prevent. Pedro Páramo and *Tilcuate* continue their “revolution” and in an almost carpetbagger opportunistic manner which both *Tilcuate* and Pedro Páramo always side with the winner to ensure a vanishing legacy and name.

El *Tilcuate* siguió viniendo:

—Ahora son carrancistas.

—Está bien.

—Andamos con mi general Obregón.

—Está bien.

—Allá se ha hecho la paz. Andamos sueltos.

—Espera. No desarmes a tu gente. Esto no puede durar mucho.

—Se ha levantado en armas el padre Rentería. ¿Nos vamos con él, o contra él?

—Eso ni se discute ponte del lado del gobierno.

—Pero si somos irregulares. Nos consideran rebeldes.

—Entonces vete a descansar.

—¿Con el vuelo que llevo?

—Haz lo que quieras entonces.

—Me iré a reforzar al padrecito. Me gusta como gritan. Además lleva uno ganado la salvación.

—Haz lo que quieras (124).

Ultimately, Pedro Páramo sides with God as he and *Tilcuate* engage in a war that followed the armed period of the Mexican revolution, *las guerras cristeras*. Upon

Tilcuate's last visit, Pedro is at first hesitant asking him to side with the government and not the Church, but ultimately "contemplates" salvation and lets *Tilcuate* side with the Church and *el padre* Rentería hoping for eternal salvation and the hope for spiritual legacy.

Attending to the legal possession of la Media Luna and disillusioned by the death of Susana San Juan, Pedro Páramo compares his estate and legacy with those of Gerardo Trujillo—his lawyer who served two generations of *patrones* in la Media Luna. Pedro Páramo tells Gerardo that he can take his practice to another without mishap and weather the revolution in the safety of another town.

—¡Qué caray, Gerardo! Estoy viendo llegar tiempos malos. ¿Y tú qué piensas hacer?

—Me voy, don Pedro. A Sayula. Allá volveré a establecerme.

—Ustedes los abogados tienen esa ventaja: pueden llevarse su patrimonio a todas partes, mientras no les rompan el hocico.

—Ni crea, don Pedro; siempre nos andamos creando problemas. Además duele dejar a personas como usted, y las deferencias que han tenido para con uno se extrañan. Vivimos rompiendo nuestro mundo a cada rato, si es válido decirlo. ¿Dónde quiere que le dejé los papeles?

—No los dejes. Llévatelos. ¿O qué no puedes seguir encargándote de mis asuntos allá adonde vas?

—Agradezco su confianza, don Pedro. La agradezco sinceramente.

Aunque hago la salvedad de me será imposible. Ciertas irregularidades...

Digamos... Testimonios que nadie sino usted debe conocer. Pueden prestarse a malos manejos en caso de llegar a caer en otras manos. Lo más seguro es que estén con usted.

—Dices bien, Gerardo. Déjamelos aquí. Los quemaré. Con papeles o sin ellos, ¿Quién me puede discutir la propiedad de lo que tengo?

—Indudablemente nadie, don Pedro. Nadie. Con su permiso.

—Ve con Dios, Gerardo.

—¿Qué dijo usted?

—Digo que Dios te acompañe (108-109).

Pedro Páramo intimidates the assertiveness of Gerardo Trujillo even in his subconscious monologue, critiquing the indifference he has had for him, even if he did not do the impossible at his service. Gerardo Trujillo, even as a lawyer, does not dare contest with Pedro Páramo. Deeds and laws are unimportant for Pedro Páramo, he lets go of Gerardo Trujillo with the least of guilt and does not even think of asking him to stay at his service. The legality of the ownership of the lands of la Media Luna is unimportant and absurd, as Pedro Páramo embodies the *hacienda* and has power over all of its lands and those of Comala.

Pedro Páramo's death and demise is a mere *coupe de grâce* after Susana San Juan's death. Not having been chased away by the rebellion and lack respect for Comala against the *hacienda*, Pedro Páramo finds in death a path to reach her beloved Susana San Juan. Upon the ruined hacienda, spoiled by the orders of Páramo, Abundio, an

illegitimate son of Pedro Páramo, approaches la Media Luna drunk, incoherent, and mourning his only legacy, his wife Refugio, la Cuca, and his son both dead.

—¡Damiana! —llamó Pedro Páramo—. Ven a ver que quiere ese hombre que viene por el camino.

—Denme una caridad para enterrar a mi mujer —dijo.

Damiana Cisneros rezaba : “De las asechanzas del enemigo malo, libranos Señor.” Y le apuntaba con las manos haciendo la señal de la cruz...

—Vengo por una ayudita para enterrar a mi muerta.

El sol le llegaba por la espalda. Ese sol recién salido, casi frío, desfigurado por el polvo de la tierra. La cara de don Pedro Páramo se escondió debajo de las cobijas como si se escondiera de la luz mientras, mientras que los gritos de Damiana se oían salir más repetidos, atravesando los campos:

“¡Están matando a don Pedro!” (128-129)

As Damiana attends to the call of Pedro Páramo to see what Abundio wants, she immediately perceives the bad intentions of Abundio and shouts desperately as she contemplates how Abundio begins to stab Pedro Páramo. Damiana’s cries for help ultimately find Abundio and leave him deaf:

Abundio Martínez oía que aquella mujer gritaba. No sabía que hacer para acabar con esos gritos. No le encontraba la punta a sus pensamientos.

Sentía que los gritos de la vieja se debían estar oyendo muy lejos... Los gritos de aquella mujer lo dejaban sordo. Por el camino de Comala se movieron unos puntitos negros. De pronto los puntitos se convirtieron en

hombres y luego estuvieron aquí, cerca de él. Damiana Cisneros dejó de gritar. Desechó su cruz. Ahora se había caído y abría la boca como si bostezara. Los hombres que habían venido la levantaron del suelo y la llevaron al interior de la casa.

(129-130)

The men that arrive to help Damiana apprehend Abundio and leave la Media Luna thinking Pedro Páramo is merely scratched. And as Pedro Páramo sees the men march Abundio to jail, from his *equipal*—his seat—he begins to think of Susana San Juan once more, as her funerary procession followed the same path. The death of Pedro Páramo marks the end of his legacy as well the end of the hacienda, yet it is also facilitating Juan Preciado search for a lost father. The futile search of a father long gone, fuels the narrative of Juan arriving in Comala in search of Pedro Páramo and is what makes the story of land and legacies possible even beyond death in *Pedro Páramo*.

The search for love not corresponded in *Pedro Páramo* is the only thing in the narrative that goes beyond legacy. A broken heart is why Pedro Páramo ignores his legacy and lands. Resolute that the future holds no love nor legacy, Pedro Páramo wants all Comala to die of hunger.

Allá atrás, Pedro Páramo, sentado en su equipal, miró el cortejo que iba hacia el pueblo. Sintió que su mano izquierda, al querer levantarse, caía muerta sobre sus rodillas; pero no hizo caso de eso. Estaba acostumbrado a ver morir cada de día alguno de sus pedazos. Vio cómo se sacudía el

paraíso dejando caer sus hojas: “Todos escogen el mismo camino. Todos se van.” Después volvió al lugar donde había dejando sus pensamientos. —Susana —dijo. Luego cerro los ojos—. Yo te pedí que regresaras... Susana, Susana San Juan... Quiso levantar su mano para aclarar la imagen; pero sus piernas la retuvieron como si fuera de piedra. Quiso levantar la otra mano y fue cayendo despacio, de lado, hasta quedar apoyada en el suelo... —Ésta es mi muerte—, dijo. (131)

Gridding from his death, already stabbed, Pedro goes after Susana, and as his body fails him its evident that he is becoming the foundation of a new land. Upon his death Pedro Páramo and the hacienda in Mexico form a new foundation of land after the revolution:

El sol se fue volteando sobre las cosas u les devolvió su forma. La tierra en ruinas estaba frente a él, vacía. Él calor caldeaba su cuerpo. Sus ojos apenas se movían; saltaban de un recuerdo a otro, dibujando el presente. De pronto su corazón se detenía y parecía como también se detuviera el tiempo. Y el aire de la vida... Se apoyó en los brazos de Damiana Cisneros e hizo intento de caminar. Después de unos cuantos pasos cayó, suplicando por dentro; pero sin decir una sola palabra. Dio un golpe seco contra la tierra y se fue desmoronando como si fuera un montón de piedras. (132)

Upon the death of the hacienda, like that of Pedro Páramo, new land projects arise from the old land and narratives of the hacienda. A new land order is evident and inevitable

with the death of Susana San Juan. After Susana's death Pedro Páramo begins to crumble. Pedro Páramo orders that the bells of Comala and la Media Luna toll for Susana for three days without stopping. In the commotion the people of Comala are confused and unsure of what to do, "Las campanas dejaron de tocar; pero la fiesta siguió" (123). A fair and a circus arrive in Comala, and people think it is a celebration, a celebration that angers Pedro Páramo even more:

La Media Luna estaba sola, en silencio. Se caminaba con los pies descalzos; se hablaba en voz baja. Enterraron a Susana San Juan y pocos en Comala se enteraron. Allá había feria. Se jugaba a los gallos, se oía la música; los gritos de los borrachos y de las loterías. Hasta acá llegaba la luz del pueblo, que parecía una aureola sobre el cielo gris. Porque fueron días grises, tristes para La Media Luna. Don Pedro no hablaba. No salía de su cuarto. Juró vengarse de Comala:

—Me cruzaré de brazos y Comala se morirá de hambre.

Y así lo hizo. (124)

Comala in its December celebrations raise the wrath of Pedro Páramo because they coincide with those of Susana San Juan's death. In a few words, Pedro Páramo says "Me cruzaré de brazos y Comala se morirá de hambre" the end of the novel is the price Comala pays for revolting against the *cacique*. I will cross my arms and those in Comala will die of hunger, is what Pedro Páramo resolves to do. His last order is to at will assail the town that rebelled against la Media Luna celebrating the tragic death of Páramo's only kinship. Pedro Páramo's resolution to punish those that served him represents the

end of the *hacienda* in Mexico, as those that could leave elsewhere, and others joined the revolution like *el padre* Rentería. While those that stayed behind to languish after death in the lands of Comala and la Media Luna help paint Juan Rulfo's land narrative after fall of the *hacendada* as result of the revolution end their old legacies entrenched in the costumes of the hacienda system. The Mexican revolution in the sense of Juan Rulfo's novel is the duality of celebration and suffering described after Suana San Juan's death "se oía la música; los gritos de los borrachos y de las loterías. Hasta acá llegaba la luz del pueblo, que parecía una aureola sobre el cielo gris... días grises, tristes para La Media Luna" (124). Despite the light and the noise of celebration, the hacienda after the revolution becomes a ghost town, a ramshackled *casco* and confluence of "Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones lejanas..." that describe the land narrative and dying legacies of la Media Luna and Comala in *Pedro Páramo*.

Rulfo incorporates styles of writing like fragmentation to break away from traditional narratives and render a hopeful and folkloric narrative of land and costumes. Rulfo inverts the classical myths in the individual stories of his characters and such and inversion defines *Pedro Páramo*'s main story. The name Pedro, from the Latin word "petra" meaning stone or country is significant in the story of a young man searching for his origins, home, foundations, or *patria*—country—as Pedro Páramo encompasses all of these origins and foundations: "todos somos hijos de Pedro Páramo" (Rulfo, 9). Pedro Páramo is a name and a character that symbolizes the foundation for a dying legacy of the "giant" landowners called *hacendados* and that in Mexico ended with the revolution and its reforms. Like them, Páramo's children, Juan "Páramo" Preciado and Miguel Páramo,

die before taking hold of the lands of the hacienda of la Media Luna. The plot of the novel starts as Juan Preciado, sent by his mother, goes searching for his father Pedro Páramo. Legacy is the unifying thread of the narrative of Pedro Páramo as his *hacienda* called La Media Luna and its barren town, Comala, an unfrequented and abandoned ghost town marked by dead legacies rooted in its land and forgotten in time.

The instances of Legado—legacy—in *Pedro Páramo* befits both the legal and ceremonial definitions of inheriting land as property and as a story. In its narrative *Pedro Páramo* presents legacy through land and stories of land that are reminiscent in noises, voices, rumors and distant songs which transmit the legacy of land to posterity—both as a matter and antimatter—all within the hacienda’s noises, voices, rumors, and songs.

The narrative of *Pedro Páramo* is a story made up of legacies and their sad and common endings. They are legacies of an old landholding family—memories, remainders of those that lived and worked in the lands of la Media Luna up to the apotheosis of the Mexican revolution, and its land reforms, and as vestiges that remain in the present as distant reminders of past legacies. Pedro Páramo is also a story of coming of age, a bildungsroman story, and making sense of one’s legacy. Juan Preciado’s journey is not unlike those taken to make sense of the past and present through the indignation of one’s legacy to determine your identity.³³

Juan Preciado is too a vestige of his family, not as powerful as his father Pedro Páramo, but he reminds others of the clout his father once had. He opens the narrative of

³³ For more on identity in *Pedro Páramo* see Merrim “The Existential Juan Rulfo: Pedro Páramo, Mexicanness, and the Grupo Hiperión”, and Urióstegui “Jorge Zepeda, La Recepción Inicial De ‘Pedro Páramo’ (1955-1963)”.

Pedro Páramo and can be said to be a main character in the narrative, as he in his search is the one who gives life to the story of Páramo Páramo. The narrative in *Pedro Páramo* reflects the recurrence and importance of Mexican literature, as well as a perspective into narrative fiction.³⁴ From the beginning of the narrative until halfway in the story, Pedro Páramo's legacy seems to take life in the steps of his long-abandoned son—Juan Preciado—who goes on a journey to Comala to find his father. Yet as the story progresses it becomes clear that Juan is the last owner of la Media Luna, from a long line of powerful *hacendados*. As noted by himself,

Vine a Comala porque me dijeron que acá vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo. Mi madre me lo dijo... “No dejes de ir a visitarlo—me recomendó—. Se llama de este modo y de este otro. Estoy segura que le dará gusto conocerte.”...

—No vayas a pedirle nada. Exígele lo nuestro. Lo que estuvo obligado a darme y nunca me dio...El olvido en que nos tuvo, mi hijo, cóbraselo caro.

—Así lo haré, madre.

Pero no pensé cumplir mi promesa. Hasta que ahora pronto comencé a llenarme de sueños, a darle vuelo a mis ilusiones. (Rulfo 5)

In this instance heritage is also a dream—illusions of a past. According to the narrative, Juan is a landowner and heir to wealth and power of his powerful father Pedro Páramo.

³⁴ For more on *Pedro Páramo* as Mexican literature see Edith Negrín's “Yvette Jiménez de Báez. Juan Rulfo, del Páramo a la desesperanza”.

The ownership and desire of a name for Juan is his search for legacy. Not unlike a mythological story, Juan Preciado goes searching for his father. Sent by a hopeful dying mother. Juan Preciado hopes to demand what they were owed and Páramo never gave them. The words of Juan's mother are the well-known premise that launches the novel. At the core of Juan Preciado's journey is the hope that everyone must know of their own legacy and where they come from to better understand themselves. And even in the disdain of his mother's words there remains a hint of love for the past, as she reminds her son that Pedro Páramo will be happy to see him.

Illusions and dreams around a languishing legacy that Juan Preciado wishes to understand gives way to the narrative of *Pedro Páramo*. All throughout the narrative, Juan Preciado meets different characters, listens to echoes, and questions what others tell him of his dying legacy. In this medley of fragments, legacies and land narratives, *Pedro Páramo* appears as a fragmented narrative, without order, where land and *tierra* describe the existence of folk traditions and its discord that give action to the character's plot, and at the same time as an indication of Juan's futile attempt to revive the legacies of the hacienda. An example of this land narrative is evident in the fragment in which Juan Preciado arrives in Comala and encounters Abundio Martínez, an illegitimate son of Pedro Páramo:

Era ese tiempo de la canícula, cuando el aire de agosto sopla caliente, envenenado por el olor podrido de las saponarias. El camino subía y bajaba: “*Sube o baja según se va o se viene. Para el que va, sube; para el que viene, baja.*”

—¿Cómo dice usted que se llama el pueblo que se ve allá abajo?

—Comala, señor.

—Seguro, señor

—¿Y por qué se ve esto tan triste?

—Son los tiempos, señor. (6)

In Juan's conversation with Abundio Martinez an *arriero*, muleteer, Comala and the lands of la Media Luna are the background of the conversation. In the hills going up and down that take Juan towards the town of Comala in search of his father, sadness evokes somberness and a bucolic ideal of land and at the same time the disregard and impudence for the once respected *hacendado*, his father.

Somber and unrevered, Juan Preciado ponders on the meaning of his personal legacy as well as on his material inheritance and family legacy. The memories of his mother bring him to the point of questioning his quest in search for a legacy which was doomed by time and by the revolution. Juan's personal account and memories show the human and personal side of the *hacendado*, a facet unknown in the rhetoric and popular ideas of the revolution. As Juan Preciado remembers,

Yo imaginaba ver aquello a través de los recuerdos de mi madre; de su nostalgia, entre retazos de suspiros. Siempre vivió ella suspirando por Comala, por el retorno; pero jamás volvió. Ahora yo vengo en su lugar. Traigo los ojos con los que ella miró estas cosas, porque me dio sus ojos para ver: "*Hay allí, pasando el puerto de Los Colimotes, la vista muy hermosa de una llanura verde, algo amarilla por el maíz maduro. Desde*

ese lugar se ve Comala, blanqueando la tierra, iluminándola durante la noche.” Y su voz era secreta, casi apagada, como si hablara consigo misma...Mi madre. (6)

Juan's saddened conversation with Abundio, recalls the words of his mother, as they describe the melancholic scenery and land which also give an insight into the defeat of the *hacendado*. This is a clear blow to a legacy of riches and privilege, as Juan Preciado does not find the extent of his mother's memories at Comala. The green meadow, with hues of yellow from the corn, and a white soil are bucolic descriptions of the endless lands that once encompassed the lands of la Media Luna in Doloritas' memories, but now they are nothing but a sorrowful landscape encountered by Juan. In the quote it is important to note that Juan is seeing the landscape through his mother's eyes, as “she gave him her eyes to see” the lands of Comala through her tales. This is the way in which Juan Preciado sees land, through the lens of the past and beyond how presently it is. All that remains of the past and land of plentiful resources are the tales incrustated in Juan's memory.

Juan Preciado's contrast with Abundio offers a contraposition between the legacy of the *campesino* and that of the *hacendado* after the revolution during a promising time in which both are (supposedly) equal and free from their old legacies. Yet Juan still has an idealized vision of the hacienda's land, while Abundio has only scorn and disdain for Pedro Páramo and the *hacienda*. Juan perceives Abundio's rancor in their dialogue and omits that he is the rightful owner of the lands of La media luna while the muleteer aches

in disdain and avarice. However different in their positions and postures towards the past, they are both Pedro Páramo's sons and hence Juan and Abundio share a dying legacy:

—¿Conoce usted a Pedro Páramo? —le pregunté...

—¿Quién es? volví a preguntar.

—Un rencor vivo —me contesto él.

Y dio un pajuelazo contra los burros, sin necesidad, ya que los burros iban mucho más delante de nosotros, encarrerados por la bajada. Sentí el retrato de mi madre guardado en la bolsa de la camisa, calentándome el corazón, como si ella también sudara. Era un retrato viejo, carcomido en los bordes; pero fue el único que conocí de ella. Me lo había encontrado en el armario de la cocina, dentro de una cazuela llena de yerbas: hojas de toronjil, flores de castilla, ramas de ruda. Desde entonces lo guardé. Era el único.

(8)

Juan Preciado finds himself alone in a quixotic search for land and the significance of home in the period of the post-revolution, where his father's legacy is no longer important nor revered by others—including Abundio. The only sense of reverence for his father's legacy comes from the words of his dead mother and faithful servants that died at the service of the *hacienda*. As Juan Preciado's mother —Doloritas—bequests upon Juan the ordeal recovering her beloved personal property—she reminisces on the wealth of Comala and la Media Luna. Her photograph, in Juan's pocket but found in a box with dry flowers, his only heritage of his mother, can be said to be an heirloom of Comala along with the dry herbs and roses that grew in its lands.

In *Pedro Páramo*'s land narrative, Preciado encounters his legacy in the laments of ghosts he hears. His interaction with those ghosts and his metamorphosis into a perpetual soul, tell the story of how the Mexican hacienda disappeared, while the live "rancor" of who was his father withers along with the memories of his mother. A quelled legacy is all that remains of the once proud *hacendado*—who is by definition a man who is distant from the hardships of the *campesinado*—just like the withered flowers lying beside the photograph of Juan's mother that point to a gone by gilded age of perfumed European roses, scent full herbs, and an essence in which reason lagged behind the emotions of the heart. Various articles and books on the narrative in *Pedro Páramo* focus on one or two main speakers and disregard all the voices in *Pedro Páramo*'s narrative as well as more in the structure of narrative than in the voices or the critical text of novel.³⁵ And while this study focuses in understanding the main narrative of Juan Preciado—it does so by analyzing the many voices in the narrative and the things they say to him and about him. *Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones lejanas* that tell of the story of the distant remainders of the once powerful hacienda and its legacy in twentieth century Mexico.

Unaware and detached from the suffering of the *campesinado*, the *hacendados*' lands grew at the cost and suffering of characters like Abundio. In the tribulation that resulted from the unjust system of the *hacienda*, the ghosts of these characters find Juan Preciado at a crossroads—where some one like Abundio show bitter disregard while

³⁵ See Ros's "Estructura De Pedro Páramo" for more on structure in *Pedro Páramo*.

Damiana Cisneros, another one of the characters in service of the hacienda and Páramo, waits for him.

Páramo's death unexpectedly discontinues his legacy, and it is also the reason why Juan Preciado does not find a father and ends up drowning in the mud and sorrow in Comala's plaza—only assisted by the last living acquaintances of Pedro Páramo legacy, Donis and Dorotea la Cuarraca. Both perspectives of reverence and disregard towards Pedro Páramo's legacy are needed, and part of the fiction of reality. Abundio represents the living ghost of the *hacienda's* unjust existence and the hate for the *hacendado* and his legacy, as well as beyond the times of the revolution, at a time when a name like Páramo is obsolete and his legacy has come to an end. In his remarks, Abundio mocks Juan Preciado, and he ignores him—the last legitimate owner of la Media Luna and its legacy—as Pedro Páramo and his lands are seen and understood as one:

—Mire usted —me dice el arriero, deteniéndose—. ¿Ve aquella loma que parece vejiga de puerco? Pues detrasito de ella está la Media Luna. Ahora voltié para allá. ¿Ve la otra ceja que casi no se ve de lo lejos que está? Bueno, pues eso es la Media Luna de punta a cabo. Como quien dice, toda la tierra que se puede abarcar con la mirada. Y es de él todo ese terrenal. El caso es que nuestras madres nos malparieron en un petate aunque éramos hijos de Pedro Páramo. Y lo más chistoso que él nos llevó a bautizar. Como usted debe haber pasado lo mismo, ¿no?

—No me acuerdo.

—¡Váyase mucho al carajo!

—¿Qué dice usted?

—Que ya vamos llegando, señor.

—Sí, ya lo veo. ¿Qué pasó por aquí?

—Un correccaminos, señor. Así les nombran a esos pájaros.

—No, yo preguntaba por el pueblo, que se ve tan solo, como si estuviera abandonado. Parece como que no lo habitara nadie.

—No es que lo parezca. Así es. Aquí no vive nadie.

—¿Y Pedro Páramo?

—Pedro Páramo murió hace muchos años, (8-9)

Being certain of Páramo's death, Abundio assumes that Juan Preciado cannot be but a miserable illegitimate son of Pedro Páramo, like himself, ignoring that Preciado was born in la Media Luna, the son of Páramo's first marriage to a wealthy landowner (Dolores Preciado, owner of the *tierras de Enmedio*). Between the legacies of Juan Preciado and Abundio, few are the differences, yet one—the lands, inheritance, of Juan Preciado's mother—make all the difference in terms of their legacies in the Rulfian narrative.

The lands of la Media Luna are described by Abundio as an endless place of injustice where Pedro Páramo had all the domain of the *tierra*, and where his illegitimate sons lacked even the poorest of cots. Unlike most of Pedro Páramo's children who are not recognized as legitimate in *Pedro Páramo*, Miguel Páramo is the only one Pedro Páramo gives his name. The one (son) who did not have a mother is the one to whom Pedro gives his name and legacy.

It is during Juan Preciado's stay at the home of Eduvijes Dyada, that the reader first hears of Miguel Páramo. Juan hears and sees the "ghost" of Eduvijes Dyada, materialized as a living being, perhaps as a voice, a rumor, or just noise, and it is her who tells Juan of Miguel and of el Colorado—the ghost of Miguel's horse who also haunts Comala. As noted,

—¿Qué es lo que pasa, doña Eduvijes?

Ella sacudió la cabeza como si despertara de un sueño.

—Es el caballo de Miguel Páramo, que galopa por el camino de la Media Luna.

—¿Entonces vive alguien en la Media Luna?

—No, allí no vive nadie...

—Solamente es el caballo que va y viene. Ellos eran inseparables. Corre por todas partes buscándolo y siempre regresa a estas horas. Quizá el pobre no puede con su remordimiento...

—Todo comenzó cuando con Miguel Páramo. Sólo yo supe lo que le había pasado la noche que murió. Estaba ya acostada cuando oí regresar su caballo rumbo a la Media Luna... Bueno, como te estaba diciendo, eso de que no regresó es un puro decir. No había acabado de pasar cuando sentí que me tocaban por la ventana... Y era él, Miguel Páramo.

— ¿Qué pasó? —le dije a Miguel Páramo—¿Te dieron calabazas?

—No. Ella me sigue queriendo —me lo dijo—. Lo que sucede es que yo no pude dar con ella. Se me perdió el pueblo. Había mucha neblina o

humo o no sé qué; pero sí sé que Contla no existe. Fui más allá, según mis cálculos, y no encontré nada. Vengo a contártelo a ti, por que tú me comprendes. Si se lo dijera a los demás de Comala dirían que estoy loco, como siempre han dicho que lo estoy.

—No. Loco no, Miguel. Debes estar muerto (23-25).

Miguel Páramo is the third character that is known to be dead in the narrative after Dolores Preciado and Pedro Páramo. Despite being recognized as the son of Pedro Páramo, Miguel dies too young to continue the legacy of this father and his lands. The legacy of the Páramo children is halted tragically by fate.

Such tragedies denote more clearly the end of the Páramo legacy as well as the fact that Eduvijes and everyone else is dead. It is not until Juan is buried that this thread of the story can be understood and connected with the rest of the novel. Yet the legacies of Miguel Páramo and Eduvijes are intertwined because Miguel Páramo is the son of the hacendado and owner of the lands of Comala. Their tragic lives raise questions of privilege and injustice, as two souls that are so alike have two very different ends. Eduvijes is at times the “hidden” and inconsequential lover of Miguel Páramo, while Miguel is a hopeless and not well comprehended womanizer. After Miguel falls from his horse, el Colorado (on his way to see a woman from Contla), he returns as a ghost to say farewell to Eduvijes—his unconditional love and the only one who understood and loved his fast and prompt take on life.

—Sólo brinque el lienzo de piedra que últimamente mando poner mi padre. Hice que el *Colorado* lo brincara... Sé que lo brinqué y después

seguí corriendo; pero, como te digo, no había más que humo y humo y humo.

—Mañana tu padre se retorcerá de dolor —le dije—. Lo siento por él. Ahora vete y descansa en paz, Miguel. Te agradezco que hayas venido a despedirte de mí.—Y cerré la ventana.—Antes de que amaneciera un mozo de la Media Luna vino a decir:

—El patrón don Pedro le suplica. El niño Miguel ha muerto. Le suplica su compañía.

—Ya lo sé —le dije—. ¿Te pidieron que lloraras?

—Sí, don Fulgor me dijo que se lo dijera llorando.

—Esta bien. Dile a don Pedro que allá iré. (25)

Juan Preciado learns of Pedro Páramo's legacy from each character or ghost he encounters on his way to la Media Luna. Through narratives of dubious nature, Rulfo adds mystery and various other rhetorical exaggerations to the land narrative of the novel. The fragmented story line of *Pedro Páramo*, Eduvijas Dyada introduces Juan Preciado to the land narratives of the characters of la Media Luna. Her distant fate is far from that of others but most notably from Miguel Páramo. Even though Abundio is the one who tells Preciado of Eduvijas and Pedro Páramo, he is an outsider to Pedro Páramo's hacienda, and life within the lands of la Media Luna. Miguel's ghost visits Eduvijas, before others know of his death in Comala and la Media Luna. The actions of Miguel's life go unjudged by Eduvijas, as she tells him that he is not what they say he is. Yet on the night

of his death, she tells Miguel to go away because he is not mad, as he tells her, but rather dead.

The death of Miguel signifies the end of a filial legacy for Pedro Páramo and the hacienda. Eduvijes also notes a recoiling pain for Pedro Páramo. The solemnity of Miguel Paramo's death is nothing but a mere farce of tears and sadness. This signals the beginning of the end of the hacienda system, even as Pedro Páramo notes how they cry not for Miguel but for them to be heard by the owner. Fulgor Sedano, the foreman of la Media Luna, sends a kid to summon Eduvijes to attend Miguel's funerary service. Fulgor tells the little messenger to cry and Eduvijes quickly notices the farce, as the death of Miguel does not pain the *peones*. And when asked to tell if he was asked to cry, the kid answers with a cynical naïveté that Fulgor had told him to cry.

In contrast with the diligence of Eduvijes and other workers of la Media Luna, Miguel Páramo, while still alive, always arrived home late after endless nights of womanizing—as the workers of la Media Luna go off to their day's labor. Miguel's actions as Fulgor puts them, are careless. Yet Fulgor still worries about the legacy that Miguel undermines in what he observes to be Miguel's "carreras contra el tiempo":

La puerta grande de la Media Luna rechinó al abrirse, remojada por la brisa. Fueron saliendo primero dos, luego otros dos, después otros dos y así hasta doscientos hombres a caballo que se desparramaron por los campos... Y apenas había acabado de salir el último hombre, cuando entro a todo galope Miguel Páramo, quien, sin detener su carrera, se apeó del caballo en las narices de Fulgor...

—¿De dónde vienes a estas horas, muchacho?

—Vengo de ordeñar.

—¿A quién?

—¿A qué no adivinas?

—Ha de ser a Dorotea *la Cuarraca*. Es a la única que le gustan los bebés.

—Eres un imbécil, Fulgor; pero tu no tienes la culpa...

Después se quedo pensando si aquella mujer le sirviera para algo. Y sin dudar más fue a la puerta trasera de la cocina y llamo a Dorotea:

—Ven para acá, te voy a proponer un trato —le dijo.

Y quien sabe qué clase de proposiciones le haría, lo cierto es que cuando entro de nuevo se frotaba las manos:

...de hoy en adelante le darás de comer a esta mujer a esa mujer lo mismo que a mí. (67-68)

Miguel disregards a notion of the future and legacy as he regularly arrives from long nights of debauchery to find the sarcastic humor of Fulgor. In this instance, the languishing voice of Fulgor jokes about Miguel's conquests. Fulgor subtly catches Miguel off guard and sarcastically tells him that he probably spent the night with Dorotea la Cuarraca, a desperate woman that wants children. Distorted about Fulgor's sarcasm, Miguel asks Damiana about la Cuarraca during breakfast, and after realizing who she is, he plots how to get back at Fulgor as well as how to at least use la Cuarraca in favor of his transient love conquests. In exchange of eating the same way as Miguel, la Cuarraca accepts to convince girls to date him. Such careless permissive informality on the actions

of Miguel and la Cuarraca would later haunt them both. A year after their agreement, la Cuarraca would regret having accepted to get Miguel innocent girls, when *el padre* Rentería condemns her to hell.

Amidst Miguel's chicanery, Fulgor continues his job as overseer checking the levels of stored grain and he seems equally troubled by the lack of grain and Miguel's own problems and the disregard for the legacy and name that Miguel takes lightheadedly.

Mientras tanto, Fulgor Sedano se fue hasta las trojes a revisar la altura del maíz. Le preocupaba la merma porque aún tardaría la cosecha. A decir verdad, apenas si se había sembrado... Llego a las trojes y sintió el calor del maíz. Tomó en sus manos un puñado para ver si no lo había alcanzado el gorgojo. Midió la altura: "Rendirá —dijo—. En cuanto crezca el pasto ya no vamos a requerir darle maíz al ganado. Hay de sobra." De regreso miró el cielo lleno de nubes: "Tendremos agua para un buen rato." Y se olvidó de todo lo demás. (68-69)

Worried about Miguel's reckonings and untimely races with time, Fulgor cannot help but worry indirectly about the Páramo legacy even as he sees that there is a surplus of feed and grass and that the falling rains will bring more.

In contrast to the ambivalence of Fulgor for Miguel Páramo, Eduvijes Dyada shows kindness and compassion to Juan Preciado welcoming him to Comala—in spite of him being the brother of Miguel, the man that still haunts her for forgiveness and love. In the narrative Eduvijes tells Juan that she was his mother's confidant and closest friend, saying that they had grown up very close and hinting that they too had died not far apart

(jesting of a past accord, that of whoever died first would subsequently take the other). Eduvijes even goes as far as telling Juan that he had almost been her own son—her own legacy—and hence treats him well, even though he tells her that his mother had not talked to him about her.

Eduvijes was a close family friend at the service of Dolores Dyada and Pedro Páramo who offered room and board in Comala to the workers of la Media Luna, who was always eager to attend Dolores her friend and wife of Pedro Páramo. Her character seems acceptable under the morality of the time and folk of the hacienda, except for the stain of having taken her own life, after having a child as result of serving men that just took advantage of her. Ultimately, Eduvijes has a troubled legacy, and she perpetually tries to abscond her sins. Even after her death, Eduvijes' sister, María Dyada, does not find absolution or forgiveness for Eduvijes from el padre Rentería. Eduvijes was ultimately a servile woman that had a doubtful reputation with a stigmatized legacy. Eduvijes is best described as a meek and troubled soul that kept on suffering in silence. *El padre* Rentería called her reality “a valley of tears” as he remorsefully walks at night, not having given her absolution: “Salió fuera y miró el cielo. Llovían estrellas. Lamentó aquello porque hubiera querido ver un cielo quieto. Oyó el canto de los gallos. Sintió la envoltura de la noche cubriendo la tierra. La tierra ‘este valle de lágrimas’” (35). The stars and Astros that fall and move in the sky, upon el padre Rentería's night walk, contrast with the suffering and tears that fall in lands of Comala. Surprisingly not even *el padre* Rentería is given absolution, himself, after his confession with the priest of the neighboring town of Contla.

One of the biggest jumps, an ellipsis in the narrative of *Pedro Páramo* is when Eduvijes leaves Juan Preciado sleeping, and he wakes up to rain and memories of Pedro Páramo's childhood. Juan recalls the last question Eduvijes asked him—if he had ever heard the shouts of a dead man—as the ellipsis takes him to Pedro Páramo's childhood when Pedro lived with his mother and grandmother. The memories of Pedro are a recurring theme in Rulfian land narrative as well as the persistent imagery of legacy and memory encoded in different elements from the land: rain, agrarian parcels, the hacienda, frogs, crowing roosters, and a Mexican bucolic existence.

The fragmented land narrative returns to Miguel's legacy through the voices and gossip (that Juan hears as he sleeps) of the workers of the *hacienda* that complain about Miguel Páramo's funerary parade and life. The voices claim that they were made to wear shoes—usually only worn during the *fiestas*—and carry Miguel's body on their shoulders. Everything the workers of la Media Luna say points to the fact that they do not feel sorry and rejoiced with Miguel's death. The rumors of Miguel's restless soul find way into the conversation of the workers as one *peón* states that Miguel, at seventeen years old, died just in time. Conversely, there were rumors of how *el padre* Rentería gave Miguel Páramo the absolution—which poor people like María Dyada could not buy for her sister Eduvijes who probably had not sinned any more than Miguel.

The indulgences that Pedro Páramo buys for his son, Miguel, shape the narrative of the novel as *el padre* Rentería and his niece Anita discuss Miguel Páramo's death over cold dinner. *El padre* Rentería tells Anita that Miguel died and confides on her that he faced the difficult dilemma of having to absolve Miguel, the man that killed his brother

and took advantage of his niece. Anita responds uneasily but is reminded by Rentería that she too had pardoned him the night he asked for her forgiveness and took her innocence. Ultimately, the dilemma of *el padre* Rentería's actions are justified by the assistance that Pedro Páramo provides him and his niece. Yet, in his actions, there is a hint of impotence and despair as money seems to be the only consolation in Comala, a valley of tears.

Susana San Juan is Pedro Páramo's main hope for perpetuating his legacy, yet she disregards him and his love. Susana only cares about the body and not even the soul as she yearns not for Pedro Páramo, but for Florencio. Like *el padre* Rentería Susana San Juan has a pragmatic conception of life (within the land of the hacienda) and of what they want. Both leave behind no legacy, yet they ponder on the past and present but not the future, examining the sweets and sourness that life offered them. According to *el padre* Rentería land in Comala only yields a bitter fruit, as he yearns for the sweetness that of grapes that only mature outside of Comala and la Media Luna. The sour dilemmas that *el padre* Rentería confronts in the barren lands of Comala are inherent of the suffering of those that stay behind after the death of the hacienda and its town. Upon a conversation with the priest of the neighboring Contla, *el padre* Rentería talks about the sour fruits that grow in Comala as the only things that flourish in the rumors and voices that rise from the soil.

Allá en Comala he intentado sembrar uvas. No se dan. Sólo crecen arrayanes y naranjos; naranjos agrios y arrayanes agrios. A mí se me ha olvidado el sabor de las cosas dulces. ¿Recuerda usted las guayabas de China que teníamos en el seminario? Los duraznos, las mandarinas

aquellas que solo con sólo apretarlas soltaban la cáscara? Yo traje aquí unas semillas. Pocas; apenas unas una bolsita... después pensé que hubiera sido mejor dejarlas allá donde maduraran, ya que aquí las traje a morir. —Y sin embargo, padre, dicen que las tierras de Comala son buenas. Es lástima que estén en manos de un solo hombre. ¿Es Pedro Páramo aún el dueño, no? (77)

Both priests conclude that the bitterness of the fruits of the land are not due to the bad soil, but to the fact that all the land belongs to Pedro Páramo and the rancor he has sown. Both *padres* allude to the parable of the sower, as they discuss about the lands and legacy of Pedro Páramo.

As sudden rains falling on the soil bring forth a promise of a good harvest, in the narrative they bring an important story of la Media Luna, as Juan Preciado listens to the drops of rain fall, from within his tomb next to Susana San Juan's grave. The voices talk about the legacy of Fulgor as overseer of the hacienda and how he rejoices in the sudden rains of spring called *derrepentes* by Juan's own mother Doloritas.

Al amanecer, gruesas gotas de lluvia cayeron sobre la tierra... Fulgor Sedano sintió el olor de la tierra y se asomó a ver cómo la lluvia desfloraba los surcos. Sus ojos pequeños se alegraron... Otro buen año se nos hecha encima. Y añadió: “Ven agüita, ven. ¡Déjate caer hasta que te canses! Después córrete para allá, acuérdate que hemos abierto a la labor toda la tierra, nomás para que te des gusto.” Y soltó la risa. (66)

Fulgor calls forth the rain to water the crops recently sowed in the lands of la Media Luna, as he once called las Tierras de Enmedio, when Pedro Páramo married Dolores Preciado. In laughter he rejoices about the good year that the rains will bring.

Fulgor Sedano, through his voice, even after death, tries to put himself at the service of Juan, the same way he had served don Lucas and his son Pedro Páramo his entire life. Through the different generations he served, Fulgor seemed to understand each of them.³⁶ His voice is among some of the rumors and voices that Juan Preciado hears in the streets of Comala among the squalls that Juan Preciado hears in the room that Eduvijes gave him, those of Torivio Aldrete. Aldrete was a man that was hung in the beams of that room by Fulgor Sedano by the orders of Pedro Páramo over their land disputes for the possession of the lands of Vilmayo. In this sense *Pedro Páramo* offers an apotheosis of voices and echoes that offer a clear notion of Fulgor's legacy, and dedication to the Páramo family and the lands of la Media Luna even after death.

—Tocó con el mango del chicote la puerta de la casa de Pedro Páramo.
Pensó en la primera vez que lo había hecho dos semanas atrás. Esperó un buen rato del mismo modo que tuvo que esperar aquella vez. Miró también, como lo hizo la otra vez, el moño negro que colgaba del dintel de la puerta...Y se iba cuando apareció la figura de Pedro Páramo.

—Pasa Fulgor...

—Siéntate, Fulgor. Aquí hablaremos con más calma.

³⁶ For more on generational gaps and legacy in *Pedro Páramo* see Treviño "The Concept of Generation in the Study of Twenty-First Century Mexican Literature: Usefulness and Limitations", and Jiménez de Báez "El Mundo De Juan En Pedro Páramo."

Estaban en el corral. Pedro Páramo se arrellanó en un pesebre y esperó:

—¿Por qué no te sientas?

—Prefiero estar de pie, Pedro.

—Como tú quieras, pero no se te olvide el “don”.

¿Quién era aquel muchacho para hablarle así? Ni su padre don Lucas Páramo se había atrevido a hacerlo. Y de pronto éste, que jamás se había parado en la Media Luna, ni conocía de oídas el trabajo, le hablaba como un gañan. ¡Vaya pues! (Rulfo 37-38)

Fulgor narrates the story of when he met Pedro Páramo. A *muchacho*, like Juan, that saved his inherited hacienda from the bleakness of ruin. Fulgor’s admiration of Pedro does not end, even after their deaths—it is a legacy of eternal service. The respect he has for Pedro, a young man, compared to Fulgor, a man of 52 years, is earned by Pedro Páramo’s actions to save his legacy. Pedro demands to be called *don* Pedro instead of just Pedro are among many that do not disappoint what Fulgor, and he expect of him. Pedro is a smart man affronting his destiny and his actions leave Fulgor questioning his decisions as heir of la Media Luna. In all honesty, Fulgor initially did not expect anything from Pedro, and it was only the loving attachment he felt for the lands of la Media Luna what made him stay after don Lucas was killed. Fulgor seems to see Pedro Páramo, in hopes of remaining part of the hacienda for however long the ruined hacienda would last with Pedro Páramo as head of household. But, instead of vanquishing his lands Pedro Páramo increases the lands of la Media Luna.

Yo no esperaba de él nada. “Es un inútil”, decía de él mi difunto patrón don Lucas. “Un flojo de marca.” Yo le daba la razón. “Cuando me muera váyase buscando otro trabajo, Fulgor.” “Sí, don Lucas.”... “Usted no se merece eso don Lucas.” “No se cuenta con él para nada, ni que me sirva de bordón serviría cuando yo esté viejo. Se me malogró, qué quiere usted, Fulgor.” “Es una verdadera lástima, don Lucas.” Y ahora esto. De no haber estado tan encariñado con la Media Luna, ni lo hubiera venido a ver. Se habría largado sin avisarle. Pero le tenía aprecio a aquella tierra; a esas lomas pelonas tan trabajadas y que todavía seguían aguantando el surco, dando cada vez más de sí... La querida Media Luna... Y sus agregados.

(Rulfo 40-41)

Without a doubt the lands of la Media Luna are a gift that never stops giving to the Páramo legacy. According to Fulgor its hills produce more grain each year. In this instance, Pedro Páramo, seems to be the representation of la Media Luna and its land, the man that instead of selling, increases the landholdings of the hacienda by marrying a rich land heir—Dolores Preciado—to which don Lucas was indebted. Fulgor is surprised by the decision of Pedro to marry his debtor in order to save the lands of the hacienda and at the same time amass more land holdings. As Fulgor begins to faithfully obey Pedro, he imagines himself calling onto la Media Luna Dolores Preciado’s lands: “‘Vente para acá, tierrita de Enmedio.’ La veía venir. Como que aquí estaba ya. Lo que significa una mujer después de todo (41). Land, for all characters in the narrative represents power, but not everyone can have power or wealth. Women, even landowners like Dolores, are relegated

by the control of a man. Pedro Páramo ultimately takes Dolores' land and will by marrying her. She accepts this subjugation; despite that she had the power between them—as he was indebted to her beyond his own land possessions and liquidity.

Fue muy fácil encampanarse a la Dolores. Si hasta le relumbraron los ojos y se le descompuso la cara.

—Perdóneme que me ponga colorada, don Fulgor. No creí que don Pedro se fijara en mí.

—No duerme, pensando en usted.

—Pero si él tiene de dónde escoger. Abundan tantas muchachas bonitas en Comala. ¿Qué dirán ellas cuando lo sepan?

—Él sólo piensa en usted, Dolores. De ahí en más, en nadie.

—Me hace usted que me den escalofríos, don Fulgor. Ni siquiera me lo imaginaba.

—Es que es hombre tan reservado. Don Lucas Páramo, que en paz descase, le llegó a decir que usted no era digna de él. Y sé callo la boca por pura obediencia. Ahora que él ya no existe, no hay ningún impedimento. Fue su primera decisión...Pongamos por fecha de la boda pasado mañana. ¿Qué opina usted?

(Rulfo 41-42)

Pedro Páramo and Dolores Preciado decide to get married as two pragmatic adults. None of them are forced into marriage: Pedro wanted her land, and for Dolores, Pedro was a fine catch considering her circumstances and his good name and legacy.

Perhaps as an indiscretion, the “voices” and gossips heard in Comala, bring forth stories of the legacies of la Media Luna. Juan Preciado along with Damiana hear stories of the motives for his parents’ marriage. Even though it was a marriage of convenience, the ceremonial conditions of the act remain according to the costume of the land. Fulgor goes to ask for Dolores hand in marriage on behalf of Pedro Páramo. Dolores feels like the luckiest woman in the Comala and Pedro Páramo ultimately weds her by all laws, those of civil society and of God. Their marriage is the fusion between equal landowners and the union of their lands. Their story is as old as time, because tradition, legacy, and land ownership prove to be stronger than mere love or romance:

Without a logical explanation Eduvijes and her voice disappear, but not without telling Juan once again of the rumors and stories of Pedro Páramo and most insistently of the shouts of Torivio Aldrete. Juan is asked by Eduvijes if he has ever heard the shouts of a dead man, Aldrete, referring to the screams that Aldrete uttered when he was hung in the room Juan stays—and that continue to be heard. When Juan tells her that has not heard them, Eduvijes tells him that he is better off not having heard them and disappears. She walks away and does not come back. This is when Juan encounters Damina Cisneros who comes to Eduvijes’ home to welcome him and take him to la Media Luna.

Her languishing soul informs the legacy of a decent and respected woman at the service of Pedro Páramo.

—¿Es usted, doña Eduvijes? —pregunté—. ¿Qué es lo que está sucediendo? ¿Tuvo usted miedo?

—No me llamo Eduviges. Soy Damiana. Supe que estabas aquí y vine a verte. Quiero invitarte a dormir a mi casa allí tendrás dónde descansar.

—¿Damiana Cisneros? ¿No es usted de las que vivieron en la Media Luna?

—Allá vivo. Por eso he tardado en venir.

—Mí madre me habló de una tal Damiana que me había cuidado cuando nací. ¿De modo que usted...?

—Sí, yo soy. Te conozco desde que abriste los ojos.

—Iré con usted. Aquí no me han dejado en paz los gritos. ¿No oyó usted lo que estaba pasando? Como que estaban asesinando a alguien. ¿No acaba de oír usted...?

—Tal vez sea algún eco que esta aquí encerrado. En este cuarto ahorcaron a Torivio Aldrete hace mucho tiempo. Luego condenaron la puerta, hasta que él se seicara; para que su cuerpo no encontrara reposo. No sé cómo has podido entrar, cuando no existe llave para abrir esta puerta.

—Fue doña Eduviges quien abrió. Me dijo que era el único cuarto que tenía disponible.

—¿Eduviges Dyada?

—Ella.

—Pobre Eduviges. Debe andar penando todavía. (35-36)

Awakened by the echoes of Torivio Aldrete's dying words "¡Ay vida, no me mereces!" Juan encounters Damiana Cisneros. Damiana is Juan Preciado's *nana* (governess) whom,

as she tells him, knows him since he first opened his eyes. Damiana comes to find Juan Preciado the same night that she hears that Juan is in Comala. Damiana guides Juan Preciado as an act of servitude and dedication to the legacy of Pedro Páramo. She was at the head of service in la Media Luna and was highly esteemed and respected by Pedro Páramo.

On their way to la Media Luna, carried by the wind are the sounds of a gone by narrative that gets confused with the noise of monotonous leaves blowing in the silence and cold of the night. As they walk, Damiana warns Juan Preciado of the noises, echoes, and gossips that are heard throughout Comala, offering him an almost as cautionary tale. Damiana tells Juan not to feel scared of the ghosts and sounds that haunt Comala. In Comala the souls cannot rest, and they futilely hope to escape from where they are trapped or buried below the lands of la Media Luna and Comala. Yet more than a tertiary conception of hell, heaven and earth, land in *Pedro Páramo* is representative of Mexican folklore and popular imaginaries about death and suffering. More important than the legacy of one's life is what remains within the echoes and noises after death—the true transcendental remainders of one's legacy.

In the novel, the noises and voices of the lost souls seem to come from holes in the soil, as if it were a matter of magic. Furthermore, the narrative states that Comala is the worst place of suffering, even worse than hell—it is noted in the narrative and among the rumors that the souls of those that died returned to Comala for their blankets. The transit of souls in *Pedro Páramo* do not have boundaries as the narrative proposes that one's soul can return from death. Perhaps a nostalgic approach to the life at the hacienda

of his father, Rulfo's novel in this instance aims to rescue the beliefs and traditions and legacies of the long-gone Mexican hacienda. This can be seen in how Damiana's narrative tells more of the Páramo land legacy:

—Este pueblo está lleno de ecos. Tal parece que estuvieran encerrados en el hueco de las paredes o debajo de las piedras. Cuando caminas sientes que te van pisando los pasos. Oyes crujidos. Risas. Unas risas ya muy viejas, como cansadas de reír. Y voces ya desgastadas por el uso...

—Hubo un tiempo en que estuve oyendo durante muchas noches el rumor de una. Me llegaban los ruidos hasta la Media Luna... Luego deje de oírla. Y es que la alegría cansa... Este pueblo está lleno de ecos. Oigo el aullido de los perros, y dejo que aúllen. Y en días de aire se ve al viento arrastrando hojas de árboles, cuando aquí, como tu vez, no hay árboles. Los hubo en algún tiempo... Y lo peor es cuando oyes platicar a la gente, como si las voces salieran de una hendidura y, sin embargo, tan raras que las reconoces... Así que no te asustes si oyes ecos más recientes, Juan Preciado. (44-45)

Damiana advises Juan to let the sounds be and to not fear as they only are a languishing echo of the hacienda and town. The noises and silence heard on Comala are rumors, songs and voices brought forth in the narrative to express long gone narratives of the Mexican hacienda and its tradition. In the oral traditional of Rulfo's Mexico, a spoken communication could easily personify a rumor—giving it movement and voice. Silence and noise in *Pedro Páramo* can be said to synchronize the oral tradition and linguistically

employ the Spanish of Jalisco and its neighboring states. Numerous studies about the orality of *Pedro Páramo*'s narrative further suggest cross-roads of sorts on Rulfo's poetic license and the employment of the Spanish of Jalisco in the narrative.³⁷ Although not the goal of this study, from the narrative it is more than evident that the Spanish of Jalisco and neighboring states have place in the narrative of *Pedro Páramo*. From a sociolinguistic approach the use of Jalisco's Spanish is true and genuine as the author, Rulfo, is from Jalisco. Rulfo although he came from urban Mexico City, he integrated in his later years, grew around Jalisco's vernacular language, tradition and more broadly, of its culture. *Pedro Páramo* hence is a product of the Spanish of Jalisco. This narrative and the culture have also fueled other studies, that also aim at understanding the life of Rulfo beyond the author of *Pedro Páramo*.³⁸

From Juan and Damaina's conversation also arises a disagreement about which souls have what information as well as their ideas about death:

—También a usted le avisó mi madre que yo vendría? —le pregunté.

—No. Y a propósito, ¿qué es de tu madre?

—Murió —dije.

—¿Ya murió? —¿Y de qué?

—No supe de qué. Tal vez de tristeza. Suspiraba mucho.

³⁷ For more on linguistic studies in *Pedro Páramo*'s narrative see Jiménez de Báez *Juan Rulfo, Del Páramo a La Esperanza*, Díaz Díaz, and García Guerra "Cerebro y metáfora en la novela 'Pedro Páramo', de Juan Rulfo", and Castany Prado "Pedro Páramo de Juan Rulfo, y la tradición filosófico literaria de los diálogos de los muertos".

³⁸ For more on a "polemical" biography of Juan Rulfo see Rivera Garza's *Había mucha neblina o humo o no sé qué*.

—Eso es malo. Cada suspiro es como un sorbo de vida del que uno se deshace. ¿De modo que murió?

—Sí. Quizá usted debió saberlo.

—¿Y porque había de saberlo? Hace muchos años que no sé nada.

—Entonces ¿cómo es que dio usted conmigo? (45)

Unlike Eduvijes, Damina treats Juan in a cold manner, not like a mother. Damina seems to only be courteous at times, and always distant—perhaps ambivalent to Juan as the only surviving heir of Pedro Páramo.

—¿Está usted viva, Damiana? ¡Dígame, Damiana!

Y me encontré solo de pronto en aquellas calles vacías. Las ventanas de las casas abiertas al cielo, dejando asomar las varas correosas de las yerbas. Bardas descarapeladas que enseñaban sus adobes revenidos.

—¡Damiana! —grité—. ¡Damiana Cisneros!

Me contestó el eco: “¡ana ...neros! ¡...ana ...neros!” (46)

Damina leaves Juan in the middle of the street, lost and imploring her to give him an answer. Juan’s screams are a polite and desperate attempt to make sense of the many voices and things he hears in solitude and abandonment of Comala. Juan’s echoes ultimately sound as if they were shouting “nana nana,” a cry of helplessness, like that of a child calling his *nana*.

Like a lost child in an empty street, Juan Preciado finds himself lost and without anyone, or anything to guide him. This lack of legacy or path to follow, ultimately fill the space with more voices that arise from the *tierra* and are carried by the wind. The voices

and land narratives that Juan listens to are the last gasps of lives that ended because of Pedro Páramo's ambitions and desires of love and power that are ultimately extinguished by death:

La noche. Mucho más allá de la medianoche. Y las voces:

—...Te digo que si el maíz de este año se da bien, tendré con que pagarte.

Ahora que si se me echa a perder, pues te aguantas.

—No te exijo. Ya sabes que he sido consecuente contigo. Pero la tierra no es tuya. Te has puesto a trabajar en terreno ajeno. ¿De dónde vas a conseguir para pagarme?

—¿Y quién dice que la tierra no es mía?

—Se afirma que se la has vendido a Pedro Páramo.

—Yo ni me le he acercado a ese señor. La tierra sigue siendo mía.

—Eso dices tú. Pero por ahí dicen que todo es de él.

—Que me lo vengán a decir a mí.

—Mira, Galileo, yo a ti, aquí en confianza, te aprecio. Por algo eres el marido de mi hermana. Y que la tratas bien ni quien lo dude. Pero a mí no me vas a negar que vendiste las tierras.

—Te digo que a nadie se las he vendido.

—Pues son de Pedro Páramo. Seguramente él así lo ha dispuesto. ¿No te ha venido a ver don Fulgor?

—No.

—Seguramente mañana lo verás venir. Y si no mañana, cualquier otro día.

—Pues me mata o se muere; pero no se saldrá con la suya.

—Requiescat in paz, amén, cuñado. (Rulfo 47-48)

In the dark of the night, Juan hears of the injustices and tales of what his father had done to many poor *campesinos*. The dialogue between a *campesino* by the name of Galileo and his brother in-law expresses the will and power of how Pedro Páramo bought off the lands of the poor even against their will and knowledge. Galileo's brother in-law seems to believe more in the rumors claiming that Pedro Páramo is the owner, than in the disapproval of his brother in-law. The dialogues clearly express that that going against the will of Pedro Páramo was like signing one's death sentence. *Requiescat in paz* are the words his brother in-law tells Galileo, upon his negative of letting Pedro Páramo take a hold of his plot of land—which foretells Galileo's doomed legacy. The avarice of Pedro is an endless demand for land with which Fulgor helps him. The unjust manners in which Pedro Páramo takes the lands are what constitutes his biggest flaw and will eventually take him to his own demise as he goes off to join the revolutionary troupes before allowing Pedro Páramo to forcefully take his land.

An old west story of a ghost town, with no legacy and in a state of ruin is not far from the description of Comala. It is a land in which the few people that visit old haciendas and their towns encounter the ghosts and stories of what the once was and is not. In the ruins of the hacienda and Comala, Juan encounters the forgotten reality of those that could not leave the servitude of the hacienda and stayed in its land to die. Juan Preciado, along with the voices and stories of la Media Luna and Pedro Páramo, encounters the least fortunate and poor that could not leave the hacienda. These

characters that can be thought to be alive, Filoteo Aréchiga, Dorotea “la Cuarraca”, and a pair of elderly brothers Donis and his sister, characters that even when living had no hope of surviving outside the hacienda:

—Mira quién viene por allí. ¿No es Filoteo Aréchiga?

—Es él. Pon la cara de disimulo.

—Mejor vámonos. Si se va detrás de una de nosotras es que en verdad quiere a una de las dos. ¿A quién crees tú que sigue?

—Seguramente a ti.

—A mí se me figura que a ti.

—Deja ya de correr. Se ha quedado parado en aquella esquina.

—Entonces a ninguna de las dos ¿ya ves?

—Pero qué tal si hubiera resultado que a ti o a mí. ¿Qué tal?

—No te hagas ilusiones.

—Después de todo estuvo hasta mejor. Dicen por ahí los díceres que es él el que se encarga de conseguirle muchachas a don Pedro. De la que nos escapamos. (47)

From afar, Juan sees the silhouette of Aréchiga and the voice of two women that gossip about hopelessly being looked at by Aréchiga, the man that scouted women for Pedro Páramo. At first the women are happy but eventually they reject him when he does not approach them. It is as if accepting to be Pedro Páramo’s lover is a multifaceted choice that brings both luck and disdain. Although it appears to be a dream to be the love interest

of Páramo, the townspeople distrust anyone having close relationships with the *cacique*, hence condemning Aréchiga to Comala's hatred and gossip.

Reminiscent narratives and voices make up the story line of *Pedro Páramo*. Ruidos “Voces. Rumores. Canciones lejanas:” the shortest fragment of the novel is that of a popular song from Mexican vernacular music *Macetita embalsamada*—heard in the many voices, noises, songs, and rumors of legacy that arise from the holes in the ground of the narrative. The song is heard among the rumors and voices of a long-gone legacy that is narrated and explained as “sounds” that Juan Preciado hears.³⁹ As noted, “*Mi novia me dio un pañuelo/con orillas de llorar.../En el falsete. Como si fueran mujeres las que cantaran.*” (Rulfo 49) The song is a popular song that has several variants, but that coincide in the story being about a woman or a man whose lover gives him or her a handkerchief for crying when their love affair ends. The song is also a resilient refusal to cry for someone who does not love you back and launches another one of the transitions of the voices that open an ellipsis to Juan's memories of his mother Dolores Preciado who appears to him the echoes telling him of Comala. The narrative shifts to an ideal past, in which Comala is a plentiful land that contrasts with a ruined land and legacy—the legacy of Dolores and Juan.

Vi pasar las carretas. Los bueyes moviéndose despacio. El crujir de las piedras bajo las ruedas. Los hombres como si vinieran dormidos.

³⁹ For more on songs, and fiesta in Pedro Paramo see Alemany Bay “Tres Tonos Para Narrar La Fiesta: Agustín Yáñez, Juan Rulfo y Juan José Arreola”.

<<...Todas las madrugadas el pueblo tiembla con el paso de las carretas. Llegan de todas partes, copeteadas de salitre, de mazorcas, y yerba de pará. Rechinan sus ruedas haciendo vibrar las ventanas, despertando a la gente. Es la misma hora en que se abren los hornos y huele a pan recién horneado. Y de pronto puede tornar el cielo. Caer la lluvia. Puede venir la primavera. Allá te acostumbrarás a los “derepentes”, mi hijo. >>

Carretas vacías, remoliendo el silencio de las calles. Y las sombras. El eco de las sombras. (Rulfo 50)

Dolores' vision of Comala is different from the empty echoes of the shadows. The empty and old shadows reflect upon the remnants of a town that once had a surplus of grains and food for people and animals, and where the air smelled like bread and honey. The bust (and becoming a ghost town) of Comala is like the death of Dolores, and the livelihood and happiness run out as Pedro Páramo only yearned for Susana San Juan. After Pedro Páramo's punishment with death those that celebrated in Comala, the town would not respect his mourning for San Juan. The echoes of those that search for people in Comala are counterposed with the lively memories and emotional sighs of Dolores for Comala. Yet, as Pedro Páramo had said, he crossed his arms to let the town die of hunger, and Juan comes to find the town full of death.

Paired with the noises and remnants of the past and the notion of a realistic setting is where in the narrative of Donis and Dorotea la Cuarraca find Juan Preciado drowning in a poodle of mud, solitude, and memories in Comala's plaza. It is implied that this is after Juan hurries outside of a room he is in after he begins to have difficulty breathing,

not long after being abandoned by Damiana's ghost. As Juan Preciado falls ill and he is taken to the house of Donis and his sister. Donis and his sister lived in a poor house that did not have a roof, and their legacy seems to be unimportant and without consequence, yet from a corner of the room, Donis' sister lends Juan a friendly hand. From the diluted dialogue it is inferred that Donis and his sister live together and are condemned to remain in Comala, as the other souls that are too poor to leave. Donis does not want to abandon his sister nor wants to leave her in solitude and poverty and with Juan. Although hesitatingly, Donis allows Juan to make her company, even though he is sick. In the unbearable solitude raved of his death, Juan runs towards la Media Luna and dies on the street while being comforted by Dorotea la Cuarraca. Juan's death represents the literary end of the hacienda. Without Juan Preciado, la Media Luna cannot be given the literary illusion of the once powerful *hacienda*. Ultimately, with Juan Preciado dies the legacy of Pedro Páramo and his legitimacy. Juan is put in his grave by Donis and La Cuarraca. Without a living heir, the death of Juan marks the end of the legacy of Pedro Páramo.

Juan Preciado has an inner monologue with his past and himself, before he dies in Comala and before the narrative shifts to other voices—when buried, Juan and la Cuarraca listen to Susana San Juan and other voices. Juan even has a conversation that could be with Dolores—his mother—but that most likely is that of Pedro Páramo, recognizing him as his son. After asking upon the brightest star next to the moon, it is evident that Pedro Páramo is the voice that answers Juan.

Un cielo negro, lleno de estrellas. Y junto a la luna la estrella más grande de todas.

—¿No me oyes? —pregunté en voz baja.

Y su voz me respondió:

—¿Dónde estás?

—Estoy aquí, en tu pueblo. Junto a tu gente. ¿No me ves?

—No, hijo, no te veo.

Su voz parecía abarcarlo todo. Se perdía más allá de la tierra.

—No te veo. (60)

Although the voice responds that he is unable to see him, the voice of Pedro Páramo, reassures Juan Preciado that he is his son along with the land. Yet as Pedro Páramo's legacy nothing but a memory, Juan Preciado's bildungsroman and land narrative end with him drowning in a sea of desolation after not finding his father. *Pedro Páramo's* story and legacy is the last thing Juan Preciado can see, hear, and utter as foam in the whirlpools made of mud, as he drowns. This shifts the tone of the narrative towards that of a mystery novel and to the uniquely Mexican folklore of death, legacy and land. Sounds, voices, rumors and songs are the tales of the land of the Mexican hacienda system that was destroyed with the revolution. Ultimately the shift in the voices in the narrative after Juan Preciado's death points to what everyone knows of that what remained of *hacienda*—voices and stories broadcasted in the lands of Comala and La Media Luna, sounds of belonging, *querencia* love and longings that remain languishing in the populi of memories of the abandoned and ruined lands of Comala and La Media Luna.

Chapter III

Agustín Yáñez and Land in *La tierra pródiga*

I. I. The Novel

Agustín Yáñez's *La tierra pródiga* published in (1960) offers an eloquent narrative of the exploitation of Jalisco and Mexico's Pacific coast. Its narrative speaks of these lands in languages of dogmas, nature, and tradition. Agustín Yáñez in *La tierra pródiga* takes the reader to the vast virgin coasts of Jalisco and to the lives of the men that exploited and profited from them. Yáñez masterfully convenes a narrative of the land as he envisaged it in his time and how he saw its future. His narrative is carried out primarily through his main character, Ricardo Guerra Victoria "El Amarillo", a man of few words, that manages to amass and loose unimaginable wealth from the lands of Jalisco. He is also an enigmatic main character influenced by the theme and context of religion, but most importantly by the setting in which the novel takes place—a prodigious land. Characters like Ricardo Guerra Victoria are characters molded by the lands and coast of Jalisco. Within a paradisiac landscape and visions of a Garden of Eden, El Amarillo not only flourishes but also exploits the bounty of the land, given that he is capable of diffusing into the narrative of land beyond exploitation and development. Yáñez's character and actions personify the development and future of Mexico's coast as well as man's fascination with the stewardship and the development of land.

In the path to the development of Jalisco's coast, El Amarillo exploits more than the land. Elena, his wife—first love, his business partner (at times his rival) El Chacal, and Gertrudis all fall victim to the sinister ambition of El Amarillo. Elena, a devoted wife

and an accomplice to El Amarillo in the venture of reaching the sea, is ultimately abandoned by his husband at the end of the novel when he runs away with Gertrudis. In the context of Jalisco's coast and land, the characters, are the most important feature of the novel. Painted into the narrative, land is best understood as a character and, predominantly, as the most "prodigious" of all the characters in the novel. The costal lands of Jalisco catalyze and condition the characters in *La tierra pródiga*, ultimately providing an alternative plot to the *costumbrista* narrative of Mexican literature.

II. Historical Context

Mexico's land discourse of *La tierra pródiga* takes place in Jalisco and in broader terms in Mexico's coast at the beginning of the rural reconstruction and development that followed the Revolution and destruction of the molds of the Mexican hacienda.⁴⁰ The novel offers a uniquely Mexican imaginary of land in the costal areas of Jalisco, and highlights the development of touristic infrastructure and the new uses of land as Mexico was entering a new age of development and order, almost fifty years after the beginning of the Revolution and at the turn of a modernization process in the 1950's.⁴¹ Building from land and its development, *La tierra pródiga*, focuses on the development of Jalisco and on key landowners who, like El Amarillo, develop and exploit the resources of the Pacific coast of Mexico.

⁴⁰ For more on the Mexican context—*mexicanidad*— and Yáñez see McDermott "The Novels of Agustín Yáñez", and Anderson "Agustín Yáñez's Total Mexico and the Embodiment of the National Subject"

⁴¹ For more on society, modernization and democracy in Mexico during the 1960's, refer to González Casanova *La Democracia En México*, Ochoa "Pastoralism, Parricide, and the PRI: Nostalgia and Self-Awareness in Yáñez's *Al Filo Del Agua*", and Ceballos Ramírez "Sobre Moisés González Navarro, Cristeros y Agraristas En Jalisco".

The coast of Jalisco by the end of the 1950's makes up an important part of an emerging new economy in Mexico. This region not atypical of Mexico's Pacific coastline is made up of extensive land holdings and settlements that were formally part of the grand Mexican Hacienda composed by wide dirt roads leading to the coast, and settlements with houses scattered alongside the roads, inhabited in most cases by *ejidatarios*—formerly hacienda *peones*. Scenic settlements of adobe and palm-thatched roof houses with formidable *higueras* and a variety of flora such as *parotas* in which the dominant enterprise was the agrarian production that stressed palm trees—*palmares*—, sugar cane, mangos, sesame and the chief food crops that were *maiz*, beans, bananas, rice, peppers, tomatoes, and fruits like *annonas*, citrus, papaya, and pomegranates. As well as the cultivation of castorbean, vanilla, tobacco, within an inherent agrarian economy that excelled in the raising of cattle and swine, in addition to chickens, pigeons, burros, horses, turkeys, ducks, dogs and a few cats. A prodigious natural environment and landscape of rivers, creeks, fishing camps, mangroves, majaua, native medicinal plants, honey from the stingless *guaricha* and *alasangana* bees that produce a black beeswax, and nonnative introductions like coconuts, mangos, and Bougainvillea, a brazilian climber introduced to Mexico in the nineteenth century, and into its central coast not until about the 1870's (Brand 4-8).

By 1960, the economy of the region focused on which the Cayaco palm as result of its byproduct, *coquito de aceite*—a palm kernel oil produced extensively in plantations made up of giant palm trees that is more than 100 feet tall (Brand, 7). This production of palm kernel oil benefited from Mexico's revolutionary land reforms and the development

of the Mexican *ejido*⁴² or land communes that centered around new land uses and facilitated investment—tourism and the development of infrastructure within the decade and context in which *La tierra pródiga* is set. In Yáñez’s novel we also can see the socioeconomic and political benefits and problems that arose in this context, especially the tension between the federal government and the Mexican *cacique* (Flasher, 162-3), as well as themes of national interest and public domain “interés público” such as the expropriation of foreign land enterprise and the development of lands that had remained forgotten. Foreign expropriations ended during the government of President Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) but in the 1960’s and new interest of national land exploitation and the investment in various industries began under the government of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958) as result of what we can characterize as the historical transition of the “traditional” social order to a new “industrial” order (Flasher, 151). Ultimately, *La tierra pródiga* can be read as historical fiction of Yáñez’s political endeavor and observations as governor of Jalisco from 1953-1959, as the novel is published in 1960.

III. The Shift from *Al filo del agua* to *La tierra pródiga*

Agustín Yáñez, one of Mexico’s most illustrious authors, presents a unique land narrative that builds on other contemporary accounts of land in Mexican and Jaliscience literature. Yáñez’s *La tierra pródiga* is a literary account of the imaginaries of costal land’s macro cosmos in which man exploits *tierra* in the subtropical forest and paradisiac coast of Jalisco. *La tierra pródiga* constitutes an essential part of what I argue is the

⁴² For more information on this ejido, see Kourí “La Invención Del Ejido”.

canon of Mexican land narrative. In fact, Agustín Yáñez' two most important novels *Al filo del agua* (1947) and *La tierra pródiga* (1960), which were written thirteen years apart, define both his narrative evolution and growth and signal his significance in the canon of Mexican literature. The earlier of these novels is set in the backdrop and antebellum of the Mexican Revolution while the second explores the new "social" wave of modernity that swept through Latin America.⁴³ In both cases, the ethnographic observations and their descriptive style offer a pictorial narrative of place and land. As it has been argued by Flasher (39), these novels can serve as models of *realismo literario* in which Yáñez paints literary accounts of culture and life in the lands of Jalisco and thus can serve as models for understanding the historic and economic changes in how land has been seen and used in the region.

La tierra pródiga and its narrative is in line with Yáñez first novel *Al filo del agua* (1947)—which I would characterize as a *novela de la tierra*—that inaugurates Mexico's contemporary narrative that makes way for the quintessential canonical Mexican novel about land and the Mexican landowner—*Pedro Páramo*. Yáñez announces with *Al filo del agua*, the beginning of contemporary Mexican narrative (Glanz, 2006), and I would argue that he was later able to reinvent his narrative in *La tierra pródiga*. Beyond the human kindness portrayed in *Al filo del agua*, in *La tierra pródiga*, Agustín Yáñez, delves into the struggle of individuals entering a new wave of modernization that clashes with the ruthless clout of landowners in the paradisiac coasts of Jalisco. Yáñez's *La tierra*

⁴³ For more on the political implications on *Al filo del agua* see Franco "Literatura y política: el caso de Agustín Yáñez", Alonso de Santiago "Hombre y cultura tradicional en 'Al filo del agua' de Agustín Yáñez", and "*Al filo del agua* de Agustín Yáñez", and

pródiga is parallel to the ideologies that conceive of land as plentiful. This take of literary realism is ultimately a diffusion and account of the prodigious lands of Jalisco—landscape—characters, and how they exploit and take advantage of the land. *La tierra pródiga* is a narrative of land development that promulgates the future and wealth of the nation, as a land of wealth and opportunities.

Agustín Yáñez shifts the rural settings of his early *costumbrista* Mexican land narratives and agrarian experience and, in *La tierra pródiga* he depicts Mexico's touristic development through the land narratives of Jalisco's spring of coastal tourism. Yáñez's incursion in describing the touristic land development and economy of Jalisco patronizes ideas of tourism, infrastructure, and a new national discourse of a land that does not yield traditional forms of living but that prodigiously favors a new way of life and land exploitation. I propose that *La tierra pródiga* offers an expansion of the canonical imaginaries of land within Mexican narrative. Mexican land narrative to the coast and its enterprising exploitation in the novel draw an impressionistic narrative of the future. By impressionistic I mean a literary parallel to the impressionist renditions of nature in art. *La tierra pródiga* offers a parallelism with a belle époque impressionist, as its narrative functions as the eclectic brush strokes of artists that painted a landscape to reflect an artistic impression of reality beyond the traditional cannon.⁴⁴ And although the classic themes of civilization and barbarism are at the forefront of Yáñez's *La tierra pródiga*, the influence of Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, and his own *Al filo del agua*, allow for his new

Rembao, "Al filo del agua".

⁴⁴ Refer to Hatry "Geografía y paisaje en la literatura Hispanoamericana y Española" for more on geography and landscape in *La tierra pródiga*.

novel to part from the contemporary style of traditional mid-twentieth century land narrative. The novelty of *La tierra pródiga* outweighs the classical influences upon a mature Agustín Yáñez and invigorate a new and vibrant land narrative—one that contemplates land and incorporates literary techniques like fragmentation and free indirect speech within a third-person narrative. In *La tierra pródiga*, little remains of the predominant religious discourse and the grand idea of machines against men, or moral dilemmas at the center of the narrative of *Al filo del agua* that question tradition.

IV. Tesis

In *La tierra pródiga* (1960) we can see the shift from an earlier *costumbrista* and traditional representation of Mexican land narrative to an expanded imaginary in the context of Jalisco's coastal exploitation that draws a landscape of the touristic development depicting the land as plentiful and prodigious. My reading proposes that the novel yields a national discourse that is conscious and has accurate vision of the future and consequences of the investments and land exploitation (of its time). Land history and its imaginaries in twentieth century Mexican literature encompasses various land narratives and authors like Agustín Yáñez, Juan José Arreola, and Juan Rulfo who explore the many contexts of land and landowners after the Mexican Revolution. In the context of this study, the lands of Jalisco offer a clear case study to Mexican "rural" and "agrarian" land and its many settings in the works *La tierra prodiga* (1960), *Pedro Páramo* (1955), *La feria* (1963) and *El gallo de oro* (1980). Spanning from the historic and fictional narratives of the hacienda in *Pedro Páramo*, to the agrarian land narrative of campesino's labor in *La feria*, and the bohemian gamble of "new" landowners Dionisio

and La Caponera in *El gallo de oro—La tierra pródiga* blankets these narratives to include modernity and development.

V. The Shift from Early Costumbrista Works

Amidst the new winds of a new world order in the second half of the twentieth century, agrarian development underwent a transformation in Mexico. The costal lands of Jalisco exemplify this shift in Agustín Yáñez's *La tierra prodiga* (1960). In *La tierra pródiga*, men are conditioned by land and the rude existence of coastal land stewardship as well as by a sea of opportunities within a prodigal land. The beginning of massive land developments for the exploitation of resources in Mexico—a prodigious giving nation—and the expansion of its touristic frontiers and development lead to a crucible in which, tradition, development, religion, nature and country conflate.

The landscape described in the novel not only captures beauty, but in what we can call “touristic land narrative”, it also functions as the means to broadcast and promote a landscape of wealth as can be seen in the riches it brings to men like El Amarillo. In this period, a traditional Mexican *Jaliciense* existence and land narrative meet modernity through the infrastructural development of Mexico's economic opening to the world.

Development in the costal lands of Jalisco is an evident motive of inspiration for the narrator in the novel, and more precisely to Yáñez as politician and governor of Jalisco. The land narrative in the novel follows a course of developments and influences. Evidence of this is the narrative shift from religious enigmas and rural existence in *Al filo del agua*—written at a time in which canonical renditions of Mexico and its lands limited to a rural Mexico, such as that of Nathan Laselle Whetten *Rural Mexico* (1948) —to

ideas of order and progress more in line with the macro landscapes of the Mexican Pacific coast in *La tierra pródiga* (1960) published at a time of great progress and development in terms of land exploitation and its uses. The change in thematic and setting is also important to the plot in *La tierra pródiga*—changes that are the result of the times, as well as how the agrarian industry was transformed and new uses of land came into being in Mexico.

* Touristic Development.

The ventures of the main character, el Amarillo, seem to be centered on obtaining wealth, property, fomenting tourism and investments, as well as on the cultivation of palm trees.⁴⁵ Hence, he seems to be far more interested in land and hospitality ventures than in Elena—his love interest. In the story we learn of how el Amarillo’s first harvest foreshadows his ruthless hold of land in the coast. El Amarillo’s first land venture is a palm tree plantation, which he obsessively guards, and this earns him a fierce reputation especially among his workers. As we can see in the novel, one of his workers defends the property of el Amarillo more than his own life:

—Tiene unas puntadas. El día que miró el primer coco en su primer palmar, llamó a uno de sus mozos, que le decían el ciego porque estaba perdiendo la vista. “Eh, tú, ciego —le dijo—, allí hay un coco, el primero que se me da después de tantos años de trabajo y espera; aquí me lo cuidas, advertido de que si alguien lo corta, te mato; en cambio, tú, para

⁴⁵ For more on Jalisco and Mexico’s costal development and tourism see Castillo “El bosque tropical seco en riesgo”, Vargas Hernández “Desarrollo Regional y Sustentabilidad”, and Ávila-García “The Environmentalism”.

cuidármelo, puedes hacer lo que gustes y no más me dices lo que necesitas.” —“Paraque, mi amo” —le respondió el Ciego. Y — “Paraque” —respondía todas las mañanas cuando el Amarillo echaba sus vueltas al palmar... Si a muerte defendió su primer coco, no puso resistencia en ceder ese primer palmar logrado entre ásperas malezas, a un político poderoso; el palmar y las tierras que colindan con unas de las playas más fantásticas de sus dominios; primoroso palmar en plena producción, dado a cambio de un precio irrisorio, que tampoco fue nunca pagado, sino con facilidades administrativas, eso sí, bien aprovechadas por el Amarillo (44-45).

El Amarillo's hold on land increases, from a single coconut to favorable dealings and concessions that put him in contact with the people from the highest spheres of power. The clout that comes from his barbaric actions transform el Amarillo into a savage and unscrupulous businessman, far removed from the innocent humble man he was, when filled with illusions he made Elena his wife and a sort of empress at the beginning of the novel. The excess of power brought forth by the acquisition of costal land turned el Amarillo into a man effectively enslaved to money and property, staining his hands with the blood of many innocent people such as his own workers. A “civilized” Amarillo seems to become a prodigal character as his costal land holdings increase, and his treatment of others worsens as he introduces modernization and development into the coast. Beyond the obvious, El Amarillo's change in fortune, that improves when he attains more properties, questions the different morality of individuals as well as land uses in the region. The land used in this context, goes beyond Lockean theories of land

and labor, as El Amarillo goes beyond the production of wealth with “*facilidades administrativas*” that exploit land as well as institutions—through loopholes.⁴⁶ Beyond his own labor, El Amarillo reaps the prodigal instances of land the many uses, traditional and modern, in the narrative. Furthermore, Lockean theories of labor and property are turned on their head as all is lost for El Amarillo, his hard work is ignored, and his property is confiscated.⁴⁷

VI. Depiction of Land as Plentiful and Prodigious

La tierra pródiga, the title that Yáñez gives his novel, describes a prodigal land that gives in excess—that resonates with a bountiful setting—where characters like El Amarillo exploit land resources. The novel presents a prodigious landscape that provides wealth and resources and ultimately conditions everyone, even secondary characters like workers, politicians, and wealthy investors among many others. In terms of the narrative, the landscape in this sense plays a bigger role than sensorial imagery, and Yáñez brilliantly revalues the land in the narrative. The landscape—descriptions of costal land—in *La tierra pródiga* proposes a re-envisioning of land in literature, through paradisiac descriptions of the coast through imagery and poetic “stills” or “impressionistic images” that are often paired with abstract notions of leisure and hospitality.

The prodigality of resources at his disposition buys El Amarillo extravagance and wealth that highlight disparity and paradox within the modernization, the prodigal setting of undeveloped land. El Amarillo is a landowner capable of doing anything he pleases—

⁴⁶ For an additional read on Lockean theories of land and labor see Locke *The Second Treatise of Government*.

such as killing over a coconut—in exchange for the power that land gives individuals. Ultimately, it is his own work and tillage of the land that ends up destroying him. The ambition of El Amarillo is that of a powerful feared man that also flirts with a disregard for land in itself. The story of el Amarillo, a self-made man, is ultimately a contradictory tale of a landowner that exploits resources and the men that work to obtain them. We can see this, for example, in a soliloquy, where El Amarillo speaks of his urge to reach the sea and lands of the coast, tirelessly orating his desire to possess the lands of the coast:

hablaba insaciamente de nuevas tierras conquistadas, llegaría pronto al mar, se apoderaría del mar—“porque un día el mar me dijo que tú eres él y toda la tierra caliente, y tú lo creíste y me quisiste así, bárbaro, y más mientras más bárbaro, y me dijo que serías mía con toda la tierra de nadie y con sus olas mismas inmensas, mías y de nadie más”, para bruscamente volver a la violencia, colmar de humillaciones a la prisionera y abandonarla entre amenazas. (101)

The polarity of el Amarillo is evident in the treatment he gives Elena. He shifts from loving words and promises to mistreatment and abandonment. In the same manner that el Amarillo exploits land, he mistreats Elena, the woman he marries and imprisons her in his home like a possession. He compares Elena with the the lands that go to the sea he wishes to own. The aspirations of El Amarillo are clearly those of what in Mexican literature can only be described as a *cacique*. El Amarillo is ultimately a *cacique* and is

⁴⁷ For more on instances of development in rural Mexico at the time of *La tierra pródiga* see DeVries “Social Research and Rural Life in Central America, Mexico”.

described through the duality of being young and mature, ultimately worried about the present and the future of the coast. The mystery of El Amarillo, owner of thousands of hectares, seems to grow with each new acquired property. The perceptions of landowners like El Amarillo, caciques, to an extent are influenced by their control and power over land.⁴⁸ He does not seem to be fifty years old nor the heartless conqueror of land and men that he is, and yet there are rumors of him not being capable of killing a fly. These rumors add to the mystery of a man that destroys anything that stands between him and the coast.

Este mentado Amarillo, espigado él, trigueño, dientes de oro, que a veces parece tener mal de sanvito por inquieto, sin poder estar silencio un rato, manoteador, anda de aquí para allá, se retuerce; y a veces: como estatua, como que le comieron la lengua los ratones, malmodiento, el ceño fruncido, pateador como caballo bronco. (43)

Tall and always moving, the character of El Amarillo projects the ideal of progress and modernity—always thinking of ways to exploit the coast, and ways to benefit from different entrepreneurial ventures. However, he seems to lack human emotion and love for others except for Elena, hence his nickname: “Lo habían apodado el Amarillo, tal vez por sus dientes de oro, por su dinero, por las chamarras de gamuza que prefería usar, por el color de la cara cuando se exaltaba y, según el dicho de la gente, se ponía bilioso” (99), a byname that described the lack of congeniality and disregard for others of El Amarillo.

⁴⁸ See Tello-Díaz “La colinización de la costa de Jalisco 1953-1959” for more on Jalisco’s coastal development and history.

His every action is almost whimsical and he is described as a man detached from emotions, omnipresent, and powerful. And although he is not always powerful, as in the novel he begins and ends without land, the illusion of El Amarillo only grows with each new development built in the coast. His will is almost that of the water and of the rivers and creeks that carve a way into the intransigent subtropical forest until it reaches the beach.

Resilient and prodigal like Jalisco's coast, the character of Elena stands willingly by the side of El Amarillo, among the immensity of the coast of Jalisco, which they both call their home. Not abiding by the law, el Amarillo shows Elena how to tame and make "brutes" obey as they slowly expand their land holdings onto the sea:

Ella se mantenía enhiesta, como laurel de raíces ramificadas al que no abaten las tormentas y se halla verde aun frente al invierno riguroso.

Enhiesta como cuando la llevó consigo en jornadas agobiadoras para enseñarle las posesiones por donde abría camino a la dominación del mar, hablándole de riquezas y venturas en las que no se pondría el sol, excitándola como a condueña para ser implacable con la tierra y la gente, mortificándola con crueldades consumadas en su presencia –“porque sólo así podremos amansar a estos brutos y hacer que nos sirvan”. En estas caminatas la abandonaba en casas de personas que la señora desconocía.

(101)

The young and prodigal land of Jalisco and the ruthless nature of El Amarillo is described in a narrative of recklessness and the difficulties of exploiting resources to ultimately

transform the landscape. Ultimately in this excerpt of the novel, El Amarillo distances from the land and its stewards, a campaign of exploitation that reflects traditional land uses not unlike those of the feudal Mexican hacienda. The touristic and agrarian ventures of El Amarillo change how people live as well as the landscape of the coast.

Modernization and costal development go hand in hand, with the dilemmas of modernization and the changes brought upon the people and the landscape of the coast offer a real literary perspective of Mexico's costal lands at the beginning of the sixties.

In this decade of progress and novel uses for the land of Jalisco, Yáñez's novel describes land exploitation prior to the development of a green consciousness and policies. The narrative postulates prodigal nature within the development of adequate infrastructure and investment in Jalisco's coast, with the development of costal airports, employment and protected ecological reserves. In *La tierra pródiga* the narrator describes a primitive touristic venture built on the will and clout of El Amarillo:

Y otra vez, cuando dejó arreglada la primera brecha para llegar al mar, hizo escándalo en los periódicos, anunciando que al fin podría visitarse el más maravilloso sitio del mundo, hasta entonces escondido, con sus playas sin rival, como lo es el paraíso terrenal, y para pública demostración de que el viaje era posible, y para propaganda que atrajera turistas, compró el más reciente, fino y lujoso modelo de automóviles *Cadillac*, le tomaron fotografías y películas al iniciar el viaje, aunque no al terminarlo, porque el coche quedó hecho pedazos en el camino; de coraje, aventó los restos a un voladero, y tuvo que llegar en un yip de doble tracción. Entonces fue

cuando discurrió hacer un campo aéreo de dos kilómetros, capaz de recibir a los más grandes aviones. (44-45)

The narrator describes the rudimentary ventures that el Amarillo devises to further exploit his lands in the coast of Jalisco. El Amarillo ventures into marketing with films that advertised the coast—his touristic ventures—through sensationalized trips that also described 1960's tourism. The newest cars and fashions are included in the films and radio ads commissioned by el Amarillo. The popularity of the Cadillac in 1950's and early 1960's, and ideals of leisure that was lived after World War II, concede with the investments of El Amarillo and the development of Mexico's coastal tourism, and incursion in film and radio.⁴⁹ In a failed attempt of building a road that would reach the coast, El Amarillo resorts instead to constructing a landing strip for airplanes, given his failed attempts of building a costal road, an almost comic bleak misfortune in the path to wealth of el Amarillo. He conceives of another solution very fast and does not think twice before tossing a new Cadillac over the coastal cliffs. This expenditure of luxury symbolized by the Cadillac that is tossed out is similar to the ostentatious wealth that the coast gives prodigiously. Land and its exploitation and development in this case is far different from traditional narratives like *Al filo del agua* in which characters live off of the land in self-sufficient manner, such as the Jesuit priest that carefully lives by tradition.

Jalisco's costal lands and their surplus raw materials and paradisiac beaches are addressed in Yáñez's narrative all throughout *La tierra pródiga*. El Amarillo uses the

⁴⁹ For more on the inter-textuality of film in literature see Valenzuela Moreno "Las adaptaciones de Gil de los clásicos literarios".

spoils of the land to build a touristic infrastructure. We can see this for example in a dialogue that El Amarillo has with a businessman and politicians he projects his infrastructure ventures as a progressive plan for the coast as well as an opportunity for economic growth:

—Vamos por partes. Lo primero es el camino: un camino de primera. Pero esto, como todos los otros puntos del programa, en principio aceptados, deben contar con la más amplia justificación...Hablemos claro: cómo pueden gastarse millones en un camino que sirva sólo para que usted y usted saquen sus productos, o para que a los taladores se les facilite su tarea de arrasamiento. Debemos ver el asunto como negocio mercantil...Anoche avanzamos en los puntos de promoción agrícola (Yáñez 46).

The dealings of el Amarillo with various land ventures, describes the narrator are those of an avid businessman that exploits land and entrepreneurial opportunity alike, but most importantly a man that is aware of the future uses of land. El Amarillo is a man at the forefront of modernity, a man of powerful means but that is also capable of unimagined cruelty. He is clearly not a campesino and does not belong to Mexico's *ancient regime* of the hacienda, but rather can be characterized as a self-made man that is pragmatic, caught between romantic and contemporary narratives and imaginaries. El Amarillo personifies the reforms of the revolution and the ideas of land reform and development, along with the air of the traditional land-owning class brought down by the revolution.

The sensory rhetoric images of the coast, ambivalent and ambiguous of the traditional and post-revolutionary costal landscape, the land narrative of *La tierra pródiga* shows land as a macrocosm, and man merely as a pawn in the schemes and prodigal immensity of nature. A nature unaware of the tradition and of modern development. The narrator descriptions of the sea and Jalisco's subtropical forests offer a particular narrative that contrasts with literary realism⁵⁰. This example of impressionistic narrative of costal land in *La tierra pródiga* offers a parallel discourse to the perceptions of land in Mexico's post-revolutionary landscape:

Todo el día fue caminar, trepar acantilados, hollar arenas húmedas, abrirse paso entre matorrales, pasar el sol vivo a la sombra sofocante de tupidos boscajes, del marasmo a la brisa. Playas dilatadas, vistas desde las alturas como vastos abanicos lentamente ondulantes, dilatados abanicos de néctar, tendidos, rematados en filigranas espumosas, lentamente ondulantes; breves, graciosas playas tenues, encajonadas en granitos escarpados; rumorosas playas al son de guijas, caracoles y conchas; abiertos mares embravecidos, bramantes, cólera de olas en vano contenidas por hostiles rocas; olas mugientes, hinchadas, abatidas en estrépito de perlas; epifanías de colores: azul profundo, verde, turquesa, azul celeste, rematados en crestas, dilatadas en faldas, en holanes, en flecos de blancura burbujeante, espesada morosamente como limos de aire sobre los ocres y los oros arenosos, o sobre las fortalezas de piedra, donde queda su huella, la marca

⁵⁰ For more on realism see Barthes *Mitologías*.

de sus niveles, pronto borrados el rápido embate incesante; caminos de sol sobre las olas, profundos a medida de la tarde, cuando los escarlatas, bermellones, solferinos, morados, lilas, rosas, grises, hasta la solemne caída en la oscuridad, bajo el velo negro de la noche; murallas del litoral, el pecho contra la furia intermitente, a veces rotas en senos deleitosos, mansos; murallas de altas torres...delgadísimas agujas de piedra, victoriosas una y otra vez, al emerger de los tiburones (51-52).

In the immensity of the coast, as described within Yáñez impressionistic narrative of the coast—through the use of asyndeton to describe the landscape—El Amarillo and Elena are at the masters of those they call “brutes” and, at the same time, they are in the grandness of nature pawns at the whims of nature. Land descriptions that make a sense of non-completion, only add to the vulnerability of men in nature. At the center of endless nature, endless list of flora and fauna in the narrative, El Amarillo and Elena, can be said to represent the biblical characters of Adam and Eve. Overshadowing the same faith as the first couple, the narrator hints into the destruction of the costal Eden. As in his endless walks, El Amarillo, seems lost and powerless in the costal scenery that describes the course of nature and the polarity of good and bad within religious morality. Perhaps it is in the naming of places-things, or their endless desire for land, which lead them to eat from the tree of knowledge, that is the coast in *La tierra pródiga* that is el Amarillo and Elena’s sin. Such venture of owning the coast of Jalisco is ultimately their death sentence, as Elena dies, and El Amarillo is exiled—from the Coast he developed.

Yáñez's land narrative offers a macro narrative of land and its endless continuation, focusing on the ideas of modernity booming at the beginning of the decade of the 1960's:

—El mar me ha hecho inquieto: no soy hombre para estar en paz.
Laberinto de brechas y veredas bajan, recorren las playas; trepan, se asoman a los balcones, hacen cornisas voladas al mar, sobre las puntas, entre la selva o entre huertos y jardines: fragancia y matices; los elevados de las palmas, en gracia y majestad: sus troncos en filas interminables, altísimos, gráciles, combinados con los de las ceibas y las higueras, esculpidos por la fantasía...las recias nervaduras de las higueras dilatadas, encarnizadas como garras, hundidas en la tierra (53-54).

Anchored in land, the novel focalizes El Amarillo's voice and actions to descriptions that grapple with land like claws. El Amarillo is personified in much of the narrative from plants by the sea and anything that symbolically grasps land for sustenance and benefit—through lawful means or force. Going beyond the narrative of a landowner, *La tierra pródiga*, is the narrative of land itself and people's attachment to the land. El Amarillo's plot hence is what makes land an impetus force that oscillates between modernity and traditional land uses. In this instance is that the narrator stresses the biblical conception of innocence and sin and the notion of men's exile from paradise. El Amarillo and Gertrudis like Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden. This narrative in *La tierra pródiga* ultimately points to a paradise lost to immorality. Yáñez's Judeo-Christian morality and dilemmas are evident in *La tierra pródiga*. Less metaphorical than *Al filo*

del agua, religious themes are not at the center of the narrative but continue to be suggested and clashing with ideas of modernity and the society of mid-twentieth century.⁵¹

The polysyndeton descriptions of land in the third person omnipresent narrative of *La tierra pródiga* give land a leading role in the novel, as the binding of these images make obvious the predominance and presence of costal land in contemporary Mexican narrative. Land narrative in *La tierra pródiga* also suggests the implicit predominance of land in Mexican literature:

Aldeas abiertas de tierra caliente, ajenas al ánimo del interior, anchas de calles, de tierra suelta, disgregadas las casas, de fisonomía provisional, hechas de madera, carrizos, palapa, techos de teja, lámina, paja, rodeadas de flores, a la sombra de palmeras, de tamarindos, de flamboyanes, en las calles, dentro de los huertos, entre animales, bajo el vuelo de zopilotes y cantos de huitlacoques, la estridente tropa de pájaros costeños, el aire de fuego, la espera de brisa, y fáciles músicas, puertas y ventanas y hendeduras abiertas al paseo del viento, a la espera de frescura y los sones, con el arpa, las flautas, los clarinetes, las guitarras, y los guitarrones, incitación al baile interminable, cálido como la luz, como el desahogo de la respiración, como el pródigo vegetar de la naturaleza, incansable, dadivosa, opulenta, siempre llena de frutos, revestida de verdes, coronada

⁵¹ For more on religiosity and various other themes see Fiallega *Al filo del agua, El mundo de Agustín Yáñez*.

de flores, en la espesura, invasora de huertos, de casas y calles, lujuriosa, pagana, extravertida, enredadora de caminos y aldeas, arrastradora de límites, pervertidora de jardines, extraña, cegadora, ensordecedora, insoportable al hombre del interior, llegado de villorrios estrechos, estériles, introvertidos en escrúpulos, amodorrados de silencio, calmosos, inactivos (92-93).

Land narrative in *La tierra pródiga*, like in *Pedro Páramo*, offer a reading not only of dust and silence as inaccurately noted by various literary critics such as George D. Schade, in his introduction to his translation of *El llano en llamas*.⁵² The depictions of land are inherent as aforementioned in “Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones lejanas.” Adding to the intensity and swarm of land images in contemporary Mexican narrative, and nauseam, depictions of land in the novel come to build up characters more than the setting. Land is the reason to exist and the only thing that is worthwhile for characters like El Amarillo. The force of land in *La tierra prodiga* also reflects the embodiment of nature’s will at the face of development, a motive in which nature’s endless gifts dance with the prodigal ventures that benefit men like El Amarillo. The lands of the coast, more than their development, defined the character of El Amarillo, as he could have been the man he became without the development of the coast, but never without land ownership.

⁵² For a more on the perception of land in Yáñez and other critiques see Treviño “The Concept of Generation in the Study of Twenty-First Century Mexican Literature”, Alemany Bay “Tres tonos para narrar la fiesta”, García Meza, and Domínguez Cuenca “Tres miradas sobre Zapotlán”, and D. Schade *The Burning Plain, and Other Stories*.

The prodigal misuse of land by El Amarillo is intensified with his marriage to Elena. The union of El Amarillo and Elena represent the symbolic ideal of conservation and legacy.

Elena se estremeció, más que de miedo, de recóndita alegría. Nadie, nadie en ningún baile o paseo, ni en el oscuro atrio del pueblo, ni junto al río, ni bajo las palmeras, nadie, ni en Autlán le habían hablado así, con ese tono. —Tengo ilusiones de hallar una isla desconocida, en la que nadie haya puesto pie, para ponerle tu nombre —el temblor de la voz, el brillo de la mirada obra el encantamiento, adormeciéndola en la prueba de los celos, que arreciaron. Un muerto, heridos y contusos casi a diario, escenas públicas, allanamientos, fechorías. Quería el absortarla, fundirla de nuevo a su antojo, sin resabios. A medida de que se apoderaba de tierras hacia el mar, crecían sus ambiciones y las traducía en lenguaje de amor: —Quisiera descubrir un nuevo continente para ponerle tu nombre y hacerte emperatriz.

A medida de sus violencias, la muchacha se erguía:

—Estoy viendo que lo que quiere son tierras, ser dueño de muchas tierras y yo de pilón; a lo más, de esclava que le dé de comer y le cuide sus animales y pertenencias; pero ya se lo tengo dicho, ya lo sabe... (97-98).

El Amarillo's love for Elena, according to her, is a fickle desire of possession. And an example of the inversion of man and nature's will. Elena is like an extra that comes with the package of land ownership, as a part of it, as a territory. To become a wealthy,

landowners which were part of the ruling class of coastal Jalisco, at the dawn of its touristic development, a man had to live according to the societal norms of Jalisco. These societal norms left little room to be broken, and men like El Amarillo had to work and have a submissive wife by his side. Elena, for El Amarillo, was someone to look after his home and land. She was not only a wife but a convenient servant, who was paid with a mediocre amount of love. El Amarillo imprisons Elena in a marriage of convenience, and, with time, Elena learns to overpower him, the way nature can be tamed only for short period of time:

Fue un fiestón de tres días con sus noches...iban y venían derrochando contento, hasta que desaparecieron sin aviso para que la fiesta prosiguiera. Se la llevó a vivir tierras abajo, en un claro de selva donde había construido una casa de cantera y terrado, al estilo de las de los Altos, que más parecía fortaleza o prisión, extraña y caprichosamente inadecuada a los usos y clima de la zona. En su afán de dar nombre a las cosas como si eso las creara —él decía que para “desembuchar ideas, ilusiones” —, llamó al sitio y a la casa El Paraíso (99-100).

The short-lived celebration of el Amarillo and Elena's wedding is quickly forgotten and shadowed by loneliness in the “imprisonment” of a home that seems out of place in the forest. The eccentric home ultimately does not stand the test of time against the tropical weather and the curse of nature that cannot be tamed. Ultimately, the prodigal gifts from the land seem endless in spite of its destruction, as El Amarillo and Elena amass more and more land.

The will of el Amarillo to own and control land and Elena does not last forever, as Elena becomes a powerful woman, similar to nature, that is desired and tamed but is ultimately not susceptible to being controlled. The power in their relationship is inherently the result of the setting and customs in which they are, part of the traditions of the land that justify their destructive actions. In the novel there is a passage where el Amarillo is reaching the beach and his wingspan shrinks next to that of his wife Elena. The violent nature of el Amarillo and his lurid actions are a mere façade, and perhaps a way to dispel his sexual naïvetés—as he is ultimately in the hands of his wife Elena. As the narrator claims, she learns to convey control over el Amarillo:

Elena descubrió que tras la osadía y la brutalidad en los otros terrenos, el alteño era un tímido sexual, que trataba de ocultarse con arranques de celos desenfrenados o bajo disculpas de origen religioso, que lo hacían caer en la crápula mercenaria, pero no en la perversión de inocencias, por más que alardeaba de cinismo: nueva cortina de humo para su timidez. Con este secreto, la muchacha conquistó al conquistador; silenciosamente, taimadamente lo enamoró...El hombre le había prestado la mejor arma cuando le declaró que la identificaba con su ambición de tierras. Lo espoleó a tomarlas, lo ayudó a utilizarlas, lo distrajo haciéndolo regarlas de sudor y cansancio, presentándole siempre horizontes ilimitados que deberían alcanzar. Así consiguió que las energías y la fiereza del aventurero se obsesionaran en el dominio de más y más tierras (105-106).

Elena's power over el Amarillo is evident as time passes and she is addressed as "doña." Her honorific title of "doña" did not come easy for her, as she had to endure work and suffering to overcome the hardships of nature and the lands of Jalisco's coast as well as el Amarillo's *macho* persona. In spite of being always forgotten and subscribing to her submissive role of devoted wife, Elena manages to discover a way to control El Amarillo. By way of knowing the desires of El Amarillo, Elena is able to predict the actions of her husband. Elena is hence an admirable woman ahead of her time, who breaks the rules of tradition without being noticed. Her control over El Amarillo increases as the couple prosper, and many years go by.

The honorific and respectful title of "doña" represents more than a distinction, the title represents power and landownership—and in all instances of Elena—courage. Distant from the young Elena that El Amarillo wished to own, "doña Elena" well into the novel demands respect and shows resilience even at vulnerable times—when she is alone and Sotero Castillo, her husband business partner and rival, intrudes in her house pretending to be looking for her husband El Amarillo:

Sotero Castillo comprendió desde un principio que no era santo de la devoción de doña Elena. La odió desde un principio. Al principio, más que al Amarillo. No lo disimulaba, y por asustarla cuando sabía que se hallaba sola en Paraiso, en Santa Elena o en La Encarnación le caía de sorpresa, pretextando que iba en busca del Dientes de Oro... La señora nunca le permitió trasponer puertas, ni reprochar al ausente: rápida, terminante lo despedía, muy segura de sí misma... Tardaría treinta años para codiciarla,

mezclando el deseo con el odio viejo, en complicación con el odio a muerte que durante más de veinte años vino acumulando contra el Amarillo. La deseaba y la odiaba por la sorpresa que recibió al verla triunfante del tiempo (*los años no pasan por ella*), espléndida en su madurez, orgullosa en su señorío; al saberla enamorada y consejera, colaboradora eficaz del rival (103-104).

Sotero Castillo, el Amarillo's rival and business partner—collaborator, sees doña Elena with barbaric desire as her age only makes her more beautiful in his eyes, but treats her in a civilized manner. A beautiful and submissive wife like Elena and the lands of El Amarillo are coveted possessions among the *campesinado*. Sotero clearly knows the value of both. His interaction with Elena shifts from fear and disgust on her part to a platonic loyalty and admiration. Sotero's stewardship of the land and hardworking persona spark an impossible love for Elena. At the end of the novel, Sotero is the only one Elena looks forward to seeing, cloistered in the stately homes where El Amarillo abandons her. He is her only hope and vision of the lands of coast, as she is looked away from life and any of the occurrences of the coast.

With the news of Sotero Castillo's death in the novel, a series of bad news came along for Elena. Although Castillo was a fierce rival of her husband, el Amarillo, he had respected her. Sotero Castillo frequently visited el Amarillo's home and saw Elena with a platonic gaze of love and admiration. The news of Sotero's death left Elena with one admirer less of her beauty. The death of the "jackal" that stocked her, leave her feeling remorse and guilt for his horrible death. As the narrator says, focalizing Elena:

Penosa impresión la de saber que tras de Pánfilo Rubio le había llegado su fin a Sotero Castillo...muerto en emboscada, perseguido como liebre por la sublevación de toda la tierra, en abandono de los suyos, tirado al sol, comido por los zopilotes, perros y coyotes, despedazado...por obra y gracia de Ricardo Guerra Victoria, en pago de la muchacha hija de Sotero, qué costosa, cuantas vidas eran ya su precio (278).

For Elena, it is evident that the death of her admirer was the work of her own husband. Like the other abuses of her husband, Elena endures the death of Sotero in silence and beside El Amarillo. Sotero is dead at the will of El Amarillo, for his lands and also because El Amarillo wanted to enamor Gertrudis, his daughter. All this happens unexpectedly, as El Amarillo plans to finally own what Sotero guarded with his life to the end—his lands and family.

Lejos de alegrarse al sentirse libre del azote, que nunca más la asediaría, doña Elena se angustió con vivísimo dolor. El crónico anhelo —ansia, angustia— de maternidad afloró con la compasión, se fijó en la muchacha, sentida, querida, en ese momento adoptada por hija, con todas las veras del alma y de la carne, con el viejo, vivo anhelo de su esterilidad, apasionadamente, absurdamente, deleitosamente...decidida a velar por Gertrudis como hija de prolongados dolores. Ni el pérfido pensamiento que sobrevino a picarle como comején la conciencia: *hija mía y de Sotero*, la espantó, ni le ahuyentó el contento, la firmeza de la resolución: la recogeré, la cuidaré, la defenderé de Ricardo mismo (278-279).

Elena knew that El Amarillo had murdered Sotero, and she still takes care of Sotero's daughter, Gertrudis. This action allows for the development of a depraved characterization of characters and an overflow of amoral actions at the hand of the characters in *La tierra pródiga*. These actions are those that occur in a nameless land without law—where morality clashes with modernity, and traditional family roles are challenged and scrutinized. At the end of the novel El Amarillo runs away with Gertrudis, betraying both Elena and El Chacal.

VII. National Discourse and Concrete Vision of the Future

Absent from societal norms, the nameless lands of Jalisco's coast allow for people's instinct and brutality to thrive. Overpowered by the maternal instincts that spring in her for Gertrudis, Elena does not stop to think that the young girl is her husband's lover. Willing to ignore that huge impediment of mores, Elena becomes an accomplice of her husband and Gertrudis. Thinking that Gertrudis is a mere victim of El Amarillo, Doña Elena hopes to protect a girl that ran away with the killer of her father. Over time Elena serves as an accessory to the crimes of El Amarillo, given that over the years she does nothing other than think that El Amarillo loves her unconditionally and she has some control over him. Strong and naïve Elena overlooks the urges and instincts of her husband, those same instincts that carry them both to misery and depravity: "Si hubiera puesto cuidado, tratando como antes de asomarse al alma de su mujer, habría descubierto el cambio: ya no era sumisión amorosa, ni resignación, desapego que quiere no alterar la vida para no llamar sobre sí la atención que lo estorbe" (281). Elena's absent

mind and disregard for her husband's crimes leave her ultimately powerless and the whims of his desires and wish to make Punta Gertrudis an important costal destination (named after his lover Gertrudis, as he had named a previous venture Punta Elena).

El Amarillo is determined to remain powerful and at the center of the touristic guild in spite of his barbaric crimes and plans to continue his venture, even after he loses all sense of civil decency. Towards the end of the novel, El Amarillo engages in a risky campaign to open the lands of Punta Elena, disregarding the law like at the beginning of in his barbaric campaign to the exploit the coast:

De Manzanillo comenzaron a llegar cargamentos de provisiones. Desde Guadalajara se abrieron paso enormes camiones con muebles, ropa, loza, cajas de buenos vinos. Ejército de peones divididos en cuadrillas de reforzadas con elementos provisionados por los contratistas de las grandes obras acometieron la reparación del campo aéreo, las brechas, los miradores, las cabañas; la construcción de nuevos alojamientos y de amplias enramadas junto al mar; la limpieza de playas, puntas, jardines, boscajes, áreas cultivadas, pasos por la jungla; el drenado de la vena de mar; la poda de árboles; el remozamiento de los parajes. Febril actividad como en los días heroicos, cuando el Amarillo puso allí la planta y la garra (281-282).

The outrage and disregard for land and people in the coast ultimately cost El Amarillo his land and power. El Amarillo is a man capable of exploiting paradisiac costal lands for the mere satisfaction of making money, and he has a marvelous sense of the commercial

worth of the lands of the coast. Yet his lack of human emotion is the very core of his exterior persona, as El Amarillo flaunts his power and land holdings. Those same airs make him less common for others except for his wife Elena who, without regard for his material holdings and disdain for others, still loves him.

El camión destartado de los primeros viajes al irrumpir en la región había sido sustituido por una flamante flotilla de cinco unidades de doble tracción y el yip inglés de uso personal, muy ostentoso. Crecían los hombres a su servicio: ayudantes, choferes, peones. Y crecía su altanería, en camino de despotismo. Sólo la muchacha Elena lo sufría con gusto; los demás por miedo. Sólo ella se atrevía a discutir con él y hacerle observaciones, bien que no aceptó tutearlo hasta que se casaron. Treinta años después las lenguas de la gente siguen diciendo que se casó por miedo, amenazada, o por interés (99).

El Amarillo's lurid mistreatment of others has no exception, not even for his wife Elena. Yet, Elena endures years of mistreatment and violence with resilience. Not regarding the rumors of having married out fear, her love and dedication to El Amarillo is the only thing that keeps Elena composed and going. Elena personifies the traditional gender norms of Jalisco, a society that predominantly influenced by the land, as land and agriculture is the main (if not the only) livelihood in the region. A set of norms in which men work in the *campos* land, and women are the homemakers.

Gertrudis, the daughter of Sotero, runs away with El Amarillo, who is also the killer of her father, immediately after his death. Outcasted and critiqued by people and

their gossip, Gertrudis seems to be a mere fool that lacks honor or moral as she decides to stay with the man that killed her father. Categorized as an easy woman with a loose moral, the worth of Gertrudis and future among the society of the coast are ruined. Her opportunity of remaining a respectable woman like doña Elena goes down the drain as does her possibility of marrying and working the land side by side with a respectable man.

The brutality and immorality of the actions of Gertrudis ultimately makes the reader give up any hope for her good morals and civilized reputation.

—Tanto escándalo, gritos y amenazas para que la Gertrudis acabara como cualquier vulgar cusca...en presencia del cuerpo de su padre, porque todavía no se disipaba la hediondez del cadáver ...

—Bien dijo su madre al llamarla güila, sin recato cual ninguno; bien la conocía; qué resbalón hasta mayor desvergüenza, como las peores... pegada como tábano al Amarillo, que ni resollar la deja.

(288-289).

The disdain felt for the actions of Gertrudis include the harsh disapproval of her own mother. Ashamed of her daughter's action she calls her a *güila*, a prostitute of the worst kind, and describes her as horse fly overly attached to the enemy and killer of her own father. With this the narrator questions an end to tradition and good costumes, brought forth by new land uses and development. Perhaps only a new way of seeing things, in *La tierra pródiga* tears at modernity and the disregard to honor and religious values inherent in the land and way of life of the Mexican *campesinado*.

Unlike Gertrudis, the anger the widow—her mother—feels for El Amarillo transcends the motherly love she has for Gertrudis retaliating against El Amarillo and Elena, and even her own daughter Gertrudis:

la viuda de Sotero manda rociar con petróleo el comando, le prende fuego, hace recoger los restos y se los remite al Amarillo, “para que sepa lo que se le espera”.

—Y díganle que allí van achicharrados algunos gusanos de su victima, por si se los quiere tragar en agua de uso con su par de cuscas, para que más pronto le salgan cuernos, mientras voy y se los quiebro en añicos, con todos los huesos, al machorro infeliz (302-303).

Sotero’s feud with El Amarillo ultimately ends with their shared venture of exploiting Jalisco’s coast. The dream of El Amarillo to own everything—including Gertrudis—ends tragically as he is ridiculed by investors and the widow of Sotero along others force him to leave the coast—La tierra caliente—empty handed. The destruction of the family and of the traditional family parcel or home is evident in the destruction of the two families.

At the end of *La tierra pródiga* el Amarillo is emasculated, given *cuernos* (the symbol of a cheated husband) and described with dishonorable and derogatory names that further stain his character. And, to make matters worse, doña Elena his lawful wife and lucky star, commits suicide, a barbaric and rather *helenistic* end to the wife of El Amarillo. Elenas tragic death, not unlike those of the Greek classics, hints and symbolizes the end of a “golden age” for El Amarillo. Upon realizing her husband’s true intentions with Gertrudis—who Elena saw as a daughter, blinded and corroded with the

explanations of el Amarillo—she resolves to “give herself” to the sea. Her decision of committing suicide is ultimately ambiguous as she suddenly finds herself in a crucible of emotions— as result of El Amarillo and Gertrudis’ affair, Sotero’s death, and ultimately her not being able to bear children.

El plan de doña Elena era darse al mar, cumplidas las fiestas, que asegurarían la posición de Ricardo. Entre tanta gente llegada, tan impertinente, conservó inalterablemente su diligencia, su serenidad, su don de mando en las complejas, pesadas atenciones de los preparativos en grande...Nadie pudo traslucir su decisión. En su semblante ni en sus actos no había desaliento, ni amargura, ni acritud; al contrario: extremada dulzura, llena de comprensión...Lo único que de aquellas vísperas la mortificó fue la preocupación de no agradar a las señoras de los señores influyentes, impuestas a toda clase de comodidades (309-310).

Doña Elena’s decision, from this perspective, seems to be made more out of sadness and desperation than for omission. All of her problems find her in a situation of despair, and she wrongfully resolves taking her life, rather than doing anything else. The idea of legacy in the nameless lands of the coast is perhaps what pushes Elena to a tragic death juxtaposed against her arduous preparations helping El Amarillo inaugurate Punta Gertrudis to truism and civilization. The omniscient narrator compares Elena to other women and in all levels of society and describes her as stronger and more proper, except for not being able to give El Amarillo the son he wanted and for whom he leaves everything behind to run away with Gertrudis and the son she expects.

El Amarillo's cruel resolution is to leave Elena for Gertrudis. He tells the young woman that, for a child, he would be capable of undoing everything that he has done and undone.

—Por un hijo seré capaz de hacer otra vez la tierra caliente, caso de que desapareciera o se acabara. Si hasta ahora he podido hacer lo que he hecho, sin tener hijo en quien pensar, a quien dejarle todo, fijate tú de los seré capaz, aunque se me venga el mundo encima (304).

The continuation of legacy and land is embedded in the custom of a lawless land where legacy is only insured by a strong posterity. Not having a legacy is the ultimate death sentence for Elena. Realizing that el Amarillo had ultimately left her for Gertrudis, Elena loses all hope of standing beside her husband:

doña Elena comprendió lo que había sucedido, y sin que nadie se lo dijera, supo que en vez de venir a refugiarse con ella, como siempre que sufrió reveses, había trepado hacia la muchacha, que doña Elena seguía queriendo y compadeciendo como hija, ya que no podía protegerla como al principio imaginó, creyéndola víctima de pasajero capricho (310).

Elena's despair grows fueled by the pitiful actions against her. Elena resolves to not stand between El Amarillo and Gertrudis only after realizing that her husband would run away with Gertrudis and leave her after many years of marriage. Elena is ultimately troubled for allowing the dissolute and amoral love of between a Gertrudis and the man that killed her father. Elena's death symbolizes the end of tradition, and the honorific uses of the land in the coast up to that point, as well as the culmination of everything good that land

traditions represented. Her death is a clear representation of the new moralities brought forth by development in the novel.

IV. Conclusion

The impressionistic landscape narrative of *La tierra pródiga* ends postulating ideas of ephemeral conquest of nature, portraying progress as a mere pawn at the mercy of land. After the plans of turning Punta Gertrudis into a great touristic destination turn sour, el Amarillo seeks to make one last allegiance and fails. His desire to control the coast does not mature, as el Amarillo is already lost and outnumbered. El Amarillo's ambition is ultimately what ruins him, from the beginning to the end, *La tierra pródiga* reads as tragic account of El Amarillo. Who is depicted as an ambitious man, but that lacks morality. Beyond the doom-destined account of El Amarillo, the narrator evokes man's fall from grace after eating from the forbidden tree. As at the end of *La tierra pródiga* as El Amarillo and Gertrudis are exiled, ridiculed, and condemned to start over,

—Usted que si es mi amigo, mi general, ayúdeme, póngase de mi parte; usted que sabe lo que yo he luchado por conquistar estas tierras para la Patria; sálveme de este ridículo; es lo que me importa; mañana, hoy mismo, se me echarán a las barbas y lo que es peor, se reirán de mí en mi cara; usted conoce cómo son acá las cosas.

—Es inútil (302).

El Amarillo's futile audience with his longtime friend and General does not yield the protection he hoped for, after losing his prodigal spoils of nature to his own ambition and immorality. El Amarillo's loss of power is a voluntary fall from grace, given that all his

actions lead to his demise. His return to poverty and loss of power is portrayed as his laughter, that of El Amarillo, turned into sadness. The one, who once laughed at others, is laughed at as even his friends turn his back at El Amarillo. El Amarillo's last hope to be recognized by governmental institutions and civil servants, shatter as his friend—a prominent general—turns him away and does not recognize his plea.

His mad laughter and inner struggle are the reflection of a man that is conscious of losing all his landholdings and clout. Exile is all that is left for El Amarillo and taking Gertrudis and the hope of a son is all that keeps him from death. El Amarillo ultimately contemplates his last drop influence thinking he can start over as he looks back at la tierra caliente (the “hot lands” not far from Jalisco's coast).

—Puede que sea la despedida de deveras —tomó ansiosa, nerviosa, rudamente a la mujer, y gritó—: ¡vámonos! ¡sin voltear! ¡a prisa! tenemos que irnos inmediatamente...después de darme el gusto de haberte cumplido, de darte la fiesta que merecías, que yo quería...para bautizar la punta que no tenía nombre, de un tirón haremos el viaje, vas a conocer México, a darte la gran vida, como esta fiesta de princesa real que aquí te di, porque aunque todo se lo lleve la pelona y no volvamos a Punta Gertrudis, mientras yo te tenga y no nos separemos, a donde quiera me seguirá la tierra, y nadie ya podrá quitarme esta noche, andando contigo, no te preocupes de nada, en el camino te compraré ropa y lo que te haga falta, veras que cosas lindas, derechito nos vamos en este momento (309).

Expelled from paradise, el Amarillo and Gertrudis can only hope for the promise of a grand new life and other lands. El Amarillo asserts that as long as he and Gertrudis are together, land will find them instead of them finding it. The play on words takes from the importance of the land, as El Amarillo conforms to losing everything and living a life of hardships he was no longer accustomed to.

Ricardo detuvo la marcha, tomo a Gertrudis del brazo para que descendiera, y la llevó de la mano al extremo del camino desde donde se acababa la tierra caliente. Ricardo enmudeció...Dio súbita media vuelta, estrechó violentamente la mano de la muchacha, entrecerró los ojos. Ella lo abrazó con furia, lo mordió en los labios. Avanzaron al carro.

Prosiguieron la carrera.

San Miguel Chapultepec, abril-agosto de 1960 (315)

The handful of earth in el Amarillo's hand at the end of the novel is a promise of starting anew—a sense that earth is more than soil—an ideal of hope and potential that makes up setting and plot in the literature and history of Mexico.⁵³ Yañez's land is a living and unbreakable aspect of nature and the building blocks of society. From the conceptions of civilization and barbaric relations land narrative in *La tierra pródiga* is a contemporary account of land development in Jalisco and Mexico's coast.

From the idyllic images of Susana San Juan's beach in Rulfo to Yañez's baroque descriptions of the landscape, land plays an import role in twentieth century literature.

⁵³ A vision of freedom, picking up and moving on, similar to that when Pedro Páramo talks to his lawyer—Gerardo—about him being able to leave everything behind and starting anew:

Land its development does not escape being part of popular literary depictions in contemporary literature. Depictions of the coast in *La tierra pródiga* are best described as a narrative about man's perennial obsession with land. Land and its age long relation with man—a history of power and surplus—and ultimately a story of Yáñez, Rulfo, and Arreola's Jalisco. Land and man's relation in Mexican literature is a history of how land has contributed to the majesty of Mexico's Haciendas, Revolution and the synthesis of both in the modern development of land in the contemporary decades of the twentieth century. In *La tierra pródiga*, Yáñez's literary depiction of Jalisco's coast offers a historiography of the popular conceptions of land and its post-revolutionary imaginary. As narrative follows the characters' dream of land and its phases of development, infrastructure and technology allow for new land claims. From the bloody soil of the revolution to that of turmoil Jalisco's plots at the heart of Mexico, to ultimately the coast, the illusions of land as a hope and a dream in contemporary Mexico—close and open—fueling the immensity of land and its development. As noted by Yáñez, Mexico's illusions in the development of land only ends as land in the coast.

Finalmente hizo cabeza de playa en La Encarnación, que habría de ser capital de sus dominios e ilusiones, presidida por Punta Elena, de rocas enhiestas como torreones arriba del océano (102-103).

And even as people's illusions are broken like those of el Amarillo, at the end of the novel, the hope of land follows one where he goes and fuels the gush of Mexico's land

—Ustedes los abogados tienen esa ventaja: pueden llevarse su patrimonio a todas partes, mientras no les rompan el hocico (Rulfo, 108).

dream within the narratives of twentieth century literature. Land and its development in twentieth century narrative bestow more than a historiography of events, contemplating folk traditions in the development of land and its imaginaries. Ultimately, land narrative and its conceptions of the coast in Yáñez encompass traditional and contemporary literary techniques that make his incorporation of land in narrative a valuable contribution to Mexican literature. Beyond the dichotomy of new and traditional land uses in 20th century Mexico, Yáñez tells land's age-old relation with man within an account of costal land in its contemporary and future development within Mexican literature.

Chapter IV

El gallo de oro: Land and Surplus in the Narrative of Juan Rulfo

El gallo de oro (1980) a surplus among the works of Juan Rulfo is influenced by the folk traditions of land, a reading of the bohemian excesses in which land as property determines the value of an individual's plot. Published in 1980, *El gallo de oro* is Juan Rulfo's last completed novel. Critiqued and perhaps misunderstood, the novel is not considered the *absolute finito* of the author.⁵⁴ Written in third person, the novel follows a chronological order, and in less than a hundred pages it is also the least ambiguous of the Rulfian narratives. Juan Rulfo's other works include a set number of narratives: *cuentos*—short stories—comprised into *El llano en llamas* (1953) and *Pedro Páramo* (1955) the novel that consolidated Rulfo as one the best Mexican authors of the twentieth century—with *Pedro Páramo* as the most important novel of the twentieth century written in Spanish.⁵⁵ From the beginning, Rulfo established himself as a classical author, because his success and narrative strengthens Mexican literature and its literary enterprise. The feat of Rulfo's literary success is unique among contemporary Mexican authors and it might be the reason why from 1955 to 1980 Rulfo chose not to publish another novel, and even turned down his publisher, Fondo de Cultura, with publishing *La cordillera* announced in the companies' gazette in 1964 ("El camino de Rulfo" García Bonilla 39). *El gallo de oro* in nineteen eighty however does not come into the world of

⁵⁴ For more on *El gallo de oro* as a marginalized text see González Boixo "“El gallo de oro’ y otros textos marginados de Juan Rulfo”.

⁵⁵ For more on Rulfo's narrative perception see Espinasa "Solo el 'Quijote' supera a 'Pedro Páramo'".

Mexican literature as surprise. The novel is a quintessential Rulfian work in its stile, thematic, and perspective of Rulfian land narrative.

El gallo de oro follows the legacy of Rulfian land narrative that is first seen in the cuento “Luvina” of *El llano en llamas*, and consequently in the lands of Comala in *Pedro Páramo*. Land narrative in Rulfian works is best described as being a literary historic contemplation of the Mexican *tierra* and *campo*.⁵⁶ In *El gallo de oro* land narrative is inherent of the characters’ literary and topographic plot. Such narrative determines them and their place in the story. Land narrative in *El gallo de oro* is also the continuation of Rulfian style, within a process continuity that does not rupture, and in which Rulfo once again produces literature after *Pedro Páramo*.

In “Lluvina” the land narrative has a uniquely Rulfian style, that describes a dry and useless land. The description of the land and its characteristics is the first of many other settings of Rulfian narrative of the land and its folklore. This Rulfian imaginary of land defines and determines the town of Comala and ultimately the hacienda called La Media Luna in *Pedro Páramo* which is described not only as dirt, but also as soil. Land narrative in *Pedro Páramo* and *El gallo de oro* is informed by Mexican land traditions and an array of soils that give plot to the Rulfian narrative. The various soil plains in the works of Rulfo range from worthless dirt to the rich soil of the Mexican hacienda.⁵⁷ The story of these narratives is delineated as the individual plot of these characters. Land and its folklore in the experimental Rulfian fragments are at the center and depend on land

⁵⁶ For more on *El gallo de oro* and the works of Rulfo see Leal “‘El gallo de oro’ y otros textos de Juan Rulfo” and Peñalta Catalán “El llano en llamas, Pedro Páramo y otras obras”.

narrative and its plot. According to Yvette Jiménez de Báez, Rulfo's most renowned literary critic, "El eje central...de fragmentos es el proceso revolucionario y su incidencia en los niveles más profundos del espacio y de la vida de relación de hombres...Orientada por estos principios, la escritura destaca el espacio de la lucha revolucionaria" (Jiménez de Báez 94). In her book *Juan Rulfo, del páramo a la esperanza* (1990) Yvette Jiménez de Báez describes Mexico's revolutionary process as the central axis of Rulfian narrative.⁵⁸ The agrarian revolutionary and the dream of land of the *campesinado* in the historic context of the Mexican *campo* allow for a land narrative in Rulfian works dominated by *cacique* landowners. Pedro Páramo is essential *cacique*, landowner, with the most domain over land (plain) in the Rulfian narrative. The power of the *cacique* is derived from his land inside and outside the agrarian context. Pedro Páramo is the folkloric archetype of the Mexican *campesino* that regardless of his flaws, the reader learns to like and understand. Juan Rulfo's endless search for land in his narrative goes beyond the perimeters of an agrarian revolution. Through his various interests in land and legacy, the character of Pedro Páramo encompasses folkloric and traditional customs and his very own ideals of love, revenge, and spirituality.

Land as literary in Rulfian works, I propose, contemplates land narrative as a plain or plot, encompasses the land of Luvina, Comala, and Santa Gertrudis in which

⁵⁷ See Van Young *Hacienda and Market* for more on the economic and cultural institution of the Mexican hacienda, and its players the *campesino* and *cacique*.

⁵⁸ For more on the historical context and definition of the agrarian and revolutionary conflicts in Mexico, present in Rulfian narrative see Bernal "En pos de Juan Rulfo", Fraser "Problems of Photographic Criticism and the Question of a Truly Revolutionary Image", Ruiz *The Great Rebellion*, and Vital Díaz "De Pedro Armendáriz y Pedro Infante a Pedro Páramo. La Lucha Por El Imaginario Colectivo Mexicano."

Rulfo inputs characters (like points in a plain) with a set range and domain.⁵⁹ Land narrative and the Mexican campo are analogous components in Rulfian novels and his envisioning of the role land and characters' lives. In the short stories of *El llano en llamas*, characters that have little to no domain over land narrative, begin to highlight the importance of *tierra* soil as property. The role of these characters in "Luvina" (the last written *cuento* of the *El llano en llamas*) give validity to Rulfo's land narrative. Most importantly I propose that the ideas of the cacique and campesino in the works of Rulfo propose a celebration of rural existence. *El llano en llamas*, *Pedro Páramo*, and *El gallo de oro* are best described as a Mexican *fiesta*. In sharp contrast to Ericka Beckman article "Unfinished Transitions: The Dialectics of Rural Modernization in Latin American Fiction," the idea I propose connotes a celebration and not a cataclysmic existence, in which even death (that of Susana San Juan and la Caponera) is a *fiesta* in which voces, ruidos, rumores, canciones lejanas are heard and accompany what Octavio Paz in *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950) described as the idea of being Mexican.

Adding to the perception of land as space in a plain, George D. Schade translates the title of Rulfo's *El llano en llamas* as *The Burning Plain* (1967). The reading of llano as a "plot" plain adds a significant perception of the domain of characters and their mobility in the context of land narrative and plot. In his introduction, Schade describes Rulfo as the best writer of fiction in Latin America, while considering land also as a central character of *The Burning Plain* (vii):

⁵⁹ See Pimentel *El Relato En Perspectiva* for more on land narrative as a physical literary field.

Rulfo peels many of his characters down to the core, but some of them, like the landscape, frequently clouded over and hazy, remain blurred, imprecise, and taciturn figures. They are never seen in full face, but always in a silhouette, like the lugubrious, black-garbed crones of “Luvina.” The one thing standing fourth clear and ubiquitous is death—overpowering life—which seems to hold scant value in this world (viii).

Although Schade describes *tierra* as character he does it describing a “landscape” always overlooked by death. Death and its lugubrious gloom, as Schade observes, seems to overshadow the *landscape* like the main character, yet in the big context of Rulfo’s work land is the difference between life and death. In the fragmented plots that give shape to the Rulfian bigger plot, *tierra* is the question of “being.”

Rulfo has an uncanny feeling for describing the bleak landscape. In the harsh are where his characters live almost nothing stirs or moves, not even buzzards. Life seems to have come to a stop in the paralyzed region, producing a static quality in many of the stories... Unlike the novels of the Mexican Revolution and certain Indianist novels of the 1930’s, Rulfo’s fictions contains no preaching about social abuses, though he refers briefly to the Mexican agrarian question in several stories and sketches the wetback problem most effectively in “El Paso del Norte.” Large social ills are commented on dispassionately only when they have bearing on the personal dramas Rulfo is unfolding (ix).

Land goes beyond the personal drama Schade makes it. Land narrative in all the Rulfian works offers a juxtaposition between dead and alive plots. Fully delving into the revolutionary agrarian question and land folklore, Rulfo's land narrative is rather a dynamic plot that conquers the static and silence several times over. For example, starting with "Es que somos muy pobres" and "El llano en llamas," rain and water flow giving (and taking) life, using a plethora of sensory language and sounds. Likewise, in *Pedro Páramo* even the dead are alive and, in the move, (at most instances) like when Doloritas describes Comala, using a narrative full of sound and an agrarian surplus in which wheels turn and wagons carry grains and even the smell of bread sets over town. Miguel Páramo is another character always on the move ridding el Colorado as even after death—they are heard. The land narrative that Rulfo employs is of a vibrant folkloric boldness of sounds belonging within songs and agrarian life contrast with ruin and a secret silence that Schade wrongfully assumes to be the only thing that defines Rulian narrative.⁶⁰ The sound of agrarian surplus heard and seen only by Juan, Dolores and Eduvijes conceives a fertile and rich Mexico beyond backward ideas of a static plot made up of social ills and dramas. Through this frame, I want to analyze Rulfo's last book, *El gallo de oro*, which paints the most dynamic and liveliest of Rulfo's land narrative. Jalisco's folklore land tradition spills a surplus of songs, games and modes of living off of land's surplus in all instances of *El gallo de oro*, as I will discuss later.

⁶⁰ For more on the depiction of movement and sound see Clares "Juan Rulfo: perspectivas críticas" and Russek "Rulfo, Photography, and the Vision of Emptiness".

The land and its folkloric surplus in Rulfo offer a narrative that contemplates history and the atemporal experience of living in the surplus of folklore and land. Jiménez de Báez in her book *Juan Rulfo, del páramo a la esperanza* explores the out of time existence of living in an idyllic land. Rulfian land narrative is captured more through the interpretation of Jiménez de Báez than of Schade, as her work goes beyond the translation process.

En “Luvina” el tiempo de la narración y de su monólogo dialogizado es lento. La sensación que se crea es de un tiempo que apenas transcurre. Se diría que toda la acción del cuento “El llano en llamas” se empoza ahora en un tiempo monótono y reiterativo fuera de la Historia; marginado por los hechos de cara a la muerte, como el tiempo y la atmósfera que bordean la muerte interminable de Pedro Páramo (Jiménez de Báez 99).

Although Jiménez de Báez contemplates land in Rulfo’s land narrative more accurately than Schade both wrongfully interpret land to be dead in the Rulfian narrative.⁶¹ Their lugubrious and woeful descriptions of the landscape are in line with the interpretation of various critics that also see land as dirt—dead soil—and not as soil—land filled with nutrients. The landscapes in all the works of Rulfo offer a perspective of both kinds of land. In the whole of Rulfian land narrative—soil and tierra—is what makes up the plot. Rulfo in his land narrative differentiates between soil and dirt as *llano* and *tierra*, associating *tierra* with living soil and dirt with the lifeless *llano*.

⁶¹ For more on the interpretation of narrative and dialogue in Rulfo see Karic “La ironía en la obra de Juan Rulfo/Irony in Juan Rulfo's Narrative”.

It can be said that land and soil in Rulfian land narrative evolves from the landscape of Luvina into La Media luna in *Pedro Páramo* and subsequently into Santa Gertrudis in *El gallo de oro*. According to Jiménez Báez the agrarian *leitmotiv* of Luvina is favored by Juan Rulfo. “‘Luvina’ es uno de los tres cuentos preferidos por Rulfo. La crítica suele decir, citándose a sí misma, que el relato anticipa la atmosfera de *Pedro Páramo*” (Jiménez de Báez 96). Agrarian discourse and soil perceptions of land that ends up being the definition of surplus (as said before) in *El gallo de oro*. Soil and its surplus are already evident in *Pedro Páramo*, the lands of La Media Luna and Comala are made up of productive soil that yields riches and power to Páramo’s plot. Soil and its surplus wealth justify the existence and recurrence of Comala or Santa Gertrudis in Rulfian narrative. The desire for surplus is the axial drive for characters like Pedro Páramo and Dionisio Pinzón.

The agrarian *leitmotiv* in the Rulfian works can be explained by surplus—the superabundance of land production best described as wealth according to John Locke’s labor theory of property.⁶² As we will see in my analysis of *El gallo de oro*, surplus as a traditional and religious desire of wanting more and more land, that function in the same way as the desire for gambling. Rulfo’s agrarian *leitmotiv* seems to have stirred more than misunderstandings. Interpretations and speculations beyond viability, trying to justify Rulfian narrative beyond the obvious importance of land folklore offer a plethora of obscure interpretations of Rulfian plots. Among these prolific urban centric contemplations of the Rulfian settings are those Juan José Arreola and Christina Rivera

Garza that polemically meddle in interpreting Rulfian genius and how he drew artistic inspiration outside urban conceptions. Without considering the viability of such interpretations García Bonilla in his article about Rulfo, uses Arreola's speculative perception of Rulfo's land narrative.

Las comunidades agrícolas, los eriales y la naturaleza, fueron un *leitmotiv* en el escritor. Pero la capital del país no fue menos importante. Juan José Arreola llegó a decir que su amigo le confió: “Ya estoy cansado de escribir estos cuentos de la tierra, de personajes rancheros [...] Yo voy a hacer una novela ciudadana”. Arreola aseguró que Rulfo inició una novela que se iba a escenificar en Santa María la Ribera, “hasta me leyó algunas cosas del principio de la novela”.

The fiction and rumors about great authors and artists always surround their character and writing. *La cordillera* according to Rulfo would have been one of those novels written without consequence and that lack backbone like the many that are written to be written without a plot, land narrative, outside the plain of the land. In “Rulfo y sus biógrafos” Alejandro Toledo states that Juan José Arreola is the wrong and inadequate person to write about Rulfo, in part because of his artistic interpretation of which Rulfo does not escape (“Rulfo y sus biógrafos” Alejandro Toledo 44). The legend in turn of Rulfo and his land narrative grows, winds and unwinds. The private and public knowledge of public figures like Rulfo and Arreola are like their works that confuse fiction and reality. One clear example of the factious interpretation of these authors is the order in which the

⁶² For more of land and property see Locke *Two Treatises of Government*.

order of the fragments was arranged in *Pedro Páramo*. The complexity of the work allows for believing a shuffled order, yet even a novice critic can discern Arreola is joking about the thought out order the novel and its land narrative. The fiction that surrounds the life and works like Rulfo is ultimately an elaborate confabulation of research and inventions, yet the influence of each other in both of their works is evident in the context of land narrative.

I. Characters, description, plot, place and transformation

With *El gallo de oro* (1980), Juan Rulfo published his last completed novel. A previous manuscript of his authorship (dated 1956-1958) was part of the screenplay's argument to the 1964 film with the same name. Rulfo's short novel is a narrative of Mexican tradition, culture, fate and life. The argument of the novel is simple in the context of fortune and tragedy, Dionisio Pinzón, is the median "main" character that falls tragically at the end of his journey. His "plot" is determined by the folk and tradition of land narrative of the contemporary Mexican novel and the canonical portrayals of *campesinos* and *caciques* in Jalisco. With *un gallo dorado* a gilded rooster under his arm, Dionisio ends his life of misery, sadness, and hunger putting a distant end to his humble beginnings and honest way of earning his life. It is this golden rooster that gives Dionisio fame and fortune (as well as taking everything from him). And along with *la Caponera* Bernarda Cutiño who with Lorenzo Benavides, Dionisio is initiated into a bohemian life living off of gambling, in which land is worth more than life according in the Mexican culture of *gallos*, *juego*, and songs. Dionisio ends living a life devoted to accumulating surplus to spend or gamble far from his humble beginnings at the start of the narrative.

Dionisio Pinzón starts off his life as a *pregonero* town crier, not being able to work the land or do other works, only jobs in his town San Miguel del Milagro, town he learns “to hate” with the death of his mother.

Tal vez fue entonces cuando odió a San Miguel del Milagro. No sólo porque nadie le tendió la mano, sino porque hasta se burlaron de él. Lo cierto es que la gente se rió de su extraña figura, mientras iba por mitad de la calle cargando sobre sus hombros una especie de jaula hecha con los tablones podridos de la puerta, y dentro de ella, envuelto en un petate, el cadáver de su madre (Rulfo, *El gallo de oro* 91).

Dionisio’s mother is described as lonely poor woman with no more family than Dionisio. Her death comes as result of years of misery at the same time she and Dionisio put back in shape a purebred gilded colored rooster left for dead at the *palenque* of San Miguel del Milagro. After his mother’s death Dionisio leaves for San Juan del Río to start his new life as a *gallero*. In San Juan del Río he meets various *galleros* but none of these acquaintances are as important as those of Lorenzo Benavides and la Caponera who, like his gilded colored gallo de oro, change his life forever. Benavides and la Caponera see in Dionisio a naïve person to collude and swindle others.

In San Marcos they approach Dionisio asking him to join them in their gamble and swindles, but he politely refuses: “a mi no me gustan los enjuagues” (101). It is not until two months later when he loses everything in Tlaquepaque that he approaches la Caponera, who he loved since he first saw her in San Juan del Río. Even without his *gallo de oro*, la Caponera asks Dionisio once again to join her and Benavides, “—Óyeme,

gallero, quiero que me juegues estos centavos a ese seis de bastos que está junto al caballo de oros” (105). After winning the first *pesos* for la Caponera, she asks Dionisio to gamble once again at *los gallos*. From that moment onward she would be his lucky star or a sort of charm that gives Dionisio a winning streak until her death. The character of la Caponera in *El gallo de oro* is described more by her luck than by her beauty. La Caponera according to Rulfian narrative is a surplus kind of beauty. La Caponera with her prodigious voice and pleasant (persona) brand can be said to be the embodiment of excess. Beauty and luck seem to be bleak in the world of gambles and fairs, yet la Caponera is bold kind of beauty and chance. Her luck is complemented by her voice and voluptuous beauty, as even without her attributes at the end of her life, she continues to be Dionisio’s charm:

Cutiño era una cantadora de fama corrida, de mucho empuje y de tamaños, que así como cantaba era buena para alborotar, aunque no se dejaba manosear por nadie, pues si le buscaban era bronca y mal portada. Fuerte, guapa y salidora y tornadiza de genio sabía, con todo, entregar su amistad a quien le demostraba ser amigo. Tenía unos ojos relampagueantes, siempre humedecidos y la voz ronca. Su cuerpo era ágil, duro, y cuando alzaba los brazos los senos querían reventar el corpiño. Vestía siempre amplias faldas de percal estampado, de colores chillantes y llenas de pliegues, lo que completaba con un rebozo de seda y unas flores en las trenzas. Del cuello le colgaban sartas de corales y collares de cuentas de colores; traía los brazos repletos de pulseras y los brazos repletos de

pulseras y en las orejas grandes zarcillos o enormes arracadas de oro. Mujer de gran temperamento, a donde quiera que iba llevaba su aire alegre, además de ser buena para cantar corridos y canciones antiguas (108).

The visual likes of la Caponera are those of the archetypical *gallera* or *cantadora*, but more so, as she is lavishly described in grace and beauty. Her excess beauty seems to be extra, as her many qualities—intelligence, strength, voice—make her to be more than bombshell. As if her beauty was not enough, her voice, lavish dress and accessories charm and fill fairgoers with joy. The sumptuary of objects of la Caponera give her extravagance and a touch of class in post-revolutionary Mexico. Gold arracadas (earrings) denote exquisite elegance among the ornate dress of la Caponera. Her rebozo and old Mexican motives add to the guption of la Caponera in Rulfo's celebration of land narrative and Mexican culture. Charmed more by la Caponera's beauty and bewitched by her malicious smile, Dionisio joins the gambling swindle of Benavides and la Caponera. Years after joining them, Dionisio would replace Benavides and have a child with la Caponera. As a whole, *El gallo de oro* is novel that transcends the limitations of the twentieth century land narrative. Beyond the folkloric narrative of contemporary Mexico, *El gallo de oro* is a surplus among the Rulfian land narrative and other nuevas novelas de la revolución that implicitly have touch on the themes of the revolution. Without mentioning the Mexican revolution in *El gallo de oro*, Juan Rulfo makes of the novel a transcendental work in contemporary Mexican literature.

II. Historical Context (Revolution to 1980)

Written at the end of the 1970's *El gallo de oro* is best understood as a *nueva novela de la revolución*, a new revolutionary novel like Juan Rulfo's most important novel *Pedro Páramo* written in the 1950's. Since the Mexican Revolution, the interest in the revolutionary process as noted by Jiménez de Báez, is still kindled in the Rulfian land narrative and literature. *El gallo de oro* is an important sample of historic space in Rulfian land narrative. In García Bonilla's article "El camino de Rulfo," *El gallo de oro* is revalued as an important part of Rulfian narrative and post-revolutionary works and film.

A los célebres libros de Juan Rulfo hay que añadir *El gallo de oro y otros guiones para cine* —"El despojo" y "La fórmula secreta"— (1980).

Escrito entre 1962 y 1964 para el productor Manuel Barbachano el argumento de *El gallo de oro* fue alterado y la adaptación para la película de Roberto Gavaldón la realizaron Carlos Fuentes y Gabriel García Márquez. Su origen fue una novela corta, que el propio escritor mencionó en una entrevista a José Emilio Pacheco (1959).

When asked by Luis Leal why did he not publish the novel when he wrote it (at the end of the fifties), Rulfo replied:

"Esa novela —*El gallero*, no *El gallo de oro*— la terminé, pero no la publiqué porque me pidieron un *script* cinematográfico y como la obra tenía muchos elementos folklóricos creí que se prestaría para hacerla película. Yo mismo hice el *script*. Sin embargo cuando lo presenté me dijeron que tenía mucho material que no podía usarse... El material

artístico de la obra lo destruí. Ahora me es casi imposible rehacerla”. *El gallo*, entonces, es un libro más de Rulfo que no fructificó. Lo mismo sucedió con la novela que comenzó a escribir sobre la historia de su tío Rodolfo Paz Vizcaíno, poderoso cacique en la costa sur de Jalisco; entretanto en una ocasión Agustín Yáñez le preguntó qué estaba haciendo, y le contó la historia de su pariente. Yáñez, que había sido gobernador de Jalisco y quien conocía bien al terrateniente, era más rápido que Rulfo y escribió *La tierra pródiga* (1960). “Pero yo tuve la culpa. Un escritor con poca experiencia no debe andar contando sus cosas” (García Bonilla 40).

El gallo de oro as Rulfo responds is an important work in defining Rulfian narrative as well as influencing the narrative of important cinematic productions like Roberto Gavaldón’s “El gallo de oro” (1963) and “El imperio de la fortuna” (1986).⁶³ García Bonilla delves into the rumors of authorship to dispel that Rulfo plagiarized as he did not have the necessity to steal ideas from other authors, yet by word of Rulfo, this is clarified as unfounded critique and the appropriation of his work by other authors. The cinematic relevance of *El gallo de oro* Roberto Gavaldón proposal of Rulfian land narrative and underlying revolutionary themes add to the historic relevance and importance of Juan Rulfo’s narrative.

III. Analysis

⁶³ For more on *El gallo de oro* and its cinematic productions see Borgeson “‘El gallo de oro’ y otros textos para cine de Juan Rulfo”, Gavelle “Lumières mexicaines: Gavaldon, Figueroa et quelques autres”, and Ruffinelli “Rulfo : El gallo de oro o Los reveses de la fortuna”.

The plot of Dionisio Pinzón in *El gallo de oro* takes off from his desire to have an “extra” in life to ameliorate his misery. A surplus in the context of the novel, allows for the progress of the plot. Dionisio is given a golden rooster in a year of excessive wealth—during the town’s fair: “Uno de esos años, quizá por la abundancia de las cosechas o a milagro no sé de quién, se presentaron las fiestas más bulliciosas y concurridas que había habido en muchas épocas en San Miguel del Milagro” (86). In the ambiguity of Rulfian narrative lost in the uncertainty and rhetoric, *abundancia*—land surplus—is the reason for Dionisio’s monetary opportunity. Upon the start of the very concurred *fiestas* of San Miguel del Milagro (that year) Dionisio begins to forget his life of “privaciones” as he walked leading the marching party of the fair “animando con gritos a los payasos que iban a su lado” (86). In the blur of past years Dionisio would see in the *fiestas* of San Miguel del Milagro an exit to his misfortunes and debacles that always left him and his mother empty handed: “Y como otras veces, su madre se las arregló para prepararle un poco de café y cocerle unos ‘navegantes’, que no eran más que nopales sancochados, pero que al menos servían para engañar el estómago” (85). In contrast to his years of misery, the surplus of that year in which Dionisio is given a *gallo de pelea* merits a celebration and dreams of hope. In his years of misery Dionisio only had a surplus of hopes and dreams and that year a rooster is more than he could have ever wanted. In San Miguel del Milagro, Dionisio was the poorest man having as only job the dying trade of *pregonero* (town crier) during the year and *gritón* (announcer at rooster fights) in the time of the *fiestas*. With the abundance that those days of *fiestas* brought, anything could happen. The poorest man, Dionisio, was given an exemplary

fighting rooster while Secundino Colemenero, the richest man in San Miguel del Milagro, lost everything: “Secundino Colmenero, el hombre más rico del pueblo, el cual acabó su gallera y perdió en las dichosas tapadas, además de su dinero, un rancho lleno de gallinas y veintidós vacas que eran toda su propiedad” (86). Like the abundant harvest that year, money in the handfuls, could be seen and played in the gambles of San Miguel del Milagro. In the exchanges of money and property that year, men with unimagined fortunes or poverty could win or lose everything. In the bonanza and borrasca of their gambles, Dionisio lost gained a way of life while Secundino dilapidated his wealth and way of life. I argue that losing poverty in the instance of Dionisio is the equivalent of Secundino losing wealth, meaning that in order to win in the Rulfian narrative someone has to lose, or at least pretend to lose like we will see later in the novel, for example, when La Caponera and Lorenzo Benavides incite Dionisio to be their partner of fraudulent fights. Deception in winning and losing, paired with surplus wealth and poverty, is the formula of how land is made off in Rulfian narrative, like in *Pedro Páramo*, where Pedro amasses a surplus of land at the cost of deception and a ruthless sense of ambition.

The abundance and surplus in *las fiestas* of San Miguel del Milagro brings in its gamble’s wealth to Dionisio. By way of a half dead rooster with a broken wing like himself, Dionisio starts his fortune. Like the rooster, life for Dionisio had played him rough—having a handicapped arm— and he could only languish in his misery serving as San Miguel del Milagro’s pregonero (crier).

—¡Se hizo chica la pelea! ¡Pierde la grande! —y enseguida añadió—:
¡Aaa-bran las puertas...!...El de Chihuahua rio burlonamente y le arrojó el
gallo a Dionisio Pinsón como quien se desprende de un trapo sucio...Al
llegar a su casa hizo un agujero debajo del tejaván y, auxiliado por su
madre enterró allí al gallo, dejándole sólo la cabeza de fuera (89-90).

A half-buried rooster is the only hope in life for Dionisio. This gilded colored fighting rooster is a miraculous realization of Dionisio's opportunities beyond the low paying job of *gritón*. In the warmth of the soil, Dionisio and his mother put to rest and mature the last of their hopes. And as the rooster improves in health, her withers. As the narrator says, "Muchos años de privaciones; días enteros de hambre y ninguna esperanza la mataron más pronto" (91). Her death leaves Dionisio unable to lose anything more as even his girlfriend runs away with another man during those days. To make things worse Dionisio is given the *coup du grâce* after losing his mother when he is made to announce the ordeal and details of who he wanted to be his wife "—Tomasa Leñero...se huyó al parecer el día 24 de los que corren al parecer con Miguel Tiscareño" (91). Being too poor to change these occurrences, Dionisio wishes to reformulate his life, even if it is too late to do anything. The ideas of usefulness and useless in the novel propose the utility of things is dependent on worth. El gallo de oro, Dionisio, and his mother in the novel seem to have passed their usefulness, yet the utility they have for another wise worthless rooster is paramount. The gallo de oro for a damaged Dionisio and his mother brings a ray of hope and utility for their otherwise forgotten and useless life in poverty.

As we see at the end of the novel, not even the vast accumulation of wealth and land is sufficient to give Dionisio a name nor the prestige that comes with land and “old money” in the plain of the Mexican *fiestas* in San Marcos, San Juan del Rio, Zacatecas, San Miguel del Milagro and Santa Gertrudis. Alone and with nothing else than a broken rooster, Dionisio futilely aims to amass a fortune and that at the end of his life he losses. Dioniso amasses a formidable fortune, but it is not without deception and never wholly his. Dionisio’s wins yield only sorrows and a bitter harvest at the end of his life. His wife would not be decent, and he would always be unable to share any of his earnings with his mother. The final wins of Dionisio—Santa Gertrudis, money and other properties—are only surplus earnings in the context of the Mexican hacienda. Dionisio’s earnings, although not bad gambles in life, do not amount to more than gambles. In the instance of Mexican society and the hacienda Dionissio carries the badge of just another gambler as his gambles never add up to the means of producing more, like the grand haciendas. At the end of his life Dionisio loses more than what he started off with as Dionisio losses touch with his humble beginnings and is never fully accepted into a land centered society.

In *El gallo de oro* the ambition for land and money is the same This ambition is one that can smell money from afar like the *cantadoras* (singers) that arrive to San Miguel del Milagro, lured by the smell of money and the fame of important gamblers:

jugadores famosos venidos desde San Marcos (Aguascalientes),
Teocaltiche, Arandas, Chalchicomula, Zacatecas, todos portando gallos
tan finos que daban pena verlos morir. Y venidas quién sabe de dónde
hicieron si aparición las cantadoras, tal vez atraídas por el olor al dinero,

pues antes ni por asomo se habían acercado a San Miguel del Milagro. Al frente de ellas venía una mujer bonita, bragada, con un rebozo ametalado sobre el pecho y a que llamaban La Caponera, quizá por el arrastre que tenía con los hombres. La verdad es que, rodeadas de un mariachi, hicieron con su presencia y sus canciones que creciera más el entusiasmo de la plaza de gallos (87).

The ambition of characters like La Caponera reflect a yearning for land that goes beyond the folkloric conceptions of traditions. Through La Caponera it is evident that the tenure of land is above societal norms. La Caponera in her folkloric dress, *rebozo*, is not stopped from going against the morals of San Miguel del Milagro in her search for money. Her popularity among men and folk excess encourage enthusiasm among the *peleas de gallos*. The excesses of La Caponera represent the bohemian performance that encourages the “spill” of surplus for characters that lack *tierra* like herself. The allure and excess of La Caponera could be considered to be a (kitsch) conception of a bad taste and lack of refinement. Although not stated or implied, la Caponera’s dress and excess only seem to appeal to the masses—never taken seriously by important men like Lorenzo Benavides.

Besides her colorful nature and doubtful reputation, La Caponera holds an important influence over Lorenzo Benavides and Dionisio even though her ambition and desire are not sophisticated. In her affairs with both men, La Caponera lives from the surplus of their *juegos* gambles and her singing, gambling alongside her lovers in the

fiestas. And in the end la Caponera is the nexus between the gambling deals of Lorenzo Benavides and Dionisio.

Cutiño daba buena cuenta de las cervezas ...Así cuando intervino en la plática, su voz tartamudeaba:

—Lorenzo—dijo, déjame a mí explicarle aquí al amigo de que se trata. Tú como siempre te vuelves un puro hable y hable y nunca acabas.

—Di, pues.

—Lorenzo quiere que te combines con él por el resto de la temporada. Tú registrarías sus gallos a tu nombre y le servirás de soltador. El trato está en que te acomodes a lo que él diga. Como ves, se trata de meter viruta: que hay que quebrarle las costillas al animal antes de soltarlo, pues a quebrárselas... Son cosas que todos hacen, así que no te pide nada del otro mundo (111).

Aside from her dubious drinking character, La Caponera is more than an example of a kitsch character distinguished by her bad taste and popular appeal given her dress and excessive *cuentas*, she is capable of having a conscience and out of the three she is the only one that dares to plan her future.⁶⁴

La Caponera is a woman of scruples. She not only uses her excessive beauty to seal different business and to also demand power—freedom—from Benavides. It is her way of persuading him and others and of seeing the ordeals and way of seeing the ordeals

⁶⁴ According to Pierre Bourdieu in *La distinción: criterios y bases sociales del gusto*, esthetic disposition and the manifestation of class conditioning and existence (preformance) result in an objective distinction of the individual (53).

of gamble that incite Dionisio into their attempts of coordinating a big win, swigging the bets in their favor. La Caponera is not just a pretty face in the romantic sense of literature, she is woman capable of anything, not easily scared by the tricks of the trade of gambling. In the context of Mexican literature, the representation of La Caponera is an embodiment of the stereotypical Mexican woman. La Caponera is the siren of Mexican literature in which her voice can be said to lure men to give her money and to follow a life headed towards impending doom.

Dionisio Pinzón hizo el intento de levantarse y dejar que aquella mujer siguiera hablando sola, pues claramente veía que se le habían subido las cervezas y que eso la animaba a decir aquellas frases duras, casi ofensivas. Pero ella lo detuvo del brazo y lo obligó a sentarse, cambiando la expresión de cara y sonriéndole con los ojos:

—Déjame terminar —le dijo—. Estábamos en que por aquí pocos te conocen y ni siquiera te toman en cuenta. Eso te sirve de mucho. El asunto es que sueltes los gallos de Lorenzo como si fueran tuyos para desorientar a los apostadores. ¿Entiendes, verdad?... No, me entiendes (111-112).

La Caponera and her excessive drinking demoralize her character but also burry her deeper in a bohemian style of life. La Caponera's understanding of excess and her desire of winning condition in her the ability to go with the flow and get out of difficult situations. Her smiling eyes are the personification of charm and versatility regardless of the situation.

The consolidation of Dionisio, Lorenzo, and la Caponera's venture is the result of the many facets of charm and mystique of La Caponera. As explained by her earlier, the ordeal of winning big is the result of the effort of the three. Their win at Aguascalientes (the biggest and most important fair in Mexico) is representative of winning big at a place of ceremonial surplus. More than a win, winning in San Marcos represents a victory, as only true legends and grand players win in Mexico's biggest fair.

El quinto día, y último día del compromiso, convirtió el palenque en un desplumadero al ganar la grande con un gallo ciego, pero que asestaba golpes precisamente como un palo de ciego a un gallo pesado y correlón que ostentaba el pomposo nombre de Santa Gertrudis. Las apuestas en contra del ciego bajaron de mil a setecientos y más tarde de varios miles contra un mil...Algunos que la habían visto segura, apostaron hasta la cobija y de haber traído consigo a la mujer la hubieran casado contra el ciego (113).

With a blind rooster, Dionisio, La Caponera, and Benavides sway more than the odds in their favor—more than triple. Each carrying out a different role in the *palenque* (manning, signing, and betting) they manage to heist the fight exponentially increasing the odds and the number of bets.

After the win of the blind rooster, deceiving the *palenque*, they become rich beyond their hopes. Yet the yearning for wealth and surplus is only encouraged by their big win, as Benavides takes the biggest cut. Dionisio, more than La Caponera and Benavides, sees in this new ordeal a way to attain wealth. Dionisio uses the cool off

period of the win in San Marcos to learn from Benavides how to be a cheating—blackleg—gambler.

Poco más tarde, acompañado de Lorenzo Benavides, quien lo había invitado a su casa de Santa Gertrudis a pasar unos días...Aprendió, primero viendo, y más tarde participando en la partida, a jugar Paco Grande, un juego de cartas un poco complicado, pero entretenido, y que los distrajo del aburrimiento en aquel sitio tan aislado y solitario (114).

In Santa Gertrudis, Dionisio finds an endless world of opportunities in the deck of cards. As way of complementing roosters, playing cards adds an important component to his ambition of accumulating wealth. The “retreat” to Santa Gertrudis is a classical way in literature to signal a locus amoenus where time stops. From *el Decameron* onwards, this happens. An Idyllic setting retreat is relevant in that Dionisio makes “profit” out of “idleness” (aburrimiento) and tries to “make use” of killing time (tiempo muerto). And instead of productivity, their new fortune brings forth an idle existence of vice and perversity in a plot in the outskirts of the town.

Dionisio Pinzón era hábil y asimilaba fácilmente cualquier juego, lo que más tarde utilizó para sus fines: acumular una inmensa riqueza. Pero por entonces seguía gustando más de los gallos, esos animalitos sedosos, suaves, con un color vivo y de los que pronto contó con una buena partida. Pronto dejó de ser aquel hombre humilde que conocimos en San Miguel del Milagro y aquel principio, teniendo como fortuna un único gallo...se fue alterando ante la pelea violenta de los gallos, como si el espeso y

enrojecido líquido de aquellos animales agonizantes lo volviera de piedra, convirtiéndolo en un hombre fríamente calculador, seguro y confiado en el destino de su suerte (114-5).

The desire of amassing immense wealth transforms Dionisio's character. It is as if wealth encompasses more than clout and power as Dionisio yearns for more and more wealth and he is unable to live a worthy life. Dionisio loses his senses as his ambition turns him into a cold-blooded unscrupulous man. San Miguel del Milagro represents a plot decadence, where Dionisio only returns to lay his mother to rest rightly a year after of burying her very poorly in manner that lacked all sufficiency. As a well-off man and free from the dealings he incurred with Benavides, Dionisio sets his eyes on accumulating more wealth, parting his humble upbringing. The ambience of gambling and the blood of the many roosters that Dionisio sees die, transform him into a cold blooded and scrupulous man. Furthermore, the plural from the narrator, functions as an ironic remark. This omnipresent narrative gives the complex and objective form of language to the story and the voice and actions of the characters.

Upon his return to San Miguel del Milagro, the town he left hating, we find that Dionisio is a rich man. His outlook on life and people seem to revolve around ambitioning wealth and nothing else. As part of the Rulfian narrative, Dionisio is a character that experiments hate, desire, and misfortune. Dionisio in this instance embodies the contradictory process of the hatred of poorness after becoming wealthy. Dionisio is a Rulfian character that from poverty raises becomes a cacique, hated by

many and understood by few. And of those few Secundino Colmenero becomes his right hand—his trusted “Fulgor,” his confidant.

El tal Colmenero, aunque lamentado dejar su casa y las pocas pertenencias que le quedaban, optó al fin por irse con Dionisio Pinzón... Así pues, los dos abandonaron San Miguel del Milagro. El pueblo todavía estaba de fiesta, de manera que entre repicar de campanas y calles adornadas con festones los dos marcharon hacia la ausencia, llevando por delante la extraña figura que, como cruz, formaba el ataúd y el animal que lo cargaba (116-7).

Along with Colmenero, and still caring the baggage of his past—and omen of his future futilely carrying a coffin—Dinisio embarks in a journey in search of wealth that ultimately takes him once again to La Caponera. This time for good, they reencounter in Cuquío and formally begin a life together married and in search of wealth. Land in this instance seems to remain as elusive as their hopes of wealth beyond its endless pursuit:

El que ella y él se hubieran unido para lidiar en el difícil mundo de las ferias se había decidido meses atrás, cuando se volvieron a encontrar en un sitio llamado Cuquío... Cuquío era un lugar pequeño, pero plagado de tahúres, fulleros, galleros, y gente que se vivía ahorrando su dinerito todo el año para irlo a tirar a las patas de un animal o a los palos de una baraja señalada. Tenía fama ese pueblo para el despilfarro que aparte del sitio oficial dedicado a las partidas se jugaba Brisca, Conquián, Siete y Medio y

Paco...Fue pues en este pueblo y dentro de este ambiente donde volvieron a encontrarse Dionisio Pinzón y La Caponera (117-8).

The ambiance of Cuquío is not far from the Rulfian land narrative of Comala. Yet Cuquío highlights the sense of land “surplus” of players, gambling, and debauchery that goes beyond the moral compass of towns in the general context of Mexico. The narrator describes Cuquío as place of *despilfarro* beyond measure and goes beyond the premise that all year long people save money to “despilfarrarlo” throw away (spill) during the *fiestas*. In this context Cuquío is the model of town in where Dionisio and La Caponera seek to accumulate wealth in a setting where wining seems bleak (nonexistent), and loosing is a way of life. Cuquío in these instances of excess that comes from the unproductive gambling is different from Comala, which is ultimately marked by the “lack” or absence of surplus.

In the instance that Benavides does not give water to their thirst for surplus, la Caponera and Dionisio restart their plot after they both part ways from Benavides. They betray Benavides as they begin their life together once again:

Dionisio Pinzón esperó a que terminara y luego se acercó hasta ella para saludarla. Les dio gusto volverse a ver; tanto, que ella le tendió cariñosamente los brazos y él la retuvo un buen rato entre los suyos. —¡De que el temporal es bueno, hasta los troncones retoñan! —Le dijo ella. Y añadió—: Creí que ya no te volvería ver gallero...—Bien decía yo que estabas picado de araña...Invítame un trago, pues aquí no le dan agua ni al gallo de la pasión (118).

Although being solvent in terms of wealth after their triumph in San Marcos Aguascalientes, Dionisio and la Caponera still pursue the difficult path of gambling where nothing is given. Both recognize each other as what they have become: la Caponera a *cantadora* and Dionisio a *gallero*. In description of Cuquío as difficult plain of low morals and prestige both reach out to the other as a gesture of honesty and their own likeliness as both own little and are nothing but two feathers floating in the chaos of *fiestas* and gamble—as their solitude is best described. As a way of life “estar picado de araña” in a sense reiterates the notion that Dionisio is destined to that life, bitten perhaps by the lure of La Caponera or his own ambition. The certainty with which La Caponera employs her knowledge of the future is almost a window into the plausible narrative that later in the novel describes her as a witch. La Caponera is described as spider, whose sting and web capture Dionisio forever.

Not having anything to her name in terms of property ultimately allowed la Caponera to abandon Benavides. Taking with her only her best attributes la Caponera ventures with Dionisio—singing along with her intellect—is all that la Caponera takes to forge a misunderstood life relegated to Dionisio. Evident in the plot of La Caponera is that her story is more complex than that of Dionisio. Her resilience in front of the crudeness of her destiny is comforting and evident as she talks about her past with Dionisio.

—Pos yo acabo de dejar la casa de Lorenzo Benavides. Él no quiso venir...

—Y a propósito, Bernarda, ¿qué eres tú de Lorenzo Benavides?

—No he de ser su mamá, ¿verdad?...

Guardaron silencio un rato. Por la cara de ella se dejó resbalar una lágrima, redonda, brillante como los ojos de donde había salido, como una cuenta más de vidrio de las traía enrolladas en el cuello.

—No quise ofenderte, Bernarda.

—¿Acaso me ves ofendida? Me siento triste, que es otra cosa —dijo limpiando con el dorso de la mano su mano su lágrima y otra más que empezaba a brotar.

—¿Lo querías?

—Él era el que me quería. Pero trataba de amarrarme. De encerrarme en su casa. Nadie puede hacerme eso a mí... Simplemente no puedo. ¿Para qué? ¿Para pudrirme en vida?

—Tal vez te hubiera convenido. Su casa es enorme.

—Sí, pero tiene paredes (119).

Paired with her beauty, la Caponera's strength is evident as she only sheds a single beautiful tear to the memory of being Benavides' lover. And her honesty in that instance goes against the grain of morality with unexplained lure and wit. The voice of La Caponera is that unstoppable gush of passion that in each song expresses the happiness of her sorrow. La Caponera embodies a tragic and luring siren as she tries to remain moral in the context of society. Listening to her, Dionisio relinches that he is not cut out for her, as la Caponera seemed too beautiful for him. La Caponera represents a woman that is more beautiful as well as indecent than another woman. Compared with the others in the

novel, *la Caponera* is a resilient representation of blemished beauty, casted aside for not being inform to others.

Éste la miraba fijamente, con humildad, mientras ella acariciaba sus propios brazos con sus manos repletas de pulseras. Al mismo tiempo que Dionisio la veía sentía que era demasiado hermosa para él; que era de esas cosas que están muy lejos de uno para amarlas. Así, su mirada se fue tornando de la pura obsesión al puro deseo, como si fuera lo único que estuviera a su alcance: poderla ver y saborear a su antojo (121).

Dionisio is obsessed with *La Caponera*, and in his desire of wealth, he sees her like a possession or “thing” (“esas cosas”). She is precious yearning and at hands reach. Her beauty and popularity fuel Dionisio’s desire and for *la Caponera*. Their relation takes place in the context of wealth and beauty, and it means an improvement—upper mobility—for Dionisio and he expresses could have not even dreamed of marrying that kind of woman. Dionisio can be said to have married up as he was considerably below *la Caponera*. Dionisio’s ambitions and longing for wealth ultimately nevertheless complement *la Caponera*, whom he sees as his lucky star.

—No sabes cuánto me gustaría que me me acompañaras a los gallos.

Tú eres mi piedra imán para la buena suerte.

—Eso ya me lo han dicho muchos. Entre otros Lorenzo Benavides. Algo he de tener, porque el que está conmigo nunca pierde.

—No lo dudo. Yo mismo lo he comprobado.

—Sí. Todos se han servido de mí. Y después...

Volvió a empinarse otro trago de mezcal, mientras oía que Dionisio

Pinzón le decía:

—Yo nunca te abandonaré, Bernarda.

—Lo sé —contestó ella (121-2).

Although La Caponera does not love Dionisio, she accepts a marriage of convenience in which it seems that she will have the upper hand. Her assurance in maintaining her freedom apart from Dionisio, give La Caponera an air of having bewitched him or being behind the wins of Dionisio. La Caponera seems to be a mysterious enigma that makes others lucky—a lucky charm.

Parecía como si la unión de él con La Caponera le hubiera afirmado la suerte y crecido los ánimos, pues siempre se le veía seguro en el juego, tal como si conociera de antemano el resultado...Se casó con La Caponera una mañana cualquiera, en un pueblo cualquiera, ligando así su promesa de no separarse de ella jamás nunca...Pueblos, ciudades, rancherías, todo lo recorrieron. Ella por su propio gusto. Él, impulsado por la ambición; por un afán ilimitado de acumular riqueza (123).

Dionisio and La Caponera, complement each other's ambitions. Their relation is one of earnings and freedom not leaving room for love in the romantic sense. They go around towns and cities like Cuquío, both separated and together, joined by their separate desires. La Caponera and Dionisio do not need each other after years of marriage, "a no ser por su hija, ni siquiera se acordaría de Dionisio Pinzón" (129). Here the quality of the "generic" is important. The quote says: "cualquiera", then "todo lo recorrieron" to reflect

the temporal sequences of the narrative: the ambition that is endless. Noting the words: “jamás nunca”, “seguro”, “todo”, “ilimitado”.

Aside from their daughter and ambitions, the only other thing that unites Dionisio and la Caponera is their old friend Lorenzo Benavides. Their relation was amoral in the sense that Lorenzo Benavides was La Caponera’s lover and also the benefactor of Dinisio. Lorenzo Benavides was also the only one the three to have a part in society and a moral to uphold, in the sense he had a rich home and appearances to keep. Dionisio, given his past as a poor man, had been a no-one in the world of *palenques* and *ferias*. La Caponera, given her loose morale, did not have a space in the plot of Benavides, as la Caponera grew unhappy inside the walls of decency.

Dionisio and La Caponera’s visit to Lorenzo in his grand estate of Santa Gertrudis is the apotheosis of *El gallo de oro*. During that visit, Dionisio and la Caponera win more than in San Marcos. They see their ambitions fulfilled in winning a new decent life by way of Santa Gertrudis, a property in which they could really hope for a decent life. The land and house of Santa Gertrudis give Dionisio and la Caponera an important place in society and the regional conceptions of what it means to be wealthy:

Un día, pasado el tiempo, Dionisio Pinzón decidió visitar a su viejo amigo Lorenzo Benavides... Llegaron una tarde a Santa Gertrudis y ya para entonces los acompañaba su hija... Benavides montado en una silla de ruedas, viejo y desgastado. A pesar de todo, los recibió con grandes muestras de regocijo...

—Sé que les ha ido bien —dijo a Dionisio Pinzón—. Y me alegro de verlos. Espero que no les aburra mi triste compañía los días que dure su visita.

—Nos vamos enseguida —contestó la Caponera—. Vamos de paso y solo nos detuvimos a saludarte.

—Sí, don Lorenzo —dijo el Pinzón—. Le debíamos esta visita como otras muchas, pero usted sabe lo atareado que anda uno cuando se tiene el mundo por casa... La cosa es que no tome el olvido como ingratitud...

—Lo que ustedes necesitan es sosegar... Ponerse tranquilos. Pues árbol que no enraíza no crece... En cuanto a casa, les ofrezco la mía por ahora y por siempre...

—¡Entonces quédense hasta mañana! Me servirá de distracción jugar una partida esta noche (123-4).

During their visit to Santa Gertrudis Dionisio and La Caponera enter with nothing more than their dreams and their young daughter, and leave as the owners of Santa Gertrudis, as rich as they could have never imagined. La Caponera maintains a cordial but informal tone with Lorenzo, while Dionisio uses a formal and rather respectful tone during their conversation. The game of cards is proposed by Lorenzo himself stating that “árbol que no enraíza no crece...En cuanto a casa, les ofrezco la mía...quédense hasta mañana! Me servirá de distracción jugar” his tone is that of loneliness and a prime time that has passed, leaving him idle. In the golden years of his life, Benavides suffers wanting to fill his home again. In the context of discussing Benavides offer in terms of economy, this is

important solely because it is an offer and a gamble on both parts. Benavides offer to Dinisio and la Caponera to take root offers them a chance to grow economically.

After having lost everything to Dionisio and La Caponera sitting in a sofa next to the gambling table, he leaves in peace, but not without slapping La Caponera and belittling her:

Al caer la décima carta apareció el seis. Un solo seis de oros.

—Es tuya la casa —dijo secamente Lorenzo Benavides.

—Le doy la revancha, don Lorenzo... Usted escoja carta.

—¿Revancha contra qué? ¿Contra mí mismo?...

—Es que no voy a aceptarle su casa. Esto usted lo sabe... Creí que solo jugábamos por divertirnos... Además, puedo decir que a usted le debo lo que tengo.

—¿Divertirnos? Si tú hubieras perdido verías la clase de diversión que yo te daría... No, Pinzón. Ni mi padre me llegó a perdonar nunca una deuda de juego... Y en cuanto a que a mí me debes todo lo que eres, estás equivocado. Mira...

Se acercó con su silla de ruedas hasta donde estaba Bernarda Cutiño, quien lo miraba interrogante, dibujando en sus labios una sonrisa; pero inesperadamente tremenda bofetada que le lanzó furioso Lorenzo Benavides le apagó la sonrisa y le hizo dar un sobresalto, mientras gritaba en su cara:

—... ¡Es a esta inmunda bruja a quien le debes todo!

Después de esto...se alejó (126).

Although Dinisio intends to forgive Benavides' loss and does not intend to accept his home of Santa Gertrudis as payment, Lorenzo demands to uphold his honor, stating that not even his father would forgive him his gambling losses. The smile and happiness of La Caponera is erased by Benavides—as he states that la Caponera is a witch that did him wrong once and again. The excess of luck of la Caponera is understood by Benavides to be the cause of supernatural beliefs.

Like other Rulfian narratives, time shifts many years forward, and the setting and plot remain the same as if time had not passed. Time in this context passes faster than what traditional critics of Rulfo—like Yvette Jiménez Báez and George D. Schade—propose. Many years fall atop Dionisio and La Caponera in an instant, like in *Pedro Páramo* Comala's priest recalls the passage of many years. In *El gallo de oro* the years find Dionisio and La Caponera in the same home of Santa Gertrudis, still gambling just like they had with Lorenzo years before:

El tiempo dejó pasar sus años. Era la misma casa de Santa Gertrudis...Se jugaba Paco Grande. Las ocho barajas eran revueltas, cortadas y vueltas a cortar hasta que comenzaba el reparto. Un poco atrás de él estaba La Caponera, como si tampoco se hubiera movido de su sitio. Sentada en el mismo sillón...Aunque ahora llevara en el cuello un collar de perlas a cambio de cuentas de colores, que destacaba sobre el fondo negro del vestido y sus manos estuvieran erizadas de brillantes, no estaba conforme. Nunca estuvo. Eran frecuentes las discusiones entre ella y su marido.

Alegatos agrios, amagos, en que ella le echaba en cara la esclavitud en que vivía obligada por él (126-127).

Unlike Dionisio, La Caponera hated the boundaries and routine of Santa Gertrudis. That domain and range was not enough for her, although Santa Gertrudis signified stability and a name. La Caponera had no loggings in real estate, or the limits of society, she wanted the life of an *artiste* that sang and was free choose her destiny. Her new jewels and brilliants did not tie her to Dionisio, nor convinced her of staying. Once again in their life they go on one last indefinite caravan of singing and gambling.

—Ya sabes que nací para andar de andariega. Y sólo me apaciguaré el día que me echen tierra encima...

—Sí. A eso me atengo. ¡Vamos!

De ese modo Dionisio Pinzón volvió a peregrinar por los pueblos en compañía de La Caponera. Ella consiguiendo canciones, aquí y allá, seguida por sus muchachos del mariachi. Él, pasando del palenque a la partida y de la partida al palenque, en procura de enderezar sus ganancias perdidas. De vez en cuando reconocían a Santa Gertrudis, pero duraban allí a lo sumo una a dos semanas, para luego volver a emprender camino (130).

Freedom and the occasional rest at Santa Gertrudis fitted them well. Their range and domain expanded by having a home from where to travel and to go back to. Both of them saw their ambitions flourish, Dionisio in search of amassing more money and la

Caponera in her own hopes of singing and a bohemian life of debauchery. Both la Caponera and Dionisio have parallel desires that ultimately encounter to complement one another.

Excess and the passage of time abruptly ended la Caponera's gamble—her only ambition withers away as does her voice. Years of singing and drinking left her sorrows and relying on Dionisio on his own terms: “hasta que llegó el día funesto para ella. Los muchachos del mariachi la dejaron. No iba bien el negocio. La Caponera bebía mucho y tenía la voz cansada, casi ronca y pocos se entusiasaban con oírla...Entonces fue cuando Dionisio Pinzón impuso sus condiciones. Por principio de cuentas se encerraron en Santa Gertrudis (130-1). Dionisio trapped her in Santa Gertrudis for good. Their last gambling tour ended with the loss of the once gushing voice of la Caponera. Resolute about not leaving their Santa Gertrudis estate, La Caponera languished obeying the orders of Dionisio, who with the years and with the deterioration of her voice, finally had the upper hand in their marriage. Dionisio would then earn the honorific title of *don*, that recognized his power, years, but most importantly his wealth:

Tenía nuevamente dinero y convirtió aquella casa en centro de reunión de jugadores empedernidos de Malilla, Siete y Medio y Paco Grande. Noche a noche la casa parecía despierta, encendidas sus luces...Don Dionisio, como ahora le nombraban, tenía para sus invitados todas las comodidades. los mejores vinos, y la mejor cocina, de manera que nadie necesitaba abandonar Santa Gertrudis en varios días (131).

With La Caponera by his side, Dionisio turned the grandness of Santa Gertrudis into an unconventional gambling house, a kind of grand casino with the best wine and food. It is

evident that by then he had accumulated a grand fortune that allowed him to gather even more wealth, luring players to lose “with style”:

Pero el más aprovechado de esta situación era él, pues fastidiado de recorrer el mundo el mundo en persecución del dinero allí le caía a manos llenas sin tener que salir a buscarlo... pronto se adueñó de varias propiedades ganadas a las tretas del juego y que ni cuidado ni ganas tenía de administrar, conformándose con lo que buenamente le pasaban sus arrendatarios, que era bastante (131).

The luck of La Caponera paired with the oversight and pretension of Dionisio accumulate more and more wealth. Their assets and properties add up to dismissal as la Caponera barely lives in anguish by the solitude and silence of gambling while the ambition of Dionisio does not allow him to enjoy all his possessions. Properties and assets add up like grains in a cellar but bring them only remorse for letting their only daughter that they had neglected grow wild like a weed.

The unhappiness of la Caponera, is evident during the last years of her life when her vices and alcoholism end her life tragically. Although she is not even the shadow of her young self, la Caponera continues to be a magnet of fortune for Dionisio until the day of her death. But La Caponera dies haunted by remorse and failure: “Pero nunca más llegó a consolarse. Se sentía culpable y atormentada por el futuro de su hija. Esto hizo que se le amargara más la existencia. Y siguió bebiendo. Embriagándose hasta la locura. Murió una noche sola, sentada en el sillón de siempre... del ahogo que la llevó a la muerte, provocada por el alcohol” (136). The features of time in description of la

Caponera's thoughts are evident in "de siempre", "un anoche" "siguió bebiendo" as a continuum that is only broken by death and excess—the excess of alcohol, a kind of surplus as well, a way of gambling with life. Her plans of raising her daughter as herself backfire as la Pinzona follows too close and becomes a seductress and ultimately a man-eater. The loose morals of her daughter paired with the demands of Dionisio, and her ruffled voice leave la Caponera with nothing but alcohol. In their mature age the tragic turn of events is rather unexpected for a family that could be said to have had everything, except that they were too busy with their own ambitions to look after each other.

The end of *El gallo de oro* brings some kind of atonement for the actions of La Caponera, yet Dionisio is left unable to bear any assimilation to a life without La Caponera or without the formidable fortune they had made over their years of marriage and joint ambition. At the end Dionisio loses everything the night la Caponera dies.

Muy cerca del amanecer cesó la lluvia. Lo anunciaron el canto de los gallos y el croar de las ranas en los anegados campos...Dionisio Pinzón seguía jugando con su calma habitual, a pesar de que aquellos dos hermanos Arriaga se habían confabulado para derrotarlo. Su rostro, tenso por el esfuerzo para conservar la serenidad, no reflejaba ni temor ni júbilo. Parecía de piedra. Al fin, uno de los abogados tiró sus cartas para indicar que se retiraba. y se retiró. El pinzón calculó que el otro lo haría en la próxima mano y que por esta vez ya había terminado la partida...por eso ni siquiera le importó reclamar cuando vio al dicho abogado, su único

contrincante, hacer una maniobra sucia al tallar las cartas. Y no sólo eso, sino que le dejó ganar el punto (138).

Sitting at the gambling table like always, Dionisio does not realize the moment at which la Caponera dies. His luck dies with her, adding to the folkloric conception that la Caponera was a witch more than a pretty face. When la Caponera was still alive, the tahures would not have beat Dionisio even if they were cheating. Dionisio's losses begin at the moment la Caponera dies, close to when he guessed the last game of the night is about to wrap in his favor. At that moment in time, Dionisio is able to see his opponent cheat openly, which would have ended the game in his favor if he had said anything. Yet Dionisio and the luck that La Caponera's last breaths would bring him reassurance that he can win taking it for granted. Rulfian narrative insists on the idea that luck is necessary to make fortune. Through *El gallo de oro* Rulfo associates instances of fortune with luck, a repetitive theme in the novel, from gambling to everyday instances of luck in the lives of Dionisio and la Caponera. And at the end of the novel la Caponera takes with her the earnings she had given Dionisio:

De pronto sintió que perdía...Fue entonces cuando oyó una risa de muchacha. Era una risa sonora, alegre, que parecía querer taladrar la noche...

—Ha de ser mi hija...—dijo como respondiendo a alguna pregunta. Pero al parecer ninguno de los dos hermanos Arriaga le había preguntado nada.

El que jugaba con él lo miró fijamente:

—Usted habla, don Dionisio —le dijo (139).

The laughter of la Caponera is all that Dionisio thinks he heard when he began losing the game. Seeing the silhouette of La Caponera (already dead) from his seat reassures him that he will win. Yet that initial whaling of defeat and death bring forth the end of Santa Gertrudis and its two lovers and inhabitants:

De algún lugar de la casa surgió con voz lejana el comienzo de una canción... Y, como una réplica, oyó la misma canción en la voz ardiente de La Caponera, allá brotando del templete de una plaza de gallos, mientras veía muerto, revolcándose en el suelo, un gallo dorado, tornasol... Allí estaba su madre ayudándolo a hacer un agujero en la tierra, mientras él, en cuclillas, procuraba revivir, soplándole en el pico, el cuerpo ensangrentado de un gallo medio muerto. Sacudió la cabeza para espantar aquellos pensamientos...

—¿Qué? —preguntó otra vez.

—Que sí tiene usted con que ir...

—Va.

Volvió a perder (139-41).

Similar in style to other Rulfian narratives, Dionisio's flashbacks to his past and images of an almost idealist past are mixed with the narrative in present tense. Dionisio's mother helping him dig a hole in the *tierra* to heal his gallo de oro is confused with the dialogue he has with his opponent at the game. In a rapid manner all his wins abandon him and Dionisio begins to give away his wealth, not even stopping to think he is losing handfuls of money and property titles.

Fue a la caja fuerte y regresó con todo lo que allí había, desde dinero en efectivo hasta papeles que representaban escrituras de sus propiedades. Pagó el monto de lo que perdió. Tomó las cartas; barajó y luego repartió... Volvía a jugar y volvía a perder. No quería apartarse un momento de la baraja, la cual ponía debajo del codo en cuanto acababa de repartir las cartas.

—No puedo perder —decía—...

Dejó caer tres y tomó otras tres, pero ni siquiera las cotejó. Su contrincante le exhibía ya su juego, contra el que no tenía nada. Ni el par del honor (143).

When Dionisio decides to check on La Caponera, he losses everything, including La Caponera. La Caponera is by then dead, and Dionisio cannot help himself feel even more sorrow for La Caponera than for all that he had lived to ambition and lost that night.

Her death was a foul play in life as La Caponera was the entire surplus that Dionisio had hoped for. The moment in which he realizes she is dead, Dionisio calls and calls upon the inherent dead body of La Caponera.

—¡Bernarda! —llamó—. ¡Bernarda! ¡Despierta, Bernarda! ¡Lo hemos perdido todo! ¿Me oyes?

Fue hasta donde estaba su mujer. La sacudió por los hombros:

—¿Me oyes, Bernarda? ¡Lo hemos perdido todo! ¡Hasta esto!

Y arrancó de un fuerte tirón el collar de perlas que Bernarda Cutiño tenía en el cuello, haciendo que se desgranara y rodaran las cuentas por el suelo.

Todavía gritó: ¡Despierta ya, Bernarda!...Entonces se notó el extravío de aquel hombre, que seguía sacudiendo a su mujer y reclamándole:

—¿Por qué no me avisaste que estabas muerta, Bernarda? (143).

Dionisio loses everything, except his cold blood. In a cowardly act he takes his life, as he cannot bear to see all his fortune and land lost to the spoils of gamble. Also, her necklace, what had been the sign of wealth and excess—the jewelry that la Caponera used to have—is now “spilled” or “desgranado”. Just as her life and their fortune.

A los gritos acudió su hija, Bernarda La Pinzona. Y sólo al ver a ésta Dionisio Pinzón pareció calmarse:

—Ven a despedirte de tu madre...

En tanto, Dionisio se encaró con quien le había ganado esa noche todo cuanto tenía.

—En ese cuarto tengo guardado un ataúd —dijo señalando una pequeña puerta de un lado de la sala—. Eso no entró en el juego... Todo, menos el ataúd. Enseguida abandonó la sala. Se oyeron por un rato sus pasos al recorrer el largo corredor de aquel caserón. Después sonó un disparo (143).

In *El gallo de oro*, it is not explained for whom of the two Dionisio wanted the luxurious and ostentatious coffin, decorated in velvet and pure silver, but he ends up being buried in it. In the cemetery of Santa Gertrudis and covered by its *tierra*, Dionisio's rests in a wealthy coffin and La Caponera in a cheap crate, and they are buried side by side, just as they had lived. Their lives and ambition do not transcend the wealth they accumulated,

and they take nothing with them. Their funeral is so sad and poor that only their burial is their daughter La Pinzona and their loyal Colmenero attend:

Esa misma tarde los enterraron en el pequeño camposanto de Santa Gertrudis. A ella en un cajón negro, de madera corriente, hecho a prisa. A él en el féretro gris con molduras de plata...Solo dos personas acompañaron a los cadáveres al campo santo. Secundino Colmenero y Bernarda Pinzón. De los invitados, que habían vivido y convivido muchas veces en Santa Gertrudis, ninguno se presentó, y los que allí estaban se fueron sin despedirse, como si tuvieran miedo de hacerse solidarios de aquella doble muerte. Hasta los enterradores, luego que terminaron su maniobra, desaparecieron por diversos caminos (143-4).

In their life of amassing a formidable fortune many were the people that filled the *palenques* to see Dionisio and La Caponera, and another good number frequented Santa Gertrudis, but none of them attend their funeral. And having lost everything, meant that no one would attend their burial—there was no “interest” anymore, both in the sense of debt and in the sense of convenience.

IV. Conclusion

El gallo de oro, a surplus among the works of Juan Rulfo is influenced by the folk traditions of land, and it is a reading of the bohemian excesses in which land as property determines the value of the plot of characters. Land narrative is inherent of the surplus, wealth, and use of land in *El gallo de oro*. In his last completed novel, Rulfo entertains a thematic all about land and the conceptions of legacy, inheritance, value, and the cycle of

land and people. Within the cyclical story of men and land, *El gallo de oro*, is a testament of land narrative in contemporary Mexico. Having inherited nothing more than her voice as a bohemian way of earning a way of life, La Pinzona was the only surviving surplus in the life of La Caponera and Dionisio. When asked by Colmenero about her future, La Caponera and Dionisio's daughter told him that she had none except to follow in the footsteps of her mother going from place-to-place singing:

Pocos días después, aquella muchacha que había llegado a tenerlo todo y ahora no poseía sino su voz para sostenerse en la vida... Cantaba como comenzó a cantar su madre allá en sus primeros tiempos, echando fuera es sus canciones todo el sentimiento de su desamparo:

*Pavo real que eres correo
y que vas pa'l Real del Oro,
si te preguntan qué hago,
pavo real diles que lloro,
lagrimitas de sangre
por una mujer que adoro...*

—¡Cierren las puertas! —pregonó el gritón al dar comienzo la pelea (144).

Like her parents, she learned to gamble her livelihood, outside the norms of society. Outside of the exceptional and unconventional ways of amazing land's surplus, La Pinzona ventures into life. In this instance, la Pinzona is a vivid example of man's endless desire and search for land and wealth. Dionisio's fall from grace leaves la Pinzona with nothing—just an endless desire for things that once were part of her life.

Even though she lacks everything after the death of her parents, she follows in their footsteps in search of value, land, and wealth. The land narrative of *El gallo de oro*, is story of man's age long relation with land and its excesses, that is exemplified in the lands of Jalisco, the heart of Mexico, and their folklore. Tradition, songs, and narratives that germinate from the *tierras* of Mexico make up Rulfo's *El gallo de oro*. The varied forms of land narrative—proposed in Rulfo—make up an important celebration of Mexican rural existence and a the most admirable examples of twentieth century Mexican literature.

Conclusion

During the second half of the 20th century, Mexican literature proposes an understanding of life in Mexico through rural themes that oscillate between the present and life after the haciendas, but most importantly of the post-revolutionary land ideology of Mexico in its narrative. This dissertation analyzes a selection of mid-twentieth century Mexican novels that can be categorized as *nuevas novelas de la revolución*: Agustín Yáñez like *La tierra pródiga* (1960), Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), and *El gallo de oro* (1980), and Juan José Arreola's *La feria* (1963). These works were written after the so-called *novelas de la tierra* in Latin America,⁶⁵ published during the first half of the twentieth century.⁶⁶ I propose a new historical approach and methodology for reading the works of Yáñez, Arreola, and Rulfo, renowned *Jalisco* writers that offer a novel perspective of Jalisco and Mexico's land and history.

This study of land narrative ventures into the literary genres of narrative and the analysis of land through the lens of historical fiction and fictional chronicles. Through venturing beyond the classical critiques of Mexican narrative—into current studies of what I call land narrative this study explores new forms of research. This approach grasps beyond the traditional studies, into new social and cultural literary currents that make up

⁶⁵ For more on the canon and *novelas de la tierra* see Menton, Seymour. *Narrativa mexicana: desde Los de abajo hasta Noticias del imperio*.

⁶⁶ For comparison and contrast between *novela de la revolución* and similar contemporary Latin American novels such as that of Rómulo Gallegos' *Doña Barbara* (1929) see John S. Brushwood's *Mexico in Its Novel, A Nation's Search for Identity* (1966), in which he offers an analysis of "time and being" and what he calls a "real" Mexico. Brushwood and others base their critiques of these novels of the first half of the twentieth century, like the Mexican well-known novels of Agustín Yáñez such as *Al filo del agua* (1947), as rural imaginaries—from where he coins the term "rural novel" arguing that these are bucolic novels about men and land that require a literal "social and historical" explanation of Mexico in order to be understood by academics in the USA.

Mexican literature, US Spanish Latino literature, Border Studies among others. I propose calling “land narrative” the particular trend of this selection of twentieth century novels that contemplate land as the symbolic structure for historical and literary representations—land being a literary sign and signifier encompassing history and structure, diachrony and synchrony in literature. These stories of land, landowners, and *campesinos* in Yáñez, Rulfo, and Arreola are thus fictionalized but, through a thorough reading it is possible to chart and document how the rural space, way of life, and land ownership changed and evolved in twentieth century in Mexico when the majority of the population still lived in a rural setting (Whetten, vii). The reevaluation and significance of these works and of the historical periods in which they were written, offer a novel reading and understanding of land in literature. And in the end, they propose a new study of land in literature, in line with and to better inform future studies and critiques of land narrative in Mexican literature and beyond.

Rulfo, Yáñez, and Arreola’s novels ultimately “literalize” land in rural Mexico. In this context, Juan Rulfo, Agustín Yáñez, and Juan José Arreola paint a perspective of Mexico’s rural land and property in two contexts: first, through the imaginaries of traditional agrarian landscape, and second, through the modern cosmopolitan writer. These imaginaries represent and document a wide range of conceptions of land such as the extensive lands of the *haciendas* or the *pequeñas propiedades* of Jalisco (*los Altos de Jalisco*) during the period of land and property reevaluation. This dissertation also argues that the novels of Juan José Arreola and Juan Rulfo are a crucial part of Mexican literature and its imaginary of the land that as a whole can compose a thorough study of

rural Mexico and its literature. The analysis of land in *La tierra pródiga*, *El llano en llamas*, *Pedro Páramo*, *La feria*, and *El gallo de oro* offer a solid literary history of land from the 1950's through the 1980's, Mexico's decades of important literary works that directly or indirectly raised an awareness of its new land imaginaries. Arreola and Rulfo's novels in this context can serve as an example to propose a historical narrative of land in Mexican literature, categorized as a historical analysis of land through stories and narratives of Mexican midcentury (rural) literature, land narratives. This dissertation, hence proposes a reading of midcentury narratives that reimagine land and property as a result of the new interpretations of Mexico's land discourse by intellectuals and artists after the countries' armed and ideological revolution between the 1950's up to the 1980's.⁶⁷

An understanding of land in Mexico through its literary and land history can be articulated in the characters of midcentury rural novels whose plot(s) form an artistic historiography and conscious awareness of land in literature. Rulfo, Yáñez, and Arreola give Mexico's mid-twentieth century a new consciousness that reinterprets rural land and people's plots after the Mexican Revolution.

It is possible to say that it is through mid-century rural narrative that land and property are given a space in Mexican literature as result of new intellectual and artistic discourses and narratives. Furthermore, midcentury writers depict rural land and property in the histrionic imaginaries of their narrative redefining rural land but most importantly

⁶⁷ Moisés Gonzalez Navarro in his article "La ideología de la Revolución mexicana" proposes that the Mexican Revolution ended with the ideological revolutionary seize at the start of sixties.

the history of Mexican literature.⁶⁸ Through a literary approach and production of a prolific “land” narrative these authors reconfigure literary settings overwhelmingly thought of as urban.⁶⁹ Mexican midcentury rural narratives precede, influence, and outlast the most productive period of the Latin American (literary) Boom, as their narratives allowed a reevaluation of land in Mexico far from the social and philosophical outcomes of a revolutionary country as Mexico’s rural land narrative.

These *nuevas novelas de la revolución* delve deeper into Mexico’s land discourse than any other intellectual land quantification processes of surveying after the Mexican Revolution. The history of rural land and its campesinado was measured not through literary or artistic forms of expression but through distant quantification methods implemented by American scholars that first began to study the history and legacies of land after the Revolution. These kinds of methods only measured the numerical outcomes of land policies of the revolution. In the early 1940’s, almost thirty years after the start of the revolution the classical studies of authors like Eyer N. Simpson and Nathan L. Whetten influenced a series of (land) studies up to those of revisionists and post-revisionist studies distant from the oral histories and literary popular Mexican discourses of *tierra* after the revolution. Along with American historians, literary critics of Mexico’s novel and *nueva novela de la revolución*, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, failed to consider the role of land as a character or plot in the field of literature

⁶⁸ Sara Poot-Herrera states “Quien no a leído *Pedro Páramo*, no a leído literatura Mexicana.” This as a quote by one of Mexico’s leading literary critics, this premise adds to the cultural importance of mid-century rural narrative, accurately considering Mexican literature a narrative of rural idealization.

⁶⁹ For more on the reconfiguration of urban spaces in narrative see Gálvez Acero, *La novela hispanoamericana contemporánea*.

and its function as an implicit or explicit motif in various works. Yáñez, Rulfo and Arreola can be considered to be a new wave of authors of the *nueva novela de la revolución* contrasting and in dialogue with the first trend of *novela de la revolución* including authors such as Mariano Azuela, Martín-Luis Guzmán, and Nellie Campobello (Gálvez 174).

The style and themes of these authors, following the Revolution, are determined by the ideologies and national discourses that sprung from the event. *Los de abajo* (1927), often considered as the first novel of the Mexican Revolution, and Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho* (1931) transform the history and themes of the Revolution in Mexican literature from the beginning (Jefferson 1). Esperanza Jefferson describes that *la novela de la revolución* was fueled by the revolution and I add that it was not only fueled by the occurrences of the revolution, but also by a literary (revolutionary) movement in Mexico's drive for land:

la Revolución Mexicana se caracteriza principalmente por ser un movimiento de insurgencia por la tierra, de emancipación económica y de afirmación de la nacionalidad. El campesinado, en manos de terratenientes y caciques, une su inquietud a la de la naciente clase obrera carente de una legislación que defendiera sus derechos y la clase media deseosa de un cambio en el gobierno de privilegiados de la dictadura. (5)

Although the literary production after the Revolution is prolific, the notions of land were ignored from Mexico's historic armed conflict and onward. Therefore, for Esperanza

Jefferson, the *nueva novela de la revolución* is the most important literary event after the *modernismo* in Latin America:

esta narrativa es el hecho literario hispanoamericano más importante después del modernismo y es precisamente durante los años de la gesta revolucionaria cuando los escritores parecen tomar dos direcciones opuestas. Por un lado se encuentran los literatos puros que tratan de evadir la realidad por la que está atravesando el país y se interesan por la cultura universal con Alfonso Reyes como maestro; del otro lado, se encuentra la generación de escritores que de una u otra forma participaron en la contienda y cuya obra al girar en torno a este hecho histórico, adquiere por ello un valor testimonial y documental. Dentro de este grupo también se hallan los que, al igual que Campobello, atestiguaron la Revolución y que también buscaban hacerse escuchar. (Jefferson 18)

On one of the extremes, within the authors of *la nueva novela de la revolución*, we find Carlos Fuentes who can be said to run from the land and its revolutionary context to re-envision a fantastic intellectual and alien perspective of Mexico's land in tune with Alfonso Reyes' "Visión de Anáhuac", a delirious narrative written (looking) outside of Mexico seeking to construct a national narrative. Other authors of the *nueva novela de la revolución* (the majority) participated in the revolution or their narrative spins are historically in tune with Mexico's land and revolution. Authors such as Juan Rulfo in *El llano en llamas*, Pedro Páramo and Nellie Campobello in *Cartucho*, can be said to have

witnessed the historical legacies of the Revolution on their land and through their own experience.

Aurora M. Ocampo in *La crítica de la novela mexicana contemporánea*, notes that the Mexican Revolution unified and defined Mexican narrative not only in literature, as the *novela de la revolución* became Mexico's contemporary novel. Mexico's revolutionary themes transcended literature and were broadcasted in its Cinematographic Industry, Mexico's most important industry during the height of the literary period of the *(nueva) novela de la revolución*. Motion pictures in Mexico were fuelled by the themes of the *(nueva) novela de la revolución* and its role and narrative were evident since the birth of motion pictures in Mexico.

La atracción hollywoodense por Villa, jamás menguante desde la interpretación de Wallace Berry en "Viva Villa" de Jack Conway, se explicará quizás en términos de la hipnosis autocomplaciente que el "primitivo" le provoca al "civilizado"; en términos de la fascinación que, desde las metrópolis, despiertan Tarzán o King Kong: todo héroe marginal folklorizable, todo "salvaje puro" (domesticable a través de la muerte o de su veneración hacia los valores occidentales) es extraordinario. (Jefferson 20)

Film and themes of the revolution are just an example of how the narrative of Mexico's revolutionary integrated into the acceptance and interest of Mexican people.

Not unlike film, in literature the *(nueva) novela de la revolución* remains in the interest and taste of readers. This study intends to assert that the themes of the revolution

and most importantly land in the *(nueva) novela de la revolución* are always present in Mexican literature, balancing social critiques with literary rhetoric as Jefferson notes within works such as *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), *Los recuerdos del Porvenir* (1963), *Zapata* (1968), *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* (1969), *Columbus* (1996), *Pancho Villa* (1998), *La sombra del caudillo* (1999), *El rey viejo* (1999), *Las soldaderas* (1999), novels that literalize land historiography and its revolutionary characters (Jefferson 21-22). To this list we can since add *Nadie me verá llorar* (1999), *Siglo pasado* (2000), *La silla del águila* (2003), *Zapata* (2006), *No me dejen morir así* (2014), *Octavio Paz. El poeta y la revolución* (2014), and *Tierra roja. La novela de Lázaro Cárdenas* (2015). Contemporary Mexican narratives, *(nuevas) novelas de la revolución* are works that remain interested in the revolution. These novels and their critique, serve to further justify the list of works this dissertation analyzes using a social historic framework that yields hybrid literary theory similar to Jefferson's notion of *literaturización*. *Literaturización*, is a way of conceptualizing literature, giving a name to the theme of land in Mexico's *(nueva) novela de la revolución* and thus the driving force of the study of *tierra* in Mexico's mid-twentieth century novel.

The theme of land in narrative as aforementioned, land narratives, remains prevalent throughout the artistic and literary productions in twentieth-century Mexico. Its analysis, however, proposes a novel approach to Mexican literature overlooked by critics. The approach of this dissertation ultimately raises awareness on the significance of land in narrative—land narrative. And it highlights the importance of land in the forms of contemporary literature as well as in scholarly research and critique, where it was not

previously considered. The revaluation of land narratives in canonical works like those of Rulfo, Yáñez, and Arreola, allow for new studies on Mexican literature—not as a reflection or part of foreign literary currents, but as the result of Ruidos. Voces. Rumores. Canciones lejanas: of twentieth century Mexico and its literature—that inform the story of land in literature.

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