AN ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF JUAN RULFO

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

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1959

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INTRODUCTION

The Mexican writer Juan Rulfo published his first work *El llano en llamas*, a collection of short stories, in 1955. His first and so far only novel *Pedro Páramo* appeared in 1955. The short stories are glimpses into the lives of rural people; the novel is a series of episodes which joined together narrate the life of the title character. One of the peculiarities of Rulfo's writing is that the characters, although all from Jalisco, seem to be isolated from time and place. Another characteristic is the frequent contrast of outward violence with the quiet yet peculiarly anguished thoughts of his people. Through this solitude of the characters and through their double yet coinciding existence in both a physical and a mental world, Rulfo creates a literary world which seems to lack an active present and therefore seems to lack reality. The peculiarity of Rulfo's writing comes not through plot or characterization but through this style of narration and through the poetry of his language.

Rulfo writes about Mexico, but he does not see Mexican society as a social problem. This lack of preoccupation with social conditions differentiates Rulfo from his literary predecessors. Rulfo's works have been translated into several languages. Although he has written little, he is considered to be Mexico's most promising writer.
STYLE

Rulfo's style is simple and direct. His sentences are not involved nor is his vocabulary difficult. Yet there is an atmosphere of mystery in his writings. The reader usually does not know who is telling the story or why. Characters appear abruptly from nowhere and disappear as abruptly. Examples of this sudden introduction to characters or into action are the first sentences of the short stories. For example Macario begins: "Estoy sentado junto a la acantarilla aguardando a que salgan las ranas." (El llano en llamas, page 7); suddenly we are in the midst of memories. La cuesta de las comadres begins: "Los difuntos Torricos siempre fueron buenos amigos míos." (Page 22) The Torricos are spoken of immediately without any introduction as if it is assumed that the reader is already acquainted with them. El llano en llamas begins with a shout: "¡Viva Petronilo Flores!" (Page 76), and we are in the middle of a skirmish. ¿Díles que no me maten! begins with a plea; "Díles que no me maten, Justino!" (Page 99); the reader finds himself listening to a conversation without knowing Justino or the person he is addressing. Anacleto Morones begins with a curse: "¡Viejas, hijas del demonio!" (Page 151) The reader is introduced to the characters and events indirectly, in a slow roundabout way through conversations and memories. One of the best examples of this indirect yet strikingly informative introduction is Juan's conversation with Abundio in Pedro Páramo. It is discussed further under characters. The conversation begins abruptly on page 8 before we know who Abundio is or even that there is another person.
besides Juan present. Abundio is not identified by name until page 14. He is identified mysteriously and vaguely: "...volví a oír la voz del que iba allí a mi lado." (Pedro Páramo, page 9) Abundio is a sound, a voice rather than a human being.

The short stories also contain this vagueness which gives the impression that nothing is clearcut or certain because the narrator somehow seems out of touch with clear reality. In Nos han dado la tierra all references to people have been impersonal (se or uno) until the third paragraph: "Pero el pueblo está todavía muy allá. Es el viento el que lo acerca:"

Hemos venido caminando desde el amanecer. Ahorita son algo así como las cuatro de la tarde. Alguien se asoma al cielo, estira los ojos hacia donde está colgado el sol y dice:

-Son como las cuatro de la tarde." (El llano en llamas, page 15)

Muy allá, algo, alguien are vague indications of place, time and character; nothing is given a clear description. Como is an approximation of time, not a confident statement; nothing is certain. The words themselves are precise; what they refer to is vague. Mystery is indicated by the frequent use of the verb parecer especially in the first few pages of introduction to Comala. It indicates a confusion of appearance and reality. In El hombre the characters are referred to throughout by the terms el hombre and él que lo seguía. They are neither named nor described so they remain hazy figures suspended in a few moments of action.
The disarrangement of time in Pedro Páramo adds to the mystery in Rulfo's style. For example when Eduviges after death talks to Juan she alludes to her suicide: "Todo consiste en morir, Dios mediante, cuando uno quiera y no cuando Él lo disponga. 0, si tu quieres, forzarlo a disponer antes de tiempo." (Page 16) This allusion is not clear until page 40 when we learn through padre Rentería that Eduviges committed suicide. The disarrangement of time is present even in continued memories; Juan remembers his conversation with Abundio and then recalls his meeting with Abundio. Sometimes this backward narration is indicated by the pluperfect tense; other times the reader must discover the time switch for himself.

A sense of the mysterious, an uneasy feeling that the characters sometimes go beyond the human even when alive is given by the strange unanswered and unanswerable questions that the characters ask one

1 To clarify later references to Pedro Páramo I will summarize the plot. Juan Preciado, a young man from Sayula (Rulfo's own birthplace), goes to the village of Comala to look for his father Pedro Páramo. Juan's mother has recently died, and he had promised her that he would go see his father whom she left shortly after Juan's birth. Juan finds Comala run down and deserted except by a few old people and by some strange men and women who speak distractedly and who disappear at inconvenient moments. Juan learns that they are phantoms from the past who died in sin and who remain to find people to pray for them. Through these phantoms he learns that his father Pedro Páramo is dead, but that he owned a large ranch near Comala and controlled the town economically, morally and physically. Juan himself soon dies apparently of fright. He is buried by an old woman, Dorotes, who later dies and is placed in the same grave. There she tells Juan of his father's love for Susana San Juan, a childhood playmate who left Comala. At this point the narration turns entirely to scenes from the life of Pedro Páramo. Susana has returned to Comala a widow. She is insane, and despite Pedro's attempts she never recognizes him. She dies, and Pedro, now realizing he can never have Susana, retires from active life and lives in memories until his own death.
another from time to time. Pedro's mother tells him: "Han matado a tu padre." Pedro's only reply is a question: ¿Y a ti quién te mató, madre?" (Pedro Páramo, page 33) Juan asks his guide through Comala if she knows about the death of his mother. ¿Y por qué iba a saberlo? Hace muchos años que no sé nada.

¿Entonces cómo es que dío usted conmigo?

...

¿Está usted viva, Damiana? Dígame, Damiana" (Page 54)

Susana asks Justina: "¿Qué esperas para morirte?" Justina replies: "La muerte, Susana." (Page 134) There is a strange conversation between Juan and his dead mother: "¿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.

Some statements seem contradictory in their vagueness: "Parece ser un aullido humano, pero no parece ser de ningún ser humano."

(Pedro Páramo, page 108); "Algun día llegaría la noche." (El llano en llamas, page 69)

The mysterious lack of communication and sympathy between characters is shown by the incongruity of their remarks. A boy tells Eduvigés that Miguel's horse is suffering because of Miguel's death: "No ha comido ni dormido y nomás se vuelve un puro corretear. Como que sabe, ¿sabe usted? Como que se siente despedazado y corcomido
por dentro." Eduvigis replies: "No se te olvide cerrar la puerta cuando te vayas." (Pedro Páramo, page 31) Eduvigis, like all Rulfo's characters, is too involved in her own self to consider what is happening outside of that self. Her only remark is a request that the door be closed. Thus she insure her seclusion.

There is mystery in the style in the vagueness of reference of words, in abrupt beginnings and transitions, and in incongruous statements and conversations. Mystery pervades the narration, the characterization and the setting of Pedro Páramo also, because all are contradictory to the qualities of time, people and places that the reader knows in his own life.

There is very little visual description of characters or places. It seems that sounds are more important than sights in Rulfo's works. Sound or the obvious absense of sound fills Pedro Páramo. In most of the short stories the reader hears the character's memories or conversations instead of seeing the characters in action. In Pedro Páramo Juan's hallucinations are mainly auditory not visual. Comala is characterized by its unusual sounds and lack of usual sounds. The first thing Juan notices about the town is its lack of noisily playing children. The lack of sounds is emphasized by several references to the sound of silence both in Luvina and in Pedro Páramo. This is discussed further below. Memories are introduced by sounds many times, by the dripping of water, the falling of rain or the hoofbeats of a horse for example. The tumult of the churchbells notifies Comala of Susana's death and of its own subsequent death. Before it dies the town is filled with sound: "Y de día y de noche las campanas siguieron
tocando, todas por igual, cada vez con más fuerza, hasta que aquello se convirtió en un lamento rumoroso de sonidos." (Pedro Páramo, page 142)

These sounds never leave Comala; they remain to haunt newcomers even after their sources are gone. Rulfo isolates sounds from their sources, giving them a strange life of their own. The sounds, especially voices, become independent of their owners; they are caught up by Comala and remain long after the events associated with them have past.

Scenery, although it is seldom described in detail, plays an important part in Rulfo's style. Most of the time the introductory sentences to a time break are statements about scenery or weather. This makes the time transition less abrupt than when the change comes in the middle of a dialogue.

Rulfo sometimes punctuates statements with scenery. When Abundio, the mule driver, makes the startling statement, "Yo también soy hijo de Pedro Páramo," Rulfo halts the conversation with an observation: "Una bandada de cuervos pasó cruzando el cielo vacío, haciendo 'cuar, cuar, cuar'." (Pedro Páramo, page 10) When Pedro's mother announces "Tu padre ha muerto," Rulfo follows with a description of dawn. "Por la puerta se veía el amanecer en el cielo. No había estrellas. Solo un cielo plomizo, gris, aún no aclarado por la luminosidad del sol." (Page 32) In the first example the cawing of crows accentuates the dramatic announcement; in the second the description of dawn increases the gloom of death. The night of Miguel Páramo's funeral the phrases "Había estrellas fugaces" and "Llovía estrellas" tie together separate episodes with the workers on Pedro's ranch and with the village priest.
At the end of the novel when Pedro realizes his death, "Esta es mi muerte," his statement is accentuated by a whirling sun: "El sol se fue volteando sobre las cosas y les devolvió su forma." (Page 151)

When landscapes are described, the description is in simple words in short sentences. The landscapes, unlike the towns, are alive with color and motion. Most descriptions are of the changing of the sun, of dawn or dusk. Many times nature conforms to the event being narrated. As Juan walks to Comala, he smells decayed plants which suggest the decay of the town. A fresh spring wind is the background for laughing children flying kites. Death often comes at night. Susana's funeral takes place on a gray day. Bitter grapes are the subject of the conversation of two bitter men, padre Rentería and his superior. Bulls snort when Pedro Páramo makes his night visits to women. Susana's father points out to her the conformity of nature to the mood of a region. "Allí, de donde venimos ahora, al menos te entretenías mirando el nacimiento de las cosas: nubes y pájaros, el musgo, ¿te acuerdas? Aquí en cambio no sentirás sino ese olor amarillo y acido que parece destilar por todas partes." (Page 102)

Reoccurring themes often appear connected with some object. The connection of memory and rain, fog and death will be discussed later. The appearance of Pedro's mother is always connected with a doorway. She appears first while he is thinking of Susana: "Alzó la vista y miró a su madre en la puerta." (Page 18) She appears again to remind him to say prayers for his grandfather: "Allí estaba su madre en el umbrel de la puerta, con una vela en la mano." (Page 21) She last appears when her husband dies: "... vio la cara de una mujer recostada
contra el marco de la puerta, oscurcida todavía por la noche, sollozando." (Page 32) Doorways are used often by Rulfo: the people of Luvina sit in their doorways waiting to die; the only part of Pedro's house to be described is the door (page 45); Pedro stands by the doorway when he visits Susana and when she dies; Pedro himself dies near the doorway of his house after spending his last years sitting there watching the road. Perhaps this is because a doorway is both an exit and an entrance but is really neither inside nor outside; Rulfo's characters are neither completely in nor completely out of the world the reader knows.

Rulfo insists on the repetition of time. He often gives the impression of reoccurring time through reoccurring sound rather than sights. The voices of Comala keep repeating the past. Time is often identified by the ordinary events which occur in it in regular repetition. Thus the monotonous inevitability of time is emphasized. On page 8 of Pedro Páramo Time is identified by a reoccurring characteristic: "Era ese tiempo de la canícula, cuando el aire de agosto sopla caliente, envenenado por el olor podrido de las saponarias."

Susana describes time by what happened in it and will always happen in it. She describes the events of early spring: "Y los gorriones reían; picoteaban las hojas que el aire hacía caer y reían... Era esa época." (Pedro Páramo, page 94) A definite hour of the day as well as a season is identified by what always occurs at a certain time: "era la hora en que los niños juegan en las calles de todos los pueblos..." (Pedro Páramo, page 12) These events in nature repeat themselves because they follow the cycle of the sun; so do the every-
day events in Comala, because the people arrange their lives according to the seasons and the time of day. But there are certain events which only happen once in a human life. One of these is death. Yet Rulfo by the repetition of the events surrounding Miguel Páramo's death keeps this death reoccurring throughout the novel. He not only repeats it in the memories of several different people but keeps inserting the death in different stages of the novel. Between the relations of the death occur various other events from different time stages; but the narration keeps returning to the death of Miguel. This event, of course, happened only once, yet it is repeated six times with variations. Through style Rulfo makes a one time event seem a repetition.

Although almost all narration in Pedro Páramo, except conversation, is in the past tense, there are a few instances of the present tense. On page 11 Juan brings us suddenly back to the present tense but with no hint of his present state. He has been speaking of the photograph of his mother which he carried to Comala. "Es el mismo que traigo aquí..." In the instances of the use of the present tense in the short stories the same can be said: the characters, although they may speak in the present tense, do not really seem to exist in it actively but only as a source of memories.

On page 28 Eduviges speaks of Miguel and his horse; both are dead. She hears the horse's hoofbeats and says "Ellos son inseparables." Time has become irrelevant for Eduviges who is dead also. The past is still continuing in the present.
On pages 105 and 106 there is a present tense description of a rainy market day in Comala. When Justina Díaz, Susana's maid, appears, the tense changes back to the past. This rainy day could be any time since such days occur again and again. There is nothing in the description that places a time limit on the day until a definite personality breaks the spell of timelessness. *En la madrugada* (*El llano en llamases*) shows the same style of description. The introductory "eternal" sunrise is in the present tense; the action of the particular day is in the past.

Again on page 113 the present tense is used. Susana is lying in bed thinking. When padre Rentería comes to see her she thinks he is her own father. When she realizes it is the priest the tense returns to the past. She had been remembering the announcement of her husband's death which to her is an eternal past. She relives it; thus it is present time.

Along with the repetition of events Rulfo uses a repetition of ideas in similar words or in an exact repetition of words. This gives conversations or statements by the characters a sort of timelessness. The frequent mention of the "flores del obelisco" in the thoughts of Macario (*El llano en llamases*) gives the impression of an endless circling of thoughts. Repetition of words and phrases is especially prominent in *Luvina* (*El llano en llamases*) where paragraphs are opened and closed with the same idea expressed in a slightly varying way. The paragraphs or conversations are framed in repetition giving the idea that nothing has really passed between the opening and closing phrase. This device is continued in *Pedro Páramo*, but here the repetitions are juxtaposed: "Allá me oirás mejor. Estaré más cerca de tí."
Encontrarás más cercana la voz de mis recuerdos que la de mi muerte..." (Page 13), "Ya voy, mamá. Ya voy." (Page 19), "Unas risas ya muy viejas, como cansadas de reír. Y voces ya desgastadas por el uso." (Page 53) This repetition also creates the impression of a slow, quiet almost imperceptible progress. There is nothing urgent or animated about the style. Sentences are short but not staccato. Language is precise yet mysterious; the unfolding of Pedro Páramo's story is slow and calm yet persistent, like the flow of memories which make it up.
NARRATION

Rulfo's stories are characterized by a lack of present action. The narrative usually consists of a series of memories, and for the most part Rulfo's characters relate their own pasts. Present time for these characters is thus a period of inactivity, a period of quiet and often aimless recounting of their lives. These memories usually consist of violent events which are in sharp contrast to the uneventful present. In Pedro Páramo, for example, the narration is a series of violent events remembered by the dead. Thus Rulfo's world seems to be an inversion from the reader's world; the past lives, and the present is dead.

The memories come from the narrating character's mind rather than from his mouth. He is reviewing his life for no one but himself. Very seldom does a connected dialogue appear uninterrupted by memories. Orderly succession of time does not matter in memories; the mind may turn from one event to another without regard for or need of chronology. So it is in Pedro Páramo whose world is one of thought rather than of substance. Glimpses of other characters' lives from different periods of time keep interrupting the beginning narration of Juan Preciado. The characters could speak their words in approximately the same length of time that it takes the reader to read them. Dialogue, although it may have taken place in the past, is of necessity an active presentation. The dialogue in a novel, as does the dialogue of theater, takes place in front of the reader. Thus in dialogue, novelistic time and reading time become one, and in the matter of time at least the
reader is drawn as close as possible to the world of the novel. But in Rulfo's world there is an utter disregard for conventional time as the reader knows it. Even Juan Preciado's relation of dialogue is cut in two by events from the past.

On page 16 Eduviges tells Juan: "El hijo de Dolores debió haber sido mío." And after several events have been related from the childhood of Juan's father, Pedro Páramo, the conversation takes up again on page 22 as if it had never been interrupted: "Pues sí, yo estuve a punto de ser tu madre." This interruption of time during a dialogue appears again on page 31. Juan narrates: "Has oído alguna vez el quejido de un muerto? -me preguntó a mí.

-No, doña Eduviges.

-Más te vale.

After ten pages of narration of events from Pedro Páramo's life the conversation continues exactly as it was: "Más te vale, hijo. Más te vale - me dijo Eduviges Dysada." And indeed the conversation has not been interrupted for those involved in it. Rulfo has suspended time for the reader by giving a glimpse of the past. Juan and Eduviges are phantoms from still another past, and they now have no place in time. This technique is repeated on pages 27 and 28.

Eduviges, who has been telling Juan about his mother, suddenly turns her head as if listening to some distant sound. She addresses someone unseen: "¿Cuándo descansarás?" There follows an interval from Pedro Páramo's childhood in which he thinks of Susana. Then the scene returns to Eduviges and Juan who inquires about the noise Eduviges heard: "¿Qué es lo que pasa, Doña Eduviges?"
The interruptions of Juan Preciado's narration by episodes from the life of his father become longer. Finally Pedro Páramo's life, which permeates and dominates all the other characters' memories (except those of Susana\(^1\)), emerges from the maze of echoes and thoughts and proceeds in an orderly fashion to its end. The narration of Pedro Páramo's life begins on page 17 with an event from his childhood. The narration continues interrupted but in chronological order until page 100. At this point Susana returns, and Pedro's life changes from one of memories of Susana to one of the actual presence of Susana. So the style of narration changes from a maze of interwoven memories to an orderly progressing series of events. There are no more interruptions by other characters nor references to the original narrator Juan. As Susana declines, Pedro declines, until all narration, all memories end with his death. Thus through the structure of the narration as well as through characterization, Pedro Páramo emerges as the dominant life in a community of lives. He breaks through the echoes and phantoms of Comala, which serve only as reflections of his life, and reveals himself as a definite personality who has and retains his definite place in time.

The narration of Pedro Páramo may be divided into three phases.

1. Juan Preciado narrates his life in the first person.

2. The author, Rulfo, narrates the thoughts of the characters who are dead when Juan is living and the thoughts of Juan after he dies. There is little description directly by Rulfo. Rather he lets

\(1\) cf., Characters
the reader listen in on the thoughts and conversations of his characters.

3. In the first few pages the words of Juan's dead mother come from the past to interrupt Juan's and Eduviges' conversations. These words poetically express the beauty of Comala which is either unseen or unmentioned by the other characters.

The periods of time in the novel may also be divided into three.

1. Pedro Páramo's lifetime.

2. Juan Preciado's lifetime which overlaps that of Pedro Páramo.

3. The time of narration which is after the deaths of both father and son.

None of these three times is separated from the others. There are no chapter divisions, only various events from the various times. This lack of orderly succession of time appears only up to page 100. The novel itself could therefore be divided into two stages - the first being glimpses into the youth of Pedro Páramo by means of the lives he effected and which reflect his life, and second an uninterrupted chronological narration of the decline of Pedro Páramo.

In the first stage of the novel, changes from one past time to another past time are sometimes introduced by a description of falling rain. This leitmotiv lessens the abruptness of the changes. Rainfall like flowing water is timeless yet has a definite place in time. It is timeless because it occurs over and over again in all places and all times; rain cannot be distinguished from the rain that preceded it or the rain that will follow. It has a definite place in
time because, as the water that flows by a point on shore is different from that which passes before and that which will pass later, so is the rain that falls on a town continually different. Rulfo uses rain as a vehicle to pass back into time by letting one period of time imperceptibly flow into another in the midst of a rainfall. The rain-falls, though logically distinct in time, become one, common to both times in Rulfo's world.

The first instance of this timeless rain coincides with the first instance of a time change in the narration. (Page 17) Juan Preciado has narrated his experience in Comala up to the first night. He is in the midst of a conversation with Eduviges. He is overcome with exhaustion. The conversation begins to slacken as Juan answers with a tired repetition Eduviges' request to come to dinner. "Iré. Iré después." Then—"El agua que goteaba de las tejas hacía un agujero en la arena del patio. Sonaba: plas, plas y luego otra vez plas..." And the reader finds himself in the midst of Pedro Páramo's childhood, in a time at least one generation before the above conversation. The rain continues through this day from Pedro Páramo's life. When the boy Pedro Páramo goes to bed he hears a clock striking the hours "como si se hubiera encogida el tiempo." And time is shortened, for the reader is brought back to the tired conversation of Juan and Eduviges.

On page 31 Juan's and Eduviges' conversation is again suspended by a description of rain. Eduviges has told Juan of Miguel Páramo's death. She has asked him if he ever heard the groan of a dead man. At his negative reply she says: "Más te vale." The following sentence
is: "En el hidrante las gotas caen una tras otra." The reader is again transported to Pedro Páramo's lifetime, to the death of Pedro's father, to the death of Pedro's son Miguel and the pangs of conscience of Padre Rentería who pardoned Miguel in exchange for money. Ten pages later the time returns to Eúviges who is still repeating "Más te vale..."

The last use of rain as a transition occurs on page 76. Juan is now dead and in the grave which he shares with Dorotea. She says: "¿Oyes? Allá afuera está lloviendo." Time regresses to an episode between Miguel and Pedro Páramo, but the rain is still falling: "Al amanecer, gruesas gotas de lluvia cayeron sobre la tierra." On page 81 the time returns to Juan's grave where he remembers the words of his mother about rain in Comala: "Mi madre me decía que, en cuanto comenzaba a llover, todo se llenaba de luces y del olor verde de los retoños." Here is rain from three pasts blended into one rainfall, as are the memories from many pasts blended into the narration of one life.

In the 15 short stories of El llano en llamas Rulfo uses all the narrative styles that he blends in the novel Pedro Páramo. The stories are a combination of memories narrated by the characters, snatches of dialogues and monologues, and narration by Rulfo.

Macario, Nos han dado la tierra and Es que somos muy pobres are memory narrations which extend into the present time. Macario and Es que somos muy pobres are monologues by children. No one is listening; the narrator is only remembering for himself. The monologue begins and ends without any interference from the world outside the narrator's
mind; so the story seems a fragment suspended in time. This same device of private memories is used in Pedro Páramo when the words of Juan's mother come back to him and when Pedro remembers Susana.

_Nos han dado la tierra_ is related by one of the participants of the story. He narrates in the present tense but seems to have no active contact with the physical surroundings he speaks about. It is as if he were only thinking and not observing. He speaks to himself, not to his companions. He counts his companions; "Entonces me digo: somos cuatro." (Page 15) His companions ask a question: "Yo no digo nada. Yo pienso..." (Page 19) This unnamed man is typical of Rulfo's characters, completely absorbed in themselves, not really listening to others, conversing with themselves mentally, not vocally with others.

_La cuesta de las comadres, El llano en llamas_ and _Anacleto Morones_ are memory narrations which are completely contained in the past. In each a man remembers an eventful violent phase of his life. In each story the present is unimportant to the narrative. The present is inactive. For example, in _La cuesta de las comadres_ a man remembers a murder he committed. The only present tense verb that appears is "me acuerdo." We do not know where the man is now or what was the result of his crime. The present is the time for remembering; all activity is past for the moment.

_Talpa_ combines the above two types of narration — the past memory and the present contemplation. A man relates his past action and then pauses to contemplate the present situation and to consider the future results of the action. This is one of the few times that
the future is considered or even mentioned by Rulfo's characters. Most of them live in the past and appear to have no future.

**El hombre** and **En la madrugada** like Pedro Páramo exhibit divisions in narration. They are a combination of narration by the author and by the characters. **El hombre** begins with Rulfo narrating the pursuit of a criminal and the thoughts of pursuer and pursued. The narrative is finished by a mule herder who relates the death of the fugitive to a silent listener. We know he is speaking to someone because he asks questions, but the conversation is completely one-sided. The narration of **En la madrugada** alternates between Rulfo's description of a town and the murder which takes place in it and the one-sided conversation of the old man who has murdered his employer. Again a character asks questions addressing another person, but the answers are unrecorded. Rulfo frames the story with time by beginning it with a description of dawn and ending with nightfall.

*Díes que no me maten!* **Luvina**, **La noche que lo dejaron solo** and **No oyes ladrar los perros** are narrated solely by Rulfo. But as in **Pedro Páramo** there is little direct description. Rather the reader listens in on conversations. In **Luvina** this conversation is completely one-sided. Someone is present and being spoken to but takes no active part in the conversation.

**Acuérdate** is an intimate one-sided conversation. Again a you is introduced into the conversation but never enters it actively.

As the title implies, the story is a review of the past. The author does not enter the narration.
*Paso del Norte* alternates between an active two-sided conversation and a narration by one of the participants. Both conversations are of course in the present tense. The inserted narration shows a passage of time between the conversations. Again Rulfo does not enter the narration. In summary, Juan Rulfo avoids present action in narration. The present is usually thought of as the vital time and the past as dead, but Rulfo reverses this idea of time in his novelistic world. Because of his disregard, suspension and disorder of time, the time element is the most striking characteristic of Rulfo's narrative style. Through the constant use of memories in revealing his characters, Rulfo isolates his characters from the present. They seem to be left behind by time, and they continue living in their pasts. This isolation is completed by the use of one-sided conversation; a character is completely alone in his memories even when he attempts to share them with others.

The narrative devices of the short stories are continued in *Pedro Páramo*, but in *Pedro Páramo* the disorder in sequence of time narration is innovated. This disorder serves to point out the predominance of the title character in all phases of the novel. Only his life progresses in the time of the novel. The other lives which surround his are only reflections of his own, and therefore like phantoms they move in and out of the narration as they are needed to reveal the character of Pedro Páramo.
SETTINGS

Since Rulfo presents his narration mainly through the voices of characters, there is relatively little description of geographical location. In some of the short stories indeed there is an absence of setting. This absence of setting plus the peculiar narrative technique discussed above combine to isolate these stories in both time and space. The characters of the stories are therefore isolated from the world; they are not in any definite place or time. In other stories there is passing mention of towns and topography but nothing else.
For example in Nos han dado la tierra the characters are walking through a desert, in Es que somos muy pobres and El hombre a river is mentioned, and in No oyes ladrar los perros a town is being approached. But desert, rivers and town remain just that and nothing more. They have no individuality. They are apart from the story, never quite reached.
"Uno ha creído a veces, en medio de este camino sin orillas, que nada habría después; que no se podría encontrar nada al otro lado, al final de esta llanura rajada de grietas y de arroyos secos. Pero sí, hay algo. Hay un pueblo. Se oye que ladrán los perros y se siente en el aire el olor del humo, y se saborea ese olor de la gente como si fuera una esperanza.

Pero el pueblo está todavía muy allá. Es el viento el que lo acerca." (El llano en lamas, page 15) The geographical presence of places is not important to the narration. Their absence is; it adds to the isolation of the characters and to the mystery of the style.
Three of the short stories bear the names of villages. In Talpa and La cuesta de las comadres the title locations have little part in the narration and no importance in the plot. Luvina is a different case. The town is the story; it has an unforgettable individuality.

In Juan Rulfo's work there appear three definite settings. All are villages: San Gabriel of En la madrugada, Luvina, and Comala of Pedro Páramo. Although they have different names, they all seem to be the same village developing as Rulfo writes.

The first to appear is San Gabriel. The village is the first "character" introduced in En la madrugada: "San Gabriel sale de la niebla húmedo de rocío." (El llano en llamas, page 54)

The town is personified: "Entonces una mancha como de tierra envolvió al pueblo, que siguió roncando un poco más, adormecido en el color del amanecer." (Page 54) Like a sleeping person the town wakes slowly to begin its day. The day contains incest and murder and the tortured thoughts of an old man who cannot remember the murder he is accused of. In striking contrast to the violence of the day, night falls over San Gabriel bringing peace. "Sobre San Gabriel estaba bajando otra vez la niebla." (Page 61) As the town emerged from the fog at dawn, like a phantom town it disappears into the fog at sundown.

Noises and voices from unseen sources come out of the darkness giving an air of mystery. "Los perros aullaron hasta el amanecer... Voces de mujeres cantaban en el semisueño de la noche: "Salgan, salgan, salgan, ánimas de penas" con voz de falsete. Y las campanas
estuvieron doblando a muerto toda la noche, hasta el amanecer, hasta que fueron cortadas por el toque del alba." (Page 61) We can imagine that this dawn will be exactly like the one which opens the story, that San Gabriel will come out of the fog and awake exactly as before. This quiet repetition of time hides the inner violence of the lives of the town.

The same atmosphere of quiet mystery pervades Luvina. But Luvina has developed a personality more than San Gabriel. Luvina is the main character of the story; it is not the setting as is San Gabriel. Luvina is never entered nor approached by the reader. He only hears about it; the town itself remains at a distance, always allá. Again the town is introduced in the first sentence: "De los cerros altos del sur, el de Luvina es el más alto y el más pedregoso." (El llano en llamas, page 110) Immediately following this introduction to Luvina comes a declaration of its negativeness, its lack of vitality which is the theme of the story. "Está plagado de esa piedra gris con la que hacen la cal, pero en Luvina no hacen cal con ella ni le sacan ningún provecho." The nameless narrator continues describing the ravines which surround the village. "Dicen los de Luvina que de aquellas barrancas suben los sueños..." (Page 110) Here is a foreshadowing of Comala, a town which absorbs the lives of its inhabitants and returns them in dreams and echoes.

The next addition to the impression of Luvina which is being built in the reader's mind is the barrenness of the town. It is constantly beaten by a wind: "Un viento que no deja crecer ni a las
dulciameras: esas plantitas tristes que apenas si pueden vivir un poco
untados a la tierra, agarrada con todas sus manos al despeñadero de
los montes."

The narrator speaks to his unresponding listener almost in
warning: "Ya mirará usted ese viento que sopla sobre Luvina...Ya lo
verá usted." (Page 111) Soon there comes a quiet suggestion of death
as Rulfo narrates: "Los comejones entraban y rebotaban contra la
lámpara de petróleo cayendo al suelo con las alas chamuscadas. Y
afuera seguía avanzando la noche." (Page 111)

As San Gabriel was hidden in fog, Luvina is hidden by dust. Dust
is a monotonous thing, a symbol of death and a destroyer of vital
colors. "Nunca verá usted un cielo azul en Luvina. Allí todo el
horizonte está desteñido; nublado siempre por una mancha caliginosa
que no se borra nunca. Todo el lomerio pelón, sin un árbol, sin
una cosa verde para descansar los ojos; todo envuelto en el calín
ceniciento."

Then comes the actual use of the adjective dead applied to Luvina.
The foregoing description which has indicated it without mentioning it
is climaxed by the word muerto. "Usted verá eso; aquellos cerros
apagados como si estuvieron muertos y a Luvina en el más alto,
coronándolo con su blanco caserío como si fuera una corona de muerto..."
(Page 112) The narrator punctuates this statement by chasing away
some children who are playing and shouting. "¡Váyanse más lejos!
¡No intrompidan! Sigan jugando, pero sin armar alboroto." Only in
a town like Luvina could a group of children play without making
noise. The children are an indication of life and joy. But they are
discouraged from showing their vitality by a man who has been
effected by Luvina.

We learn that it rains little in Luvina, but that when it does
rain it rains violently so that the earth is eroded away. Luvina
has been depicted as a dusty, windy, barren town. Vitality in nature
is completely lacking. After this has been established the narrator
turns to the town's effect on its inhabitants. There is also a lack
of human vitality. The town controls its inhabitants, oppresses them
and can be felt by them like a living being. "Por cualquier lado que
se le mire, Luvina es un lugar muy triste... Yo diré que es el lugar
donde anida la tristeza. Donde no se conoce la sonrisa, como si a
toda la gente le hubieran entablado la cara. Y usted, si quiere,
puede ver esa tristeza a la hora que quiera. El aire que allí sopla
la revuelve, pero no se la lleva nunca. Está allí como si allí
hubiera nacido. Y hasta se puede probar y sentir, porque está siempre
encima de uno, apretada contra de uno, y porque es oprimente como una
gran cataplasma sobre la viva carne del corazón." (Page 113)

Luvina seems to absorb the lives of its people. The narrator
like Juan Preciado of Pedro Páremon leaves in the town his life and
the illusions he brought with him. "Allá viví. Allá dejé la vida...
Fui a ese lugar con mis ilusiones cabales y volví viejo y acabado."
(Page 114) The narrator tells of his personal experience in Luvina.
A mule driver lead him and his family to Luvina just as the mule
driver Abundio takes Juan Preciado to Comala. Like Abundio, the
mule driver would not remain in the town; he left his companions "como
si se alejara de algún lugar endemoniado." (Page 115) To show the
ominous quality of Luvina and Comala Rulfo in both cases introduces a man who uses the road to make his living and who knows all the towns along them. The narrator’s wife immediately took on the apathy of the people of Luvina. She entered a church to pray. “¿Para qué? me pregunté yo. Y ella se alzó de hombros.” To her husband’s completely bewildered and discouraged question “¿Qué país es éste, Agripina?” (Page 116), she again shrugged her shoulders.

The family passed a frightening first night. The sounds of the night are reminiscent of En la madrugada. In the morning women walked through the town on their way to get water. They are the inhabitants of Luvina, but like those of Comala they appear more shadows than people: “…como si fueran sombras, echaron a caminar calle abajo, con sus negros cántaros.” (Page 118)

Along with the people who seem to be phantoms and the strange noises of night is introduced an even stranger noise – the sound of silence. The narrator’s wife asks him:

“¿Qué es? me dijo.
¿Qué es qué? le pregunte.
Eso, el ruido ese.
Es el silencio. Duérmete” (Page 117)

The sound of silence emphasizes the complete lack of sound in the town, the mystery of the night and the contradiction of reality in Rulfo’s world. The idea is used several times again in Pedro Páramo. The first time is when Juan Preciado is entering Comala. Abundio has just left him alone. “Y aunque no había niños jugando, ni palomas, ni tejados azules, sentí que el pueblo vivía. Y que si yo escuchaba solamente el silencio, era porque aun no estaba acostumbrado al
silencio; tal vez porque mi cabeza estaba llena de ruidos y de voces."

For the first time Juan is hearing and seeing things he cannot explain. He attempts to rationalize the sounds in the midst of silence. He realizes there are no children or voices. Later as he becomes immersed in Comala, he no longer tries to rationalize, and he is completely deceived by the voices and figures. The first night in Comala Juan again hears the sound of silence. He has been sleeping. He hears the cries of a hanging man: "Al despertar, todo estaba en silencio; sólo el caer de la polilla y el rumor del silencio.

No, no era posible calcular la hondura del silencio que produjo aquél grito." The sound of silence like the disarrangement of time is a part of the opposition of Rulfo's word to reality. This irreality begins to appear in Luvina and develops fully in Comala.

People lose track of time in Luvina and so really lose contact and orientation with the world outside of Luvina. Rulfo narrates: "Parecía ser aún temprano, en la noche." Parecía implies either a doubt in or a denial of the time of night. This doubt in reality appears again on page 118. The narrator speaks to his silent listener: "Me parece que usted me preguntó cuánto tiempo estuve en Luvina, ¿verdad...?" There seems to be some sort of barrier in communication between the speaker and the listener. So the narrator is really left alone in his memories even though he is addressing another person. He admits that he has lost all notion of time in Luvina. "Perdí la noción del tiempo desde que las fiebres me lo envenenaron; pero debió haber sido una eternidad... Y es que allá el
tiempo es muy largo. Nadie lleva la cuenta de las horas ni a nadie le preocupa cómo van amontonándose los años. Los días comienzan y se acaban. Luego viene la noche. Solamente el día y la noche hasta el día de la muerte, que para ellos es una esperanza." (Page 118)

The people of the town have lost interest in time. Like Pedro Páramo at the end of his life, they have lost hope except in death. Their lives are monotonous repetitions which have no events to distinguish one day from another. "Estar sentado en el umbral de la puerta, mirendola salida y la puesta del sol, subiendo y bajando la cabeza, hasta que acaban aflojándose los resortes y entonces todo se queda quieto, sin tiempo, como si se viviera siempre en la eternidad. Eso hacen allí los viejos." (Page 119) This could very well be a description of Pedro Páramo on the day of his death.

Luvina like Comala is a city of old people. There is no youth nor hope; everything is about to die: "Porque en Luvina sólo viven los puros viejos y los que todavía no han nacido... Y mujeres sin fuerzas, casi trabadas de ten flacas. Los niños que han nacido allí se han ido...

Sólo quedan los puros viejos y las mujeres soles..." (Page 119)

All the people are alone although they are surrounded by their neighbors. Like the narrator himself they are isolated in their own selves while apparently in contact with others: "Solos, en aquella soledad de Luvina." (Page 120) These people become nothing but shadows, as is the first person that Juan Preciado sees, disappearing and reappearing between the houses of Comala, only the shadow of a woman. The narrator describes the people of Luvina:
"Los miraré pasar como sombras, repelidos al muro de las casas, casi arrastrados por el viento." (Page 121)

Luvina is summarized in a description of complete hopelessness. "San Juan Luvina. Me sonaba a nombre de cielo aquel nombre. Pero aquellos es el purgatorio. Un lugar moribundo donde se han muerto hasta los perros y ya no hay ni quien le ladre al silencio; pues en cuanto uno se acostumbra al vendedor que allí sopla, no se oye sino el silencio que hay en todas las soledades. Y eso acaba con uno. Mirame a mí. Conmigo acabó. Usted que va para allá comprenderá pronto lo que le digo..." (Page 122) The narrator starts to continue his speech: "Pues sí, como le estaba yo diciendo..."

"Pero no dijo nada. Se quedó mirando un punto fijo sobre la mesa..." As a final indication of Luvina's absorption of vitality and its negative effect on its inhabitants Rulfo ends the story as the narrator, his narration unfinished, falls asleep in the midst of a sentence.

San Gabriel is seen as a setting in which the quiet monotonous passage of time conceals the violent events which take place within time. Luvina is this and more. To a seeming timelessness is added the ability to destroy the vitality of its inhabitants. Comala has both these characteristics plus the strange ability to retain the vitality it has taken and return it in echoes, whispers and phantoms. Comala is a town dead to the present, as is Luvina, but Comala is living in the past. In Comala the past is relived again and again.
Like San Gabriel and Luvina, Comala is introduced in the first line. "Vine a Comala porque me dieron que acá vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo." (Pedro Páramo, page 7) As in Luvina the negative aspect of the town is presented immediately. Comala lacks vitality. "Era la hora en que los niños juegan en las calles de todos los pueblos, llenando con sus gritos la tarde..."

Al menos eso había visto en Sayula, todavía ayer, a esta misma hora...

Ahora estaba aquí, en este pueblo sin ruidos." (Page 12) Comala is different from any town Juan Preciado has been in. His first impression of it is that it is a sad town. "¿Y por qué se ve esto tan triste?" This idea of a sad town is continued by Susana's father who could be just as well describing Luvina. "Hay pueblos que saben a desdicha. Se les conoce con sorber un poco de su aire viejo y entumido, pobre y flaco como todo lo viejo. Este es uno de esos pueblos, Susana." (Page 102) Like Luvina "donde anida la tristeza" Comala also passes its sadness and oldness on to its inhabitants.

The people of Comala like those of Luvina seem to be shadows. The first person Juan Preciado sees raises a doubt in his mind. "Al cruzar una bocacalle vi una señora envuelta en su rebozo que desapareció como si no existiera." (Page 13)

But unlike Luvina's people, those of Comala not only seem to be phantoms, they are. They appear and disappear until Juan Preciado becomes so confused he loses all contact with reality. When Juan Preciado visits Comala, the town and most of its inhabitants are dead
because the man who sustained the town's life is dead. All that remains are the old and the depraved and the echoes of Pedro Páramo's lifetime. Comala is in every sense of the word a ghost town. Damiana Cisneros tells Juan: "Este pueblo está lleno de ecos... 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." (Page 52) Even the laughter of the town is old and tired. It is from the past and is never refreshed. Damiana continues: "Este pueblo está lleno de ecos.
Yo ya no me espanto. Oigo el aullido de los perro y dejo que aúllen. Los dejo, porque sé que aquí no vive ningún perro. Y en días de aire se ve al viento arrastrando hojas de árboles, cuando aquí, como tu ves, no hay árboles...

Y lo peor de todo es cuando oyes platicar a la gente, como si las voces salieran de alguna hendidura y, sin embargo, tan claras que las reconoces." (Page 53) When Damiana disappears, and Juan is alone, the voices and noises become constant. Juan has asked Damiana if she is alive or dead; he shows his now complete confusion of reality. Juan hears the carts pass by and recalls his mother's words about the carts coming to Comala every morning. But he hears their echoes at night. Since the sounds are detached from the objects that originally made them, they are free to tumble about Comala in complete disregard of time. But they have a definite purpose. They all add to the character of Pedro Páramo whose town Comala is.

Juan calls the shadows of objects "El eco de las sombras." He is now removed twice from reality. He has seen shadows of people who
once lived; now he does not hear the sounds of these shadows but only the echoes of their sounds. When, in a disturbed mental state, he finally meets two living people, a brother and sister who are living together as husband and wife, he realizes the difference in living sounds and "dead sounds." "Oía de vez en cuando el sonido de las palabras, y notaba la diferencia. Porque las palabras que había oído hasta entonces, hasta entonces lo supe, no tenían ningún sonido, no sonaban; se sentían; pero sin sonido, como las que se oyen durante los sueños." (Page 60) Juan is still able to distinguish the real from the unreal here. At the point where he loses this discernment, he dies. After he is dead he tells Dorotea: "Me mataron los murmullos... Llegué a la plaza... Me llevó hasta allí el bullicio de la gente y creí que de verdad la había." (Page 73) From this point on all the characters are dead. It becomes harder to distinguish at what point they passed from living to dead until the novel reaches the final climaxing confusion of life and death in Damiana Cisneros which will be discussed later.

Comala with its phantom sights and sounds has destroyed Juan Preciado by an almost physical presence. He describes his death as the sensation that the murmurings of Comala were crowding and suffocating him. However Comala is not presented entirely as decayed and dead. Juan's mother remembers Comala's beauty. This contrast to what Juan sees is due to the fact that his mother remembers a young Comala. She still sees Comala at the time of a young and vigorous Pedro Páermo. He controlled the town, so Comala was also young and vigorous. Dolores (Juan's mother) was young herself and in love with
Pedro when she last saw Comala. The other characters who describe the town are either old, discouraged or distressed. So Dolores describes a beautiful vital Comala in the springtime. "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." (Page 8)

Everything is alive and young and sweet because the one who describes it is. "...Llanuras verdes. Ver subir y bajar el horizonte con el viento que mueve las espigas, el rizar de la tarde con la lluvia de triples rizos. El color de la tierra, el olor de la alfalfa y del pan. Un pueblo que huele a miel recién derramada..." (Page 25).

Comala changes, it dies before Juan reaches it because Pedro Páramo willed that it die: "Me cruzaré de brazos y Comala se morirá de hambre.

Y así lo hizo." (Page 143)

So Comala, the final development of Rulfo's towns, is but a tool in the hands of his main character. As the characters which surround Pedro Páramo serve only as reflections of his life, Comala serves to show Pedro Páramo's complete control over his domain.

Pedro Páramo rules Comala from his ranch the Media Luna. The Media Luna cannot really be considered a setting. It is never described; only its vastness is mentioned. Pedro Páramo is the Media Luna, its owner and its law. The Media Luna drains Comala of its life. Pedro Páramo takes Comala's women physically and controls Comala's men, even its priest, morally. Most of Comala's children seen to have been fathered by Pedro Páramo. The Media Luna lives
through Pedro Páramo's vitality, while Comala is a parasite of the Media Luna. The town depends on the ranch for its livelihood; its fortune declines with that of Pedro Páramo. So Comala never really has a life of its own; it is never independent of Pedro Páramo and the Media Luna.

Comala has developed from Rulfo's two earlier towns. San Gabriel was only a location, a framework for a story. It is the same mysterious, quiet little mountain town that Luvina is. Luvina is a setting which influences and changes its people. Comala is subordinated to a man, Pedro Páramo. Comala also influences its inhabitants but only because it itself is controlled by the passions of Pedro Páramo. While Luvina seems to have a life and personality of its own and seems almost a living being, Comala is wholly dependent on the life of Pedro Páramo. But Comala has been developed beyond Luvina in the sense that it has developed beyond the world of reality as the reader knows it. Luvina, even with its apathetic, isolated inhabitants, is within reality. But Comala, with its ghosts and sounds without sources, has stepped beyond the limits of the reader's world.
CHARACTERS

From the above discussions it is evident that Rulfo's characters appear to us in the stories as merely shadows and voices. This is true of all the characters of the short stories and of the minor characters of the novel. There are no physical descriptions of characters that leave any definite picture in the reader's mind. There are only fleeting impressions of physical features such as the eyes of a man in Acuérdate, the legs of a woman in Talpa and Susana's pale green eyes in Pedro Páramo. These impressions are those of the narrating character, so the reader seldom meets a character but only hears about him from someone else. Some of the characters are left nameless; they are only voices without name or physical features, location or time. They seem to have no real substance.

The characters do not really communicate with one another; they hold inner conversations. In Macario, Nos han dado la tierra, La cuesta de las comadres, Es que somos muy pobres, Talpa, El llano en llamas and Anacleto Morones an "I" is relating, but the "you" is apparently absent. In El hombre, En la madrugada, Luvina, and Acuérdate a "you" is addressed by the "I", but a reply never enters into the story. The reader is isolated from anything outside the principal character. In Luvina (as has been discussed above) this isolation also includes the narrator who cannot seem to quite break through himself to the listener; he cannot clearly hear the questions asked him. He is walled in by himself and isolated from the present by his memories. This isolation is typical of all Rulfo's characters.
Only two characters, Pedro Páramo and Susana San Juan, are important in themselves. Pedro Páramo is important because he creates what we see of Comala. Through him the people of Comala have some semblance of life. Susana is important because she supplies Pedro's drive in life; she is his goal.

Pedro Páramo is introduced in the first line of the book along with Comala. "Vine a Comala porque me dijeron que acá vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo." (Page 7) "Un tal Pedro Páramo" presents the man first as a very vague figure. Juan knows nothing more than his father's name. He tells this to a mule driver he meets on the way to Comala. After a short exchange of small talk the mule driver makes a startling revelation: "Yo también soy hijo de Pedro Páramo." (Page 10) The vague "un tal Pedro Páramo" begins to take shape. He is responsible for both of the characters so far introduced. The emergence of these first impressions of Pedro Páramo's character is slow; conversation and the memories of Juan appear between the brief information about the man. Juan asks who Pedro Páramo is. The mule driver Abundio replies: "Un rencor vivo." (Page 10) Now Pedro Páramo is associated with an emotion, hate. Later it is seen that Pedro Páramo's life is directed by love, a love of power and a love for Susana. Abundio points out the size of the Media Luna owned by Pedro Páramo and indicates that he and Juan are not the only sons of Pedro Páramo. The episode is climaxed by Abundio's statement: "Pedro Páramo murió hace muchos años." In these few startling statements we have an impression of a man of power and passion who has effected many lives and who has been dead for many years but is still spoken of in the present tense.
The next glimpse of Pedro Páramo comes with the first time change. (Page 17) Pedro is seen as a boy, but the reader is not aware of his identity until page 21 when his mother calls him by name. Pedro is presented as a child absorbed in himself who talks as little as possible because he is occupied with thoughts. His thoughts are memories of Susana, a girl who has left Comala. Pedro thinks of the time he and Susana flew kites; the wind was pulling his kite away. "Ayúdame, Susana. Y unas manos suaves se apretaban a nuestras manos." (Page 18) This is one of the only two times Pedro Páramo calls for help; he and the Media Luna are self sufficient except for one need - Susana. Perhaps Pedro feels that Susana is his only equal, the only person independent of him. Pedro does the everyday errands of a boy; he helps his grandmother and mother and goes to the store. But no matter what he is doing, he is continually obsessed by thoughts of Susana. These thoughts set him apart from the everyday affairs around him. He is a boy living two lives: the physical life of any boy his age and already a mental life of memories.

Time changes back to Juan and Eduvigés. Pedro Páramo's power and attraction for the women of the town is revealed by their conversation. Every conversation or memory relation of the novel, if not directly involving Pedro Páramo, reveals something about his character through his effect on other people.

We again see Pedro as a boy. He is thinking of Susana, and we discover that she loves him too. Pedro thinks: "Dejabas atrás un pueblo del que muchas veces me dijiste: 'Lo quiero por tí; pero lo odio por todo lo demás...' Pense: 'No regresaré.' Y me lo dije
muchas veces: 'Susana no regresaré jamás; no volveré nunca.' (Page 27)

Pedro not only thinks of Susana, he addresses her in his thoughts, as if he were carrying on an inner conversation. In these inner conversations he seems to be another man from what he is when he is dealing with his associates. He expresses himself differently; the poetic words of his mind are far from the curt words he speaks when he replies to questions. This can be said of all the characters: the beauty of Rulfo's language comes in memories, inner conversations directed at no one, not in dialogue. But the gently passionate Pedro Páramo is never seen by the people around him. They know only his lust and drive for power. While some hate him and all respect and fear him, no one really loves him, except Susana as a child. Their love is never fulfilled.

Pedro Páramo shows his strong will early. His grandmother advises him to resign himself to learning the operation of the telegraph. Pedro replies: "Que se resignen otros, abuela, yo no estoy para resignaciones." (Page 28)

When Pedro inherits his father's ranch, episodes with Fulgor Sedano, Pedro's lackey, and Dolores, Pedro's wife, reveal to what length Pedro will go to keep his power. He marries Dolores and hangs a man with Fulgor's help in order to liquidate debts on the Media Luna. When Fulgor questions Pedro's methods, Pedro asserts himself as a supreme power.

"¿Y las leyes?
¿Cuáles leyes, Fulgor? La ley de ahora en adelante la vamos a hacer nosotros." (Page 52)

Even the mysterious voices which Juan hears echo Pedro Páramo's life. Bits of conversation reveal how Pedro Páramo procures girls from
Comala and how he threats men into selling him their land.

(Page 55,56)

After Juan is dead he finds that even the people in their graves talk about Pedro Páramo. He learns more of the violence done by his father to assert his power. But there is one person who does not talk about Pedro, Susana. Dorotea, a procuress for Pedro Páramo, shares Juan's grave and describes Susana: "La última esposa de Pedro Páramo. Unos dicen que estaba loca. Otros que no. La verdad es que ya hablaba sola desde en vida... El la quería. Estoy por decir que nunca quiso a ninguna mujer como a ésa. Ya se la entregaron sufrida y 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 mandó quemar los enseres...pasaron años y años y el seguía vivo, siempre allí, como un espantapájaros frente a las tierras de la Media Luna." (Page 99,100) With this description of Pedro's consuming but hopeless love for Susana begins the direct narration of Pedro Páramo's life. It begins at the time of Susana's return, when Pedro stops living in memories and comes back to a harsh reality, and ends with Pedro's death.

When Pedro hears that Susana has returned to Comala he is overcome with emotion. Until now he has showed no emotion, not even at his son's death. Then he said: "Estoy comenzando a pagar. Más vale empezar temprano, para terminar pronto.

No sintió dolor." (Page 84)
But when Susana returns; "Tuve ánimos de correr hacia ti. De rodearte de alegría. De llorar. Y lloré, Susana, cuando supe que al fin regresarías." (Page 102) He is still speaking mentally, silently to Susana, and his thoughts never have a chance to become words. Pedro arranges the death of Susana's father so that she is left alone. He gives her a house on the Media Luna. But Susana has returned to Comala a widow, and physical longing for her dead husband has made her insane. Now she lives in memories and thinks only of her past love. She is beyond contact with Pedro Páramo. So when Pedro Páramo leaves his memories of Susana for the real Susana, he finds that she is absorbed by memories which are beyond his power to overcome. The barrier of space has been overcome, but the barrier of reality cannot be. As in El llano en llamas the characters cannot reach one another, and they remain hopelessly alone in themselves.

Pedro stays by Susana's bed as much as possible, but she does not know him. When he makes love to other women he tries to imagine they are Susana: "Una mujer que no era de este mundo." (Page 133) Susana is Pedro's ideal; the fact that she is so near but so completely beyond his reach begins to destroy him. It is clear that Pedro wants Susana more than physically; he can have her this way quite easily. He needs her as a responsive person who will return his love to him not to a memory; this he can never have.Without the hope of Susana, Pedro begins to decline. "Quedó él, solo, como un tronco duro comenzando a desgajarse por dentro." (Page 133) Pedro Páramo is several times described as falling into pieces, disintegrating rather than dying.
Perhaps this is because Pedro Páramo dies bit by bit. He has been a man of action, a man of strong will and a man of memories. When Susana dies the man of action dies. The strong will continues; when Comala takes advantage of Susana's funeral to have a celebration, Pedro is angered and decides to let the town die. The town does die, but Pedro Páramo continues to live doing nothing. He is involved financially in the revolution but not spiritually. He forgets time: "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.'" (Page 144) So the man living in memories still remains too. Now that Susana is gone, he thinks of her and addresses her again gently and beautifully as he never did vocally. "Hace mucho tiempo que te fuiste, Susana. La luz era igual entonces que ahora, no tan bermeja; pero era la misma pobre luz sin lumbre, envuelta en el paño blanco de la neblina que hay ahora. Era el mismo momento. Yo aquí, junto a la puerta mirando el amanecer y mirando cuando te ibas, siguiendo el camino del cielo; por donde el cielo comenzaba a abrirse en luces, alejándote, cada vez más desteñida entre las sombras de la tierra." (Page 144) Pedro Páramo has lived a life of violence much in contrast to this inner peace apparent in the quiet repetition of time found in his memories. One more act of violence, Abundio's drunken stabbing of Damiana, occurs before Pedro Páramo can return to his memories. He feels his body dying little by little: "Estaba acostumbrado a ver morir cada día alguno de sus pedazos." (Page 151) This impersonal word pedazos indicates that this outward Pedro Páramo is something apart from the real man.
Although Pedro is dying outwardly he returns to his memories: "Susana" dijo. Luego cerro los ojos. "Yo te pedí que regresarás..." (Page 151) This time he speaks aloud in one last plea to the only person he needs. As the first mention of Susana came as a cry for help (page 18), so the last mention is also an expression of inadequacy, incompleteness. He remembers Susana as an apparition of beauty; she is now raised above the human. "...Había una luna grande en medio del mundo. Se me perdían los ojos mirándote. Los rayos de la luna filtrándose sobre tu cara. No me cansaba de ver esa aparición que era tu. Suave, restringada de luna; tu boca abollonada, humedecida, irisada de estrellas; tu cuerpo transparentándose en el agua de la noche. Susana, Susana San Juan." (Page 151)

Pedro is passing from a memory to an actual vision of Susana. "Quiso levantar su mano para aclarar la imagen..." (Page 151) He cannot move, and he realizes he is dying. The Media Luna is already dead: "La tierra en ruinas estaba frente a él, vacía." (Page 151)

Although all action has been taken from him by age, and his memories are interrupted, his will remains strong. When Damiana comes to him "enderezó el cuerpo, endureciéndolo." (Page 152) She offers to bring him his dinner, but he refuses: "Voy para allá. Ya voy." (Page 152) When he tries to walk he falls "suplicando por dentro; pero sin decir una sola palabra." (Page 152) Pedro Páramo is to his death two men - the one "suplicando por dentro," living inwardly, incomplete, longing and pleading for a love he cannot reach - the other "sin decir una palabra," the outward, self sufficient, lustful but unemotional Pedro Páramo. The former is shown only to the
reader; Pedro Páramo's fellow characters know only the outward man. Pedro Páramo's will keeps the two from meeting even at death. He does not die as a man, he falls apart as something made of many facets. "Dio un golpe seco contra la tierra y se fue desmoronando como si fuera un montón de piedras." (Page 152).

The reader knows Susana only through Pedro's thoughts of her until page 93 when Susana herself begins to talk from her grave. She invents an explanation for her position: "Estoy acostada en la misma cama donde murió mi madre hace ya muchos años." After she remembers her childhood, she brings herself back to reality: "Pero esto es falso.

Estoy aquí, boca arriba, pensando en aquel tiempo para olvidar mi soledad... Porque estoy muerta." So Susana first appears as a memory of Pedro, then as a dead body, and finally when the end of her life is narrated she is insane. The reader never knows directly the Susana who justifies Pedro's idealization of her.

Like Pedro, Susana says very little to her associates; she lives in private thoughts. Like Pedro, she stops her active life when her loved one dies. Her memories of her husband's love are much more fiercely passionate than Pedro's gentler idealization of his love for Susana. Susana says of her husband: "...lo que yo cuiero de él es su cuerpo." (Page 124) Pedro, on the other hand, possesses Susana physically but wants something more - perhaps it could be called sympathy or at least more than a physical relationship.

Like Pedro, Susana is waiting for death; she does not want to live if the one person she needs and longs for is unobtainable. She
leaves the world of reality to live constantly in her memories, until she believes that the memories are realities. Then she is called insane. Unlike Pedro she is unable to keep her two worlds separate. This confusion appears most strikingly when Susana dies; padre Rentería tries to explain the mortification of the body before he administers Extreme Unction, but Susana turns his ugly words of death into expressions of love. "Tengo la boca llena de tierra," says the priest. Susana thinks, "Tengo la boca llena de ti, de tu boca."

(Page 139)

Susana's husband's name was Florencio, a name very much in contrast with the hard, barren connotation of Pedro Páramo. Not enough is known about Florencio to determine whether the contrast extends beyond names. But the outward Pedro Páramo agrees with the unrelenting, severeness of his name, as does the description of his death "como si fuera un montón de piedras." Susana, the lily, is the ideal of beauty. The real Susana remains a mystery to the reader; she always appears either in the thoughts of others, in death or in insanity. The real Susana is not the important one. Susana is important for what she is to Pedro Páramo. She is a part of his life as are all the characters of the novel. But she is independent of Pedro; memories of his actions do not pervade her life as they do the lives of the other characters. When she returns to Comala she does not love Pedro; perhaps she is not even aware of his presence. It is she who pervades his thoughts. She, unlike the other characters, is more than a reflection of Pedro's life; she is its motive. Susana is the unobtainable that Pedro never stops trying to reach. To reach her
would be to break out of his self isolation, but like all Rulfo's characters Pedro Páramo fails. Each character must remain alone in his private world. "¿...cuál era el mundo de Susana San Juan? Esa fue una de las cosas que Pedro Páramo nunca llegó a saber." (Page 117)

Compared to Pedro and Susana the minor characters of the novel have no will of their own. With the exception of the priest, these characters have a reality only through Pedro Páramo. Padre Rentería has a reality, a life of his own, but is deprived of a will. Therefore he never really steps out of Comala's shadowy existence to become a flesh and blood character. Pedro's moral control of Comala is most apparent through the character of padre Rentería. The priest is Comala's moral leader, but he loses his own self respect and the respect of his superiors by accepting bribes from Pedro. The sins which he hears in the confessional are all involvements with Pedro Páramo, Pedro's son killed the priest's brother and raped his niece, but padre Rentería does nothing to condemn Pedro to the people of Comala. The priest realizes he is doing wrong: "Un hombre malo. Eso siento que soy." (Page 90) He either lacks the courage or the vitality to state his convictions about Pedro. It seems that, like most of the characters, he lacks vitality and will. His superior in a neighboring town asks him about Comala: "Es Pedro Páramo aún el dueño, no?" The priest replies: "Así es la voluntad de Dios." (Page 90) He lets Comala continue as it is because he has no "voluntad" to combat Pedro's will. The priest had a guilty conscience about his approval by silence of Pedro Páramo, and he con-
siders himself a failure. He is last seen carrying arms in the revolution; he has abandoned his church and his people and any ideals he once had.
PREDOMINANT THEMES

Rulfo's characters are illusive; the reader cannot really describe them and sometimes cannot even tell if they are alive or dead. The settings are illusive; they are apparently concrete places but they deceive the senses of those who live in them. Rulfo's narration of time is illusive; the medley of various stages of time creates the illusion that there is no time. Many of the characters are trying to find something that either does not exist or whose realization proves to be a deception. This pursuit of illusion appears often in Rulfo's works.

The first case of a deception comes in Talpa (El llano en llamas). A girl and her brother-in-law have decided to hasten the death of her sick husband. They think that they can be happy when he is out of the way. But they find that they both have such feelings of remorse that their feelings toward one another completely change. Instead of being happy they are made unhappier. They have realized what they wanted, but life has deceived them.

In Luvina the unnamed traveller says that he went to Luvina as a young man with illusions. Perhaps they were illusions of wealth, of starting a new life, or of happiness; whatever his intentions were, Luvina destroyed them. "Fui a ese lugar con mis ilusiones cabales y volví viejo y acabado." (El llano en llamas, page 114) The town itself has the power of disillusionment that death has in Pedro Páramo.

In Pedro Páramo two types of illusions appear. The hallucina-
tions which Juan sees and hears and the expectations which the characters have but never realize. The hallucinations have been discussed as a part of the setting. The illusive expectations of the characters are a part of their isolation from one another. In most cases their expectations involve contact with another person. The characters fail in this contact and are left alone.

Juan is the first to mention his illusion. After his mother dies he relates: "...pronto comencé a llenarme de sueños, a darle vuelo a las ilusiones. Y de este modo se me fue formando un mundo alrededor de la esperanza que era aquel señor llamado Pedro Páramo..." (Page 8)

He came to Comala to find his father and perhaps an inheritance of money, but he finds only fear and death. When Dorotea asks him why he came to Comala, he replies: "Vine a buscar a Pedro Páramo, que según parece fue mi padre. Me trajo la ilusión." (Page 74)

This mention of illusion reminds Dorotea of her own: "¿La ilusión? Eso cuesta caro. A mí me costó vivir más de lo debido. Pagué con eso la duda de encontrar a mi hijo, que no fue, por decirlo así, sino una ilusión más; porque nunca tuve ningún hijo." (Page 74)

Dorotea was involved in a double illusion. She believed she had a child when she had none; she believed the child had been taken from her when she never had one to begin with. She walked about Comala with her "baby" wrapped up in her cloak, living an illusion. She wants to be a mother, which in her case would be a release from her self isolation, but she cannot be.

The most important pursuit of an illusion in the novel, the one that makes Pedro Páramo what he is and makes Comala a dead town, is
Pedro's pursuit of Susana. Susana is an illusion; she is not the same Susana that Pedro knew and remembers as a child. That Susana never returns and can never be regained by Pedro. But as long as Susana lives, Pedro has the hope of regaining the companionship and love of their childhood. When she dies he realizes there is no more hope. He abandons the illusion or becomes disillusioned, and he loses the purpose of his life - the pursuit of Susana. Dorotea uses the word disillusion in referring to Pedro's reaction to Susana's death and his abandon of Comala. "Le perdió interés a todo. Desalojó sus tierras y mandó quemar los enseres. Unos dicen que porque le agarró la desilusión; lo cierto es que echó fuera a la gente y se sentó en su equipal, cara al camino." (Page 99) The disillusionment comes only with death. Nothing else, Susana's absense, her marriage or her insanity, is considered final by Pedro Páramo. Only the cessation of life leaves him without hope. The other characters mentioned acknowledge their own illusions either after death (Juan and Dorotea) or while they are in a state of isolation from the present (the traveller from Luvina). Therefore they admit that their ideals or goals never existed. Only Pedro never really abandons his illusive ideal. He realizes it can never be attained, and therefore he abandons its pursuit. But he keeps the illusion of Susana in his mind. To be completely satisfied Pedro must combine the mental image with a physical reality. He cannot do this. But although the physical Susana is dead, the mental Susana, his own personal Susana, is preserved within Pedro Páramo to the last. The other characters do not have this intensity of inner life. Pedro is never seen in the disillusionment of
death perhaps because both his mental and physical life are destroyed at one time when he falls apart bit by bit instead of dying. Certainly Pedro is never seen as dead because he is the force of the novel; when he is destroyed so are all the memories, voices and phantoms that surround him. The dead are only used to reflect the life of Pedro Páramo; they die with him as reflections die with an image, and the entire illusive world of Pedro Páramo comes to an end.

There is frequent violence in Rulfo's works, but it is always a violence that appears in contrast either to the quiet monotony of time or to the peaceful inaction of memories. Each character has his violent outer life in which he clashes with others and his peaceful inner life in which he is isolated from others. The violence is never actually "seen"; it is reduced to memories. In the monotonous, continuous repetition of time the few violent events lose their importance. In Rulfo's works time does not pass; it repeats itself. The events which take place in time are smothered by the oppression of this repetition; they are dwarfed by the vastness of time.

This theme of a contrast between sudden violence and continuous monotony is seen in En la Madrugada. Here a violent crime is committed on a sudden impulse. But it is framed by descriptions of sunrise and nightfall on a little town. This description of the everyday is the first and last impression given to the reader. The repetition of day and night covers the violence with a kind of veil of time. The one distinct action is obscured by the suggestion of an eternity of days and nights. The violence happened once, but the sunrises and sunsets will go on and on.
The use of the present tense in the introductory sunrise of *En la medrugada* and the use of the past tense in narrating the murder are a part of the contrast of violence and monotony or action and inaction. The violent action is moved away in time from the reader while the reader is drawn into the quiet of the everyday. The action thus loses its vitality.

The same effect is accomplished by the use of memory narration. In *La Cuesta de las comadres*, *Es que somos muy pobres*, *El hombre*, *Acuérdate* and *Anacleto Morones* violence is remembered. Action is removed from the reader's present by the intervention of a narrator who remembers, not lives the action. The reader never really "witnesses" action; he only hears about it through another person. Thus the outward action of the characters is never in the present time; the present for the reader is dominated by the inner contemplative side of the characters.

The character who best displays this coexistence of outward violence and inward quiet is Pedro Páramo. More than the other characters he lives two distinct lives, one outward and one inward. The one life does not effect the other, until he loses Susana. Then he turns entirely to the inner quiet of memories. Until this point Pedro Páramo, (as has been shown above in the discussion of characters), is able to go about his active affairs and to remember at the same time. The characters of the short stories, on the other hand, are apparently in states of inactivity when they remember; they are not interrupted by anything or anyone from the outside world.

Pedro Páramo lives a violent life of murder and robbery. Even
on the day of his death he is an indirect cause of violence. But
even so, the quiet memories of Susana, the continuous inner contempla-
tion of Pedro Páramo submerge these violent outbursts in the peace of
reoccurring time. The outer violence is always kept in the background;
the inner solitude dominates the novel.

Death is present in some degree in all the short stories and in
Pedro Páramo. Death is seen as something which sets up a barrier
between the dying character and reality. Unlike the invisible bar-
riers which always exist between the living characters, the barrier
of death is a visible one. Something comes between the dying character
and the rest of the world; it makes the world indistinct. Several
times this blurring barrier is fog. In En la madrugada the murdered
man is described: "Una nublazón negra le cubrió la mirada cuando quiso
abrir los ojos. No sentió dolor, sólo una cosa negra que le fue
oscureciendo el pensamiento hasta la oscuridad total." (El llano en
llamaes, page 59) Miguel Páramo describes the feeling of death to
Eduviges; "Se me perdió el pueblo. Había mucha neblina o humo o no
sé que; pero sí sé que Contla no existe." (Pedro Páramo, page 30)
Juan's experience at death is similar; "Tengo memoria de haber visto
algo así como nubes espumosas haciendo remolino sobre mi cabeza y
luego enjuagarme en aquella espuma y perderme en su nublazón."
(Pedro Páramo, page 72) Susana also feels that a barrier is set up
at death; "Miró de reajo al padre Rentería y lo vio lejos, como si
estuviera detrás de un vidrio empañado." (Pedro Páramo, page 139)
The barrier not only exists for the dead person but also for those
left alive. Rulfo describes Susana's dead husband; "¿Qué largo era
aquel hombre! ¿Qué alto! Y su voz era dura... Y su figura era borrosa, ¿o se hizo borrosa después?, como si entre ella y él se interpusiera la lluvia." (Pedro Páramo, page 123)

Death or the mention of death often comes during a rainfall. Pedro's mother and grandmother pray for the soul of Pedro's grandfather during a rainfall. (Page 21) It is raining when Pedro's mother tells him his father is dead. (Page 32) It rains steadily during the day when Susana's father dies. This steady persistent rain is unusual in Comala, and Rulfo insists on its unusual persistence; "Una lluvia menuda, extraña para estas tierras que sólo saben de aguaceros." (Page 105); "Allá afuera se oía el caer de la lluvia sobre las hojas de los plátanos, se sentía como si el agua hirviera sobre el agua estancada en la tierra... Los caños borbotaban, hacían espuma, cansados de trabajar durante el día, durante la noche, durante el día. El agua seguía corriendo, diluyendo en incesantes burbujas.

Era la medianoche y allá afuera el ruido del agua apagaba todos los sonidos." (Page 109-110) This insistence on an unnatural rain that pervades and interrupts the everyday life in Comala gives an oppressive atmosphere of gloom. The Indians who come to the market feel this atmosphere: "Sienten que es un mal día. Quizá por eso tiemblan debajo de sus mojados "gabanés" de paja; no de frío, sino de temor. Y miran la lluvia desmenuzada y al cielo que no suelta sus nubes." (Page 106) The unnaturalness of the rain accentuates Susana's unnatural acceptance of her father's death. She laughs when she hears the news. This contrast of laughter and death is seen again at Susana's death when Comala has a fair instead of a period of mourn-
ing. There is a lack of natural emotion at all instances of death, except when a servant cries at Susana's death. This lack of emotion seems fitting for the manner in which death is presented. It is presented or rather remembered as a dreamlike event of the past, not as an event of great sadness. Even at Susana's death, which has such a great impact on Pedro Páramo, the reader does not observe Pedro's emotions at the actual time of death but reads his memories at a time much after the death itself.

The dreamlike quality of death is developed through the similarity in the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the characters. The actual causes or circumstances are never mentioned directly. The deaths are usually not observed first hand but are reported by someone else. The announcement of death usually comes at night; for example, the announcements of Pedro's father's death, of Miguel Páramo's death, of Susana's father's death and of Susana's husband's death are all brought at night to sleeping persons. Susana's own death is surmised by two old women who see the light in her house go off at night. When Miguel dies the similarity in circumstances sets off a chain reaction of memories of death in Pedro's mind: "Vino hasta su memoria la muerte de su padre, también en un amanecer como éste... Nunca quiso vivir ese recuerdo porque le traía otros, como si rompiera un costal repleto y luego quisiera contener el grano."

(Page 83)

Only two deaths, those of the two principal characters Pedro and Susana, are "witnessed" by the reader. In sharp contrast to the
other deaths, Pedro's comes in the bright sunshine, at noon in the fulness of the day. He is thus removed entirely from the dream atmosphere of the lesser characters. In life and death he stands out as the one reality of the novel.

Throughout Pedro Páramo there is a confusion of life and death. The novel begins with the death of Juan's mother. The first person Juan meets is Abundio; he later finds out that Abundio died years ago. The first person Juan sees in Comala disappears "como si no existiera." Juan discovers that the woman he spent the first night with is really dead. His informant also disappears when she is asked if she is really alive. Juan discovers that the first woman, Eduviges, had been informed of his coming by his dead mother. These people of Comala are apparently dead since they stopped "living" years ago. But they speak and look like living people except for their obvious distraction from the present time.

When Juan dies he finds himself in a graveyard where the dead, although confined to their coffins, are still able to talk and remember their lives. Just as they did throughout most of their life they still live in their own private world of memories. So death is not very different from life except for the former's lack of movement. The characters still remain isolated and still relive past events.

The frequent changes in time add to the confusion of life and death. It is almost the halfway point in the novel before the reader is informed that all the characters are dead, even the first narrator Juan. However the reader receives glimpses of some of the characters
after death and of others before death. There is no way of dis-tinguishing the living from the dead except by the specific indication of
the author that the character is dead.

The final, insolvable confusion, comes in a blending of life and
dea at the end of the novel. Damiana Cisneros, Pedro's housekeeper,
has apparently been stabbed to death by Abundio. "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." (Page 150) But awhile later she
comes out to Pedro and asks him if he wants dinner. It is then that
Pedro crumbles to the ground. But before this final appearance of the
apparently dead Damiana, Pedro feels himself die physically: "Sus
ojos apenas se movían; saltaban de un recuerdo a otro, desdibujando
el presente. De pronto su corazón se detenía y parecía como si
también se detuviera el tiempo. Y el aire de la vida." (Page 152)
Perhaps this is the actual stoppage of Pedro Páramo's life, and the
appearance of Damiana, her support of Pedro to the doorway and his
fall are one last confusion of life and death which is neither one
nor the other as the reader knows them.
CONCLUSION

In Rulfo's stories the world seems to have lost all substance. There are shadows and voices rather than human beings, memories rather than actualities, an "eternal" present of repeating time rather than a definite "now," localities that are off there somewhere but never really here. The phantoms who inhabit the world are silent stoics whose hopes have become illusions, who live constantly within themselves. Rulfo's Pedro Páramo emerges as his main character through the use of narration, setting and themes as well as through characterization. He is the force of the novel in all its phases. But even he cannot realize his ambition although he has the will that the other characters are deprived of. In this world of illusion the confusion of life and death creates a bewilderment, a doubt in the actual state of people and places. The intermingling of violence and quiet contemplation produces a state which is neither one nor the other, neither activity nor non-activity. Perhaps this world of unrealized ambition, where interior anguish is hidden by impassivity and monotony, is Rulfo's view of Mexico.