

action," but must find the law of Mexico in books. This book is a good place for him to start.

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After the Storm: Landmarks of the Modern Mexican Novel. By JOSEPH SOMMERS. Albuquerque, 1968. University of New Mexico Press. Illustration. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 208. \$5.95.

This study is an excellent analysis in depth of four landmarks among contemporary Mexican novels: *The Edge of the Storm* by Agustín Yáñez, *Where the Air is Clear* and *The Death of Artemio Cruz* by Carlos Fuentes, and *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo. There are brief comments on Mexican novels of the preceding generation which provide a basis for judgment.

Sommers has interviewed both Rulfo and Fuentes, so that he is able to bring their remarks into his discussion. His interpretation of *The Edge of the Storm* seems to me to be his weakest piece, for he does not comment at all on what I would consider the novel's most important quality—its symbolic representation of a composite Hispanic village spanning time from the Middle Ages to the Mexican Revolution.

Yáñez' village is not a real town but a symbolic town. The historic particular is Mexico, but the universal poetic frame is broadly Hispanic. This symbolic village recalls the medieval period, when the Church dominated everything, but its people do not have the sexual freedom of the medieval epoch nor its great outlet in church building. The village is also of the Counter-Reformation, but without its flowering Baroque literature and art. It is also modern Mexico, but without its social, economic, and political oppression or constant protest. It is a village of *almas*, of souls, not of Mexicans concerned with what the political boss is doing or where their next meal is coming from. Yáñez focuses on the agony of these *almas* in their composite prisonhouse of Hispanic values.

In Sommers' analysis of *Pedro Páramo* analogies with Faulkner, the *Odyssey*, Oedipus, Jocasta, Eurydice, Orpheus, and Dante are mentioned but not pursued. Sommers states that Rulfo is interested in the *quality* of myth rather than in any specific myth. His novel dramatizes the idea of the wandering *ánimas en pena*, agonizing souls, of rural Mexico. Sommers says that Rulfo disintegrates his

universe, then puts back together enough pieces to have a "coherent, highly personalized expression of despair" (p. 94). Sommers does not point out that the novel reflects today's overall fragmentation of reality which has resulted in the fragmentation of man, who feels that he has neither identity nor epoch.

The analysis of Fuentes' *Where the Air is Clear* goes into the collage type of presentation which the author uses, but does not indicate how sloppily he has put this novel together, with its hodge-podge of needless confusions and redundancies. Sommers rightly finds the novel to be a quest for Mexican identity which also "incarnates the values and myths of Indian Mexico, in particular the timeless sense of betrayal and the compulsion to reestablish ties with the past by means of sacrifice" (p. 103). *The Death of Artemio Cruz* by the same author is a better constructed novel, says Sommers. It combines the existential anguish of Cruz with the great sweep of Mexican history and much astute comment on that convulsive, contradictory, traumatic history, comment which insists on reverting to the egg.

All four of these landmark novels, Sommers writes, achieve a balance between national preoccupation and universal values. In them the Mexican novel has truly come of age.

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Mexican Indian Costumes. By DONALD and DOROTHY CORDRY. Foreword by MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS. Austin, 1968. University of Texas Press. Texas Pan American Series. Illustrations. Maps. Figures. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xx, 373. \$15.00.

Mexican Indian Costumes is a many-faceted delight. The text, lucidly written by Donald and Dorothy Cordry, contains information of value to the archaeologist, historian, cultural anthropologist, and student of weaving. Interspersed in the text are numerous superb black and white and color photographs taken by Donald Cordry, as well as a number of useful figures and maps. The book is handsomely printed, and it can be enjoyed as much for its aesthetic merits as for the data it contains.

The first part of the book (pp. 5-190) is a general treatment of Indian dress in Mexico. Attempts are made to put contemporary costumes in temporal perspective by means of references to pre-Conquest styles (as known from sources such as the codices and figurines) and to information provided by early Spanish writers. The