THE IMAGE OF LIMITED GOOD IN TWO MEXICAN NOVELS:
HASTA NO VERTE, JESUS MIO AND LA PRINCESA DEL PALACIO DE HIERRO

by

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Certain relationships between reality and fiction can be appreciated by means of a study of a type of writing called documentary fiction, in which non-fiction - newspaper reports and sociological studies, for example - is presented in a narrative framework. The reality dealt with, however, must be a cognitive one, that is, a set of mental constructs shared by members of a society rather than any concrete physical reality. Documentary fiction has been chosen over "pure" fiction for a first study in this area because while it conforms to the conventions of the narrative, it documents "real" behavior and thus may be considered to be a meeting ground between the real and the imaginary. In addition, documentary fiction is an increasingly popular literary form both in the United States and Latin America. A short review of the genre in Mexico precedes a detailed study of two examples of it from that country: *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (Poniatowska 1969) and *La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro* (Sainz 1974).

A cognitive model, the Image of Limited Good, has been posited for Mexico by George Foster (1965 and 1967). A subcategory of this model is the nucleus of behavior which Octavio Paz (1950) calls the Mexican mask. It is our contention that the model predicts behavior not only for the society but for its literature as well, and that this is
the point at which reality and fiction come together. In the novels analyzed, this is seen to be the case. *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* is clearly a portrait of a member of the Limited Good society. The protagonist of *La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro*, on the other hand, exhibits very little of this traditional behavior. However, she structures her discourse to conform to the pattern of masking, which is closely tied to Limited Good behavior.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to suggest certain relationships between "real" life and "fiction" and thus, at a more general level, between literature and society. The conclusions reached are by no means definitive, but are meant only to indicate directions for further research.

Since this is a preliminary look at the problem, a type of literature has been chosen for analysis which is rather peripheral to what is commonly considered "pure" fiction. However, although the form - which has been designated here as "documentary fiction" - is not the same thing as pure fiction, it presents an advantage for this study. This advantage is that in documentary fiction, precisely because of the social documentation involved, certain relationships between the literary work and the society it documents are more apparent than in purely imaginative fiction. Nevertheless, it is probable that many of these relationships hold true for pure fiction as well, although this assertion will have to be borne out by other studies than the one at hand.

Documentary fiction has its antecedents in realism and naturalism. However, it differs significantly from these, according to Vicente Leñero (1974:2):

...el empleo de la grabadora como instrumento para reproducir el habla coloquial dio pie a que...las transcripciones magneto-fónicas de Oscar Lewis cancelaran a partir de ese momento los alardes realistas de los...
escritores empeñados en calcar el lenguaje popular. Así como la aparición de la fotografía finiquitó el furor de la pintura naturalista, cuya máxima virtud era copiar al detalle lo que miraba el ojo, la aparición de la grabadora...convertía ahora en infructuoso el esfuerzo imaginativo de los fotógrafos del lenguaje. Se liquidaba pues un recurso, pero al mismo tiempo se instauraba otro: el aprovechamiento expreso de la cinta magnética, ya no con fines antropológicos sino con propósitos decididamente novelísticos.

Documentary fiction is an increasingly popular and texturally rich literary form. As Gustavo Sainz (1979a:1) remarks:

El investigador social tenía una ventaja sobre el escritor, que era que su acervo no partía de su sensibilidad o de sus obsesiones particulares sino de una observación muy minuciosa de la realidad, es decir de una observación incluso que él hacía con la ayuda de otras personas....Por lo tanto alcanzaba un nivel de profundidad en su aprehensión de la realidad que un escritor, con contadas excepciones, no puede conseguir.

For Sainz, this grounding in reality makes documentary fiction superior to traditional fiction as a literary medium. While no such value judgment is implied in this study, it would seem that by now documentary fiction is worthy of study in itself. Therefore, there is a double task undertaken here: to examine documentary fiction as a literary form on the one hand, especially as it exists in Mexico, and on the other to draw certain conclusions about the relationship of fiction to reality, using two examples of Mexican documentary fiction as a guide.
It is obvious that a few terms in the preceding paragraphs must be defined in order to avoid more abstractions than are absolutely necessary. While the terms "literature" and "society" are too broad for this sort of definition, "reality," "pure fiction," and "documentary fiction" have very particular meanings in this investigation, and will be explained.

"Reality," in the sense it is used here, has no exact relation to the physical world: there is no such thing as an objective reality. This is a crucial point, because it seems that it is precisely at this juncture that studies in the relationship between reality and fiction have gone astray. The "reality" referred to in this case is a cognitive reality shared by a social group. It appears that there is a set of mental constructs around which a society internalizes its collective experience, and through which individual experience can be made intelligible to the society as well. Social scientists have referred to this set of constructs as the "reality set" (Scollon and Scollon 1979) or the "cognitive orientation" (Foster 1965 and 1967), and these sets of integrating principles are what are treated as reality in this study.

The social nature of the cognitive orientation must be emphasized. Literature, while it depends greatly on the individual experience and creativity of an author, is basi-
cally a social phenomenon. While many writers do not seek to have their works read and understood by everyone, few indeed are those who wish to be read by no one. Certain literary critics, such as Booth (1961), Barthes (1971) and Todorov (1977), maintain that reading is as important a task as writing in the literary process. It is clear, then, that the cognitive orientation which is held in common by author and reader must take precedence over any individual reality. It will be through this common cognitive code, of course, that the writer's unique experience and creative genius will be assimilated by the group, so that individuality as a concept in literary creation is not invalidated by the existence of the code.

The two terms remaining to be defined are "pure fiction" and "documentary fiction." As with the ideas of "literature" and "society," no attempt will be made to say what the word "fiction" itself means. For this the reader is directed to excellent and exhaustive studies on the subject by Northrop Frye (1957) and Wayne Booth (1961). Rather, a distinction will be drawn between "pure and "documentary" fiction.

It is impossible to delineate with any exactness the boundary between the two. It is more productive to imagine that there is a continuum with non-fiction at one extreme and fiction at the other. Non-fiction, and more specifi-
cally reportage or documentary which is the kind of non-fiction being examined here, includes all manner of things: newspaper articles, policy statements, interviews, term papers and scientific reports, as well as any other form of writing which documents real subject matter. "Pure" fiction is the product solely of an author's imagination. Of course, while a text may approach classification at one end or the other of this continuum, the extremes are actually theoretical ideals; reporting is always colored by an author's bias, and fiction must of necessity draw on some "reality." Documentary may make greater or lesser use of narrative techniques - a fact quite familiar to historians and biographers - whereas fiction may be placed very solidly within a matrix of real-life events, situations and facts.

"Documentary fiction" is a term to be applied to a type of text falling somewhere near the middle of the posited continuum. In it, the author makes a concerted effort at investigation, either alone or working with a research team, before writing. The results of the research are reported, not in the cut-and-dried manner of the scholarly paper, but in the mode of fiction, usually using highly sophisticated narrative techniques.³

The concept of documentary fiction is broad enough to include works based totally on academic investigation, such
as the historical novel. However, for the purposes of this study, the concept will be limited to works which depend partially or completely on research conducted with live informants imparting information about themselves through such means as interviews, field observation, life history data, etc.. Indirect, scholarly research is not precluded, but is not the sole basis for the sort of writing being considered here.

It has already been stated that this study has the two-fold goal of pointing out a cognitive relationship between reality and fiction and showing why documentary fiction is a particularly rich form of literary expression. A theoretical discussion of the nature of the reality-fiction relationship is introduced in Chapter 1. Following this, certain general ideas on the nature of documentary fiction and a comparison of it to fiction and non-fiction are also presented, along with a more specific discussion of documentary fiction in Mexico. The connection between a society's cognitive orientation and its literature is stated in Chapter 1 only in theoretical terms. The object of Chapters 2 and 3 is to demonstrate it at a practical level, using a specific cognitive code and two texts of documentary fiction by authors who are competent users of that code. This type of analysis is not limited to use with texts of documentary fiction, but it is felt that the ties between the cognitive orientation and texts of this kind
might be easier to deal with in a first study.

In Chapter 2 there is a discussion of a possible cognitive model for Mexican society, referred to here as the Image of Limited Good (from Foster 1965 and 1967). Chapter 3 shows how the Image of Limited Good is handled in Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (1969) and Gustavo Sainz's *La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro* (1974). Chapter 4 consists of the conclusions to be drawn from these analyses as well as comments on the two novels studied as examples of documentary fiction.
CHAPTER I

Literature and Society: The Nature of the Author-Reader-Literature Relationship

Any literate society can be divided into certain subgroups according to the following diagram:

![Diagram](image)

Figure 1

The subsets of authors and readers overlap somewhat: some authors are readers and some readers are authors. There are a leftover few (or many, depending on the society) who neither read nor write. Literature in such a society is the concrete manifestation of a certain relationship between authors and readers in that there is an implicit agreement between author and reader to exercise their common cognitive code for other that essential, overt behavioral reasons. The way in which this agreement works may be understood once two concepts are made clear. These are narrative framing and the "grammaticality" of the cognitive orientation.

Richard Scollon and Suzanne B. K. Scollon (1979) have
suggested a series of frames functioning within a society and whose graphic representation resembles that of mathematical sets. In the Scollon and Scollon study these frames posit a relationship among informants, field observers and texts elicited in an anthropological field study done at Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. While the goals of that study were different from those of the present one, a modified form of this framing scheme is useful here in formulating a possible relationship among author, reader and narrative text. The scheme looks like this:

![Diagram of frames](image)

**Figure 2**

The frames start within a given literary text and expand outward to include the narrator of the text, the fic-
titious reader (either the one implied within the text or
the actual reader who has become "fictitious" by suspending
disbelief sufficiently to participate in the author's nar-
rative game: the broken lines indicate the two possible
placements of the fictitious reader), the author of the
text, the reader and the society as a whole.

In Scollon and Scollon, each successive frame, pro-
gressing outwards, constituted a gloss on the preceding
frame, that is an explanation of one kind or another (a
translation from Chipewyan to English, for example). In
this study, however, the relationship between two contigu-
ous frames, moving from the center outward, can be expressed
as $x$ "is a function of" or "operates in the context of" $y$.
Thus, the innermost frame, the content of the narration, is
a function of the narrator's behavior. In the same way the
creation of the text (all of the frames inside the shaded
area) is a function of the author's behavior.

At the level of the author, the diagram becomes more
complicated. It should be pointed out that the outer frames
of Fig. 2 (author's behavior, reader's behavior and cogni-
tive code) are analoguous to the sets in Fig. 1 in their
relationships to each other. Author and reader are indepen-
dent beings within the social system and one cannot be de-
picted as a function of the other. On the other hand, in
some sense they share the author's text (going back to
the idea that writing and reading a given text are co-equal
creative tasks), and for this reason in Fig. 2 the author's frame and the reader's frame are shown as overlapping sets inside the common area of which the text functions. The outermost frame is that of the cognitive code, that is, the set of all possible behavior which is in accordance with the society's cognitive orientation. The framing system could be extended almost indefinitely outward. Perhaps the next few frames would be the set of all possible human behavior, the set of all possible animal behavior and the set of possible behavior in the physical world. These, of course, do not concern us here.

The precise significance of this framing diagram is that it allows us to make certain general observations about the relationship of "reality" (the cognitive code) to a literary text. A cognitive code in a society is somewhat like the grammar of a language. The generative view of grammar, espoused by such linguists as Noam Chomsky (1957) and Sydney Lamb (1966), is that all native speakers of a language are "competent," that is they have internalized the grammatical rules of the language, and upon these rules they are able to generate grammatical utterances in the language.

The members of a society are also competent users of the cognitive code. Just as they generate "grammatical" sentences, they are also able to produce "appropriate" behavior and modes of thought. A writer, besides behaving in
real life in accordance with the code just as all members of the society do, is further able to generate texts based on the code. These texts will conform to the code, albeit at a different level, just as everyday real life behavior does.

To digress for a moment, it was stated in the introduction to this study that the relationship of reality to fiction is often easier to perceive in documentary fiction than in "pure" fiction. The reason for this is precisely the recounting of "real" behavior found in these texts. Of course, if behavior is recounted rather than observed first-hand, it is no longer "real" in the same way the original behavior was, but is changed into narrative and has thus been manipulated in an irrevocable manner. The difference, however, between pure and documentary fiction lies in the fact that the author, besides generating his own text, is including large or small bits of already-generated real-life behavior in his telling of a story. To return to Leñero's metaphor, these are verbal snapshots of behavior which serve to reinforce the author's own portraiture, making the frame of the text and the frame of reality seem even closer than they otherwise would.

Returning to the idea of a text's being generated following certain cognitive rules similar to the rules of grammar in language, this obedience to cognitive norms may be thought of as a certain kind of verisimilitude, and not
such a new one at that. To quote Tzvetan Todorov (1971:82):

Corax, verisimilitude's first theoretician, had already gone further; for him verisimilitude was a relation not with reality (as in truth) but with what most people believe to be reality - in other words with public opinion. Hence discourse must be consistent with another (anonymous, impersonal) discourse, not with its referent.

The "public opinion" and the "(anonymous, impersonal) discourse" referred to here are, for all practical purposes, synonymous with the concept of the cognitive orientation.

In order to understand more fully the reality-fiction relationship which is seemingly violated or at least not so readily apparent in some examples of fiction, it will be necessary to explore a distinction made by generative grammarians between utterances which are "ungrammatical" and others which are "nonsensical." The grammaticality of an utterance is totally divorced from any semantic sense it might have. To take a well-known example from Chomsky (1957:15), of the two sentences "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" and "Furiously sleep ideas green colorless," only the first is grammatical (in fact, the second could probably not even be considered a sentence). Of course, semantically the first utterance is absolute nonsense, but it conforms to the grammatical code of English.

In the same way, the competent user of the cognitive "grammar" will generate a text that conforms to that cogni-
tive code, that is to say certain cognitive relationships will always be preserved. This is an involuntary action based on implicit assumptions - an author cannot help doing it. But it does not necessarily follow that things which appear in a text might obtain in the world of real behavior. A rather uncomplicated example of this is the violation of physical laws and the fantastic use of time found in Gabriel García Márquez' *Cien años de soledad* (1967). The novel may lack verisimilitude in the narrowest sense, but certainly violates no cognitive reality in a culture where an oral tradition of fantastic stories is the norm.

The distinction between "ungrammatical" and "nonsensical" is made here for a special reason. Of the two texts to be analyzed in this study, both are grammatical. Indeed, the object of the analysis is to show in what ways the do conform to a specific cognitive code. However, while the first text, *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* is firmly rooted in reality - that is it could actually have happened and indeed most of it did - the second, *La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro*, is not so probable. Fiction must conform to certain implicit and culturally-determined generative principles, but it may or may not seem particularly "real." In fact, it is precisely this notion which gives fiction its broad creative range.
Documentary Fiction: A Special Case of the Literature-Society Relationship

It has been stated that documentary fiction draws on material that has traditionally been the reserve of non-fiction. Two sources of raw material for this sort of writing come readily to mind. One is the interview, and increasingly common tool for gathering information. The other is field observation of the type done by sociologists and anthropologists. An example of each in American letters are the writings of Tom Wolfe (*The Pump House Gang*, 1968; *The Right Stuff*, 1979) and those of Oscar Lewis (*Five Families*, 1959; *The Children of Sánchez*, 1961; *Pedro Martínez*, 1964; *La Vida*, 1966). Wolfe, a journalist, obtained most of his material by interviewing the people involved in the "scene" he covered in his reports. The reports themselves, however, read more like short stories than newspaper accounts. This result, of course, is intentional on Wolfe's part, since having real life read like fiction is one of the central characteristics of the New Journalism of which Wolfe is a proponent.

Lewis's books, on the other hand, were unintentionally literary, although he always insisted that he was impartially reporting raw data. In *Five Families*, for example, his technique was to send a stenographer to each of five households so that a written record could be made of everything that was said (within earshot of the stenographer, at
least). The project represented a new departure in anthropological field techniques and the results were fascinating. However, without minimizing its value as an anthropological document, *Five Families* was really documentary fiction. An anthropological report would have presented only the stenographer's transcript plus perhaps enough description of movements, gestures and other relevant actions to make the transcript intelligible. Lewis turns *Five Families* into narrative by the skillful addition of background information exactly where it is needed and by the addition of insights into what the informants were thinking, just in the way an omniscient narrator would. The mixture of reporting and narration can be seen in the following passage from *Five Families*:

The girls laughed loudly, pushing each other and getting red themselves. Juanito had been listening from the bedroom with a perplexed smile. The girls went out for the milk and Rosa turned off the burner under the coffee which was just beginning to boil. She got back into bed and closed her eyes. Juanito had begun to do his arithmetic homework; the room was quiet. Ester came in with the milk and set it to boil on another burner.

"Tell me, Sis, if I have twelve left over below and have eight above, what do I do?"

"Let's see... don't be silly, the lower number has to be smaller than the other. You have to get more... look, this way."

"Oh, yes. Let me do it now. I'll show it to you later."

Rosa listened to the children with interest. She had always liked school and she had completed the fourth grade, then the highest grade in her village school. She was lucky to have gone to school at all for
her father had died when she was an infant and her mother had had to struggle to support her three daughters by renting out her husband's land and by taking in washing. Rosa would be more than satisfied if Ester and Juanito could learn a trade and have a better future than their brothers. It pleased her to see them doing schoolwork together. It was more usual for them to quarrel, for Ester had always been jealous of her younger brother. (p. 113)

One drawback to the validity of these studies (as well as one of the factors in their literary merit) is that they are interesting - not happy, optimistic or picturesque, but definitely interesting. Daily life on the whole, and in the "culture of poverty" in particular, is nothing if not tedious and boring. To make it interesting by telescoping or extending time, focusing on several characters at once, reading informants' minds and adding extra information is to change it in a vital way. Of course, what happens to raw material after it has been gathered determines whether the final document is literature or not. The social scientist or journalist has traditionally reported an encounter, or the facts derived therefrom, in as neutral and straightforward a way as possible. The writer of documentary fiction will use the encounter as the basis for the creation of something more. In this sort of undertaking, data may be edited, rearranged, added to or manipulated in any way the author chooses.

While in the introduction to Five Families Lewis insists that his work is not documentary fiction, some social
scientists prefer this narrative form for reporting their research. According to them, the advantages of documentary fiction are numerous. For one thing, it represents a tremendous enrichment in the fields of ethnography and sociological case studies. Gabriel Careaga (1979:2) comments:

Es un elemento que enriquece lo antropológico y lo sociológico. Yo no veo por qué las ciencias sociales deben de divorciarse de lo bien escrito....No debe estar reñido este tipo de expresión novelística con la riqueza antropológica y sociológica de las teorías....No pienso tampoco que es el único camino, pero es un camino que si se puede explotar, será muy útil para la investigación y para el análisis sociológico y antropológico.

Further on, he mentions the limits of traditional sociology (Careaga 1979:4):

Por otra parte a la sociología se le ve con desconfianza por esto: porque creen que es la panacea para todos los problemas....La sociología puede diagnosticar pero no tiene poder para transformar ¿no?

With reference to social transformation we also have Carlos Fuentes' ideas (1965:85) on the new Latin American novel, in which the power of the written word is used in a dramatic way:

...La palabra vertida puede descolorar eso que pasa por "realidad" para mostrarnos lo real: lo que la "realidad" consagrada oculta: la totalidad escondida o mutilada por la lógica convencional (por no decir: de conveniencia). La palabra vertida es la palabra enemiga: la palabra que no divierte ni advierte sino que, quizás, convierte. Es
ésta la palabra que en el mundo actual sería imposible o que, si intenta hacerse posible, es reprimida.

Careaga sees sociology as a diagnostic tool; Fuentes sees the overturned word of contemporary Latin American narrative as a tool for denunciation and persuasion. If both are correct, it is possible that the two fields taken in conjunction provide a powerful tool for social commentary in Latin America, as well as a mutual enrichment for the social sciences and literature. The use of the two together impoverishes neither, but rather enhances both, according to Gustavo Sainz (1979a:2-3).

Sainz especially notes an improvement in the quality of literature when he says that "En Mexico mis novelas quedan descontadas como literatura porque parecen sociología, pero yo opino que eso enriquece la literatura." Careaga, who is more a sociologist than a novelist, places the emphasis on the opposite phenomenon, when he says about his own book Biografía de un joven de clase media, "Yo creo que se comprobó mi tesis de que se podía profundizar un estudio de caso a través de esta narración novelar" (Careaga 1979:4).

Documentary fiction, for these authors, is better than either non-fiction or pure fiction. In pure fiction, authors are limited to the resources of their own imaginations and what research they wish to do to implement their
flights of fancy. For Sainz (1979a:1), on the other hand, not only is the evocation of real people, historical periods, events, etc., a laudable literary goal within a narrative framework, but it also gives the practitioner of documentary fiction a much wider range of resource material to choose from than the writer who relies only on his imagination. Indeed, if he chooses to do so, the creator of documentary fiction can call on a whole team of research assistants in gathering this material.

Sainz (1979a) comments on his reasons for preferring documentary fiction:

Analizando la novela mexicana tÚ ves que los soldados de la RevoluciÓn hablan como si fueran españoles...en fin, nunca se rescató un lenguaje popular....(p.3)

Como vivo en AmÉrica Latina, mi historia tiene que denunciar, tiene que ser un poco La Historia, a recuperar un poco los mitos mexicanos, nuestras maneras, nuestras costumbres, nuestra idiosincrasia para enfrentarlo a los mitos imperialistas que nos hacen una penetraciÓn cotidiana demoledora, devastadora. (pp. 9-10)

¿Por quÉ me interesa el rescate? Porque me ofenden los libros mexicanos del pasado. Mira, si lees Los bandidos de Río Frío, cuando el escritor usa una palabra mexicana como "petate", la pone en cursivas, como si le diera vergüenza ponerla....Buscas en los libros cÓmo hablaban y en ningũn libro sale, porque todos los personajes de los libros de la RevoluciÓn hablan como españo- les. (p. 13)

Documentary fiction also has an advantage over straight documentary in that in the former the author has
at his disposal all the rhetorical devices of fiction. As is the case with any literary genre, the reader has certain expectations of what fictive narration may do. As Wayne Booth states in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961:27):

> For experienced readers a sonnet begun calls for a sonnet concluded; an elegy begun in blank verse calls for an elegy completed in blank verse. Even so amorphous a genre as the novel, with hardly any established conventions, makes use of this kind of interest....Authors may surprise us by violating conventions, but only so long as conventional expectations are available in a given public to be played upon.

The rhetorical devices of fiction are far too numerous to be dealt with here, except for a few which particularly complement to documentalist's task. One advantage of using fiction is that the writer may place a certain distance between himself and his subject. The only distancing mechanism available in pure documentary is the writer's objectivity, that is, his willingness to report directly or indirectly observed phenomena in as straightforward a way as possible. In fiction, even the concept of objectivity is more subtle and complicated than in non-fiction because fiction is, by definition, a mediated medium and not one where ideas can be communicated directly from author to reader. The basic tool for persuasion in fiction is manipulation of the reader's reactions rather than the author's expounding his line of reasoning straight out.
Also, of course, objectivity is not the only mechanism for creating distance in fiction. The conventions of structure, language, plot, character, time, space and ideas provide layer upon layer of distance if the author wishes to make use of them. In distancing himself from his subject, the author also places his reader at the same remove.

This distance is particularly helpful when the project at hand is the analysis of some contemporary social or political issue in which the author and/or the reader are subjectively involved. The purpose of this distancing varies from work to work. In one case, it is simply to divorce the subject matter from certain emotional ties in order to place things in a historical or philosophical context. In another, distancing may be used to compel the reader to view the subject matter in a new way. In yet another, it may be for purposes of irony. An excellent example of this type of distancing is found in the novels of Gustavo Sainz. *La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro* is a 347-page monologue by an apparently superficial woman about a particular period in her life. The author's presence is unobtrusive: no judgments are made about the woman's character. But this vain and silly woman talks the way many Mexican women talk, a fact which makes the book a satire on women of a certain social class in that country.

The most obvious of rhetorical devices in fiction is the "trick of going beneath the surface of the action to
obtain a reliable view of a character's mind and heart" (Booth 1961:3). This view of the internal workings of character may be documented only indirectly in real life. Such tools as the interview, observation and certain psychological tests as the Rorschach and the Thematic Apperception Test will probably reveal to a researcher a great deal about a given subject. However, the non-fictional documentary mode called for in most traditional reports of research tends to drain them of almost all aesthetic or close personal interest. It happens that information in these areas is of at least general and sometimes vital interest to the lay reader. The writer of documentary fiction, then, finds that this form of reportage integrates his material in ways which will hold a reader's attention by satisfying his quantitative, qualitative and personal expectations (to use another concept from Booth, 1961) and will make his research data intelligible to others than just his professional colleagues.

**Documentary Fiction in Mexico**

It is interesting to see what some of the precedents are for documentary fiction as it is practiced in Mexico. The connections which are mentioned by the two authors being studied here have to do with certain already-noted innovations made in the 60's in the fields of social science
and journalism. Both Poniátowska and Sainz feel a particular debt to Oscar Lewis, the author of *The Children of Sánchez* (1961), as does the sociologist Gabriel Careaga, who has also experimented with documentary fiction as a means for presenting his sociological studies. Careaga expresses his feelings about Lewis's work in this way:

Sobre todo a partir de *Cinco familias*, me pareció un acercamiento antropológico y sociológico de una enorme riqueza....Cuando apareció *Los hijos de Sánchez* me pareció un clásico sobre la cultura urbana popular mexicana dado que daba un panorama... completo de un grupo....Y me influyó también profundamente, a tanto que yo quise hacer un estudio de ese tipo sobre la clase media y por eso escribí *Biografía de un joven de clase media*, que es un intento de profundizar a través de la cotidianidad novelada todo el universo sociológico y cultural. Entonces a mí las obras de Oscar Lewis me parecen de una importancia significativa en la cultura. (1979:2)

Sainz is also quick to point out his debt to Lewis. When asked why sociology and literature were important to him, part of his answer was

Yo creo que el descubrimiento de la fusión de estas dos áreas en lo particular lo hizo con la antropología norteamericana, sobre todo con el libro de Oscar Lewis, *Los hijos de Sánchez*. Ese libro me pareció infinitamente más rico que todas las populistas mexicanas sobre ese tema. Entonces ¿qué quería decir? Que el investigador social hacía uso de artificios literarios. Es decir, manejaba su información para conseguir efectos dramáticos, para volverla coherente. Es decir, se combinaba su trabajo social con el trabajo imaginativo del escritor. (Sainz 1979a:1)
While Careaga and Sainz have only read Lewis's studies, Poniatowska actually worked with him on the editing of material for the publication of *Pedro Martínez*, the study of a peasant family in the village of Tepoztlán. While she has raised the points that Lewis rarely paid his field workers on time and that work was often hindered by his hypochondria, she remembers him as an extremely kind and hard-working man (Poniatowska 1979:5). The editing techniques she practiced during work on *Pedro Martínez* may have helped prepare her for piecing together the material for her own book, *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío*.

However, she feels a much greater debt toward Ricardo Pozas, a Mexican anthropologist who did an outstanding study on the Tzotzil Indians of the Chamula region of Chiapas. Much of Pozas' work antedates Lewis's, but one also finds in them the use of novelistic techniques in reporting field data. Pozas' best-known work is *Juan Pérez Jolote* (1952), a very well written account of the life of a young Tzotzil with whom Pozas lived for an extended period of time. While Pozas primarily sought to produce an ethnographic document, he is a man of considerable literary talent, and *Juan Pérez Jolote* is not only a fascinating account of Pozas' research in Chiapas but also a contribution to the art of the narrative.

Besides the influence of the behavioral sciences on documentary fiction, there have been two real contributions
to it from the field of journalism in Mexico. One is the crónica, a more or less free-form essay on such subjects as contemporary politics, current events, the foibles of human nature or the harassments of daily life, which is a staple in Latin American newspapers. The other is the American school of newspaper feature writing known as the New Journalism.

The crónica provides, by its very timeliness, interest in the human condition and conversational style, a precedent for documentary fiction. The style and subject matter of the crónicas may vary widely. However, one trait they all share is that the writer's personal opinions on a given subject figure widely in the material presented. Although documentary fiction relies much more heavily on background research than the crónica does, the author's freedom from restraint and his control over the form the work will take have much the same function in documentary fiction as the writer's personal opinion does in the crónica.

Poniatowska, who is primarily a journalist rather than a novelist, has written many crónicas herself, many of which have been published in the Mexican newspaper Novedades, while others have been collected in book form. One of these, Tortas en domingo (no publication data available), written in conjunction with Alberto Beltrán, was a look at the way in which lower income families relax and have fun in
Mexico City. Another, Palabras cruzadas (Mexico City: Era, no date available) was a series of interviews with well-known sports figures, politicians, movie stars, etc. At present there is another collection in press which deals with Mexican political life (Poniatowska 1979:12).

The crónica, perhaps, falls somewhere between the editorial and the feature article in style and content. As we have seen, the form and intention of feature articles themselves underwent a radical change in the United States in the 1960's, and this change was not without impact in Mexican letters. Tom Wolfe, a feature writer for the New York Times, chronicles the shift in attitude in this way:

"...But there was this other lot of reporters as well....They tended to be what is known as "feature writers." What they all had in common was that they all regarded the newspaper as a motel you checked into overnight on the road to the final triumph....The final triumph was known as The Novel....They never guessed for a minute that the work they would do over the next ten years, as journalists, would wipe out the novel as literature's main event. (Wolfe 1973:5-8)

These feature writers began to see that they might write journalism that would...read like a novel" (Wolfe 1973:8). Indeed, the kinds of articles which were written in this style soon began to appear in books, either as collected articles (as in Wolfe's case) or as novel-length features. Of these, the one which had the most effect on Mexican writers was In Cold Blood by Truman Capote. Elena Poniatowska had this comment to make about Capote when she
was asked about the generic nature of documentary fiction in Mexico:

Yo no creo que empieza a ser un género literario a partir de Sainz o a partir de mí. Yo creo que eso sería absurdo afirmarlo. Es un género literario y hecho con mucha mayor maestría que lo hemos hecho Sainz y yo con Truman Capote. ¡Ahora, Truman Capote, pues francamente es mucho mejor escritor que Sainz y que yo ¿no? Hay que guardar la proporción. (Poniatowska 1979:4)

In Mexico in recent years, several books have been published which spring from journalism or the social sciences but which read like fiction. Among those working in this area, Gabriel Careaga (1979:7) mentions himself, Ricardo Pozas, Gustavo Sainz and Elena Poinatowska as the only writers he knows of who have made attempts at this literary form. Pozas' work dates from 1952, but the other three have published all their works in this field within the last ten years. One name should perhaps be added to the list. Vicente Leñero, well known for years as a novelist, playwright and cronista for Mexico City's up-till-recently leading newspaper Excelsior, has written a book called Los periodistas (1978). It is, in format and conventions, a novel. But this novel is in fact an account of the Echeverría administration's takeover of Excelsior in 1976. Of course, upon reading some of this book's more unbelievable, but not necessarily untrue, passages, one is reminded of the oft-mentioned dictum that in Latin America reality imitates fiction rather than the other way around.
(Fuentes 1969:9, among others). However, in fifty years, when the immediacy of the events chronicled in Los periodistas has faded, the book will still stand as a remarkably well-written narrative.

Although the genre is new in Mexico, it is gaining in popularity. In the Summer of 1979, Editorial Grijalbo published another book in this field, Acapulco by Ricardo Garibay, in the tradition of New Journalism. However, the difficulty of keeping up with the latest developments in Mexican letters makes it nearly impossible to say with any certainty whether other authors have ventured into the field in recent years, although it is nearly certain that more of them will eventually become interested in doing so.

While Poniatowska states that she would rather not try her hand at a study as demanding as Hasta no verte, Jesús mío again (Poniatowska 1979:11), both Sainz and Careaga are convinced of the value of documentary fiction as a literary and scientific tool. Both are working on other books in the genre at present. Careaga's, which has a working title of La ciudad enmascarada, will be a series of case studies on life in Mexico City (Careaga 1979:3), while Sainz is writing a novel about the excavation of the Templo Mayor site now in progress on one side of the Zócalo in Mexico City. By interviewing the workers who are doing the actual digging as well as the archaeologists who are able to shed
considerable light on the artifacts being unearthed, Sainz hopes to draw important parallels between Aztec urban life and contemporary Mexico City life, and in this way to expand the modern Mexican urban dweller's sense of self (Sainz 1979b:6-7).

Of the well-known examples of documentary fiction by Mexican authors, Juan Pérez Jolote (Pozas 1952), Compadre Lobo (Sainz 1976), Biografía de un joven de clase media (Careaga 1978), Los periodistas (Leñero 1978) and Acapulco (Garibay 1979) enter into this discussion only coincidentally. The other two, Hasta no verte, Jesús mío (Poniatowska 1979) and La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro (Sainz 1974) are the subjects of analysis in Chapter 3 of this study.
In *El laberinto de la soledad*, Octavio Paz (1950) describes in the following way what he terms the "Mexican mask:"

Viejo o adolescente, criollo o mestizo, general, obrero o licenciado, el mexicano se me aparece como un ser que se encierra y se preserva: máscara el rostro y máscara la sonrisa. Plantado en su arisa soledad, espinoso y cortés a un tiempo, todo le sirve para defenderse: el silencio y la palabra, la cortesía y el desprecio, la ironía y la resignación. Tan celoso de su intimidad como de la ajena, ni siquiera se atreve a rozar con los ojos al vecino: una mirada puede desencadenar la cólera de esas almas cargadas de electricidad. Atraviesa la vida como desollado; todo puede herirle, palabras y sospecha de palabras. Su lenguaje está lleno de reticencias, de figuras y alusiones, de puntos suspensivos; en su silencio hay repliegues, matices, nubarrones, arcoíris súbitos, amenazas inescifra-bles....En suma, entre la realidad y su persona, establece una muralla, no por invisible menos franqueable, de imposibilidad y lejanía. El mexicano siempre está lejos, lejos del mundo y de los demás. Lejos, también de sí mismo. (p. 26)

Although hyperbolic and over-generalizing, this description will strike a profound chord of recognition in those who are familiar with Mexican culture. Paz has set forth here, and expanded upon in other parts of *El laberinto de la soledad*, one of the fundamental traits of "Mexicanness:" the need to protect oneself from what is perceived as being a hostile environment. Inasmuch as one's fellow man is part of this environment - a very large part of it -
much of the protective reaction is oriented toward preventing either physical or psychological undermining by others.

And, of course, anyone can be an enemy: a friend, a lover, a relative, a neighbor, a business associate or any of a series of more casual acquaintances. The affront may be intentional or accidental; the distinction is trivial, since the damage is the same in either case. Constant vigilance is necessary to avoid being either the victim of injury or the unintentional causer of harm to another. This second precaution is indispensable because any perceived aggression is deemed cause for retaliation.

In day-to-day living, the manifestations of this personality syndrome do not usually arise, as Paz suggests above, from a direct challenge which might "desencadenar la cólera de esas almas cargadas de electricidad." They are rather more apt to center around intentional or unintentional slights, more often at a verbal level than at the level of actions. Indeed, the "perfect" kind of aggression is a verbal attack which is so subtle that the victim will not realize that he has been attacked until it is too late to do anything about it. Contrary to Paz's implication, the ideal defense is not physical violence or anger (although this is not an uncommon reaction in spite of the popular dictum that "el que se enoja pierde"), but rather a soften-
ing or deflection of the aggression, or even better, a strategy which will not leave one open to attack in the first place. The importance of this last is illustrated by Carlos Fuentes' (1971) comments on the albur, a form of verbal aggression very common among Mexicans:

El "albur", en México, es una operación del lenguaje que consiste en desviar el sentido llano de las palabras a fin de dotarlas de una intención insultante, agresiva, negadora de la personalidad de los interlocutores. Las elaboradísimas formas de la cortesía verbal en México, el uso del subjuntivo, la constante apelación al diminutivo, son protecciones contra el "albur" y sus secuelas violentas. (p. 35)

Paz is correct in saying that, as a result of his constant vigilance against aggression, "el mexicano está lejos del mundo y lejos de los demás." A partial description of what happens under these circumstances is the following:

Para nosotros [los mexicanos], contrariamente a lo que ocurre con otros pueblos, abrirse es una debilidad o una traición. El mexicano debe doblarse, humillarse, "agacharse", pero no "rajarse", esto es, permitir que el mundo externo penetre en su intimidad....

El hermetismo...muestra que instintivamente consideramos peligroso al medio que nos rodea....

...El ideal de hombre para otros pueblos consiste en una abierta y agresiva disposición al combate; nosotros acentuamos el carácter defensivo, listos a repeler el ataque. El "macho" es un ser hermético, encerrado en sí mismo, capaz de guardarse y guardar lo que se le confía. (Paz 1950:26-28)

One of the more obvious manifestations of this herme-
tierno is the love of form. Social formulas and traditions make life much easier than does constant invention; in being original one treads on dangerous ground, whereas in using what has been tried before, one is safe. Another manifestation is the inability to relate to others in intimate situations. A love relationship, for example, where success normally involves considerable bearing of one's soul and a certain amount of risk-taking, in Mexican culture is often perceived as a conquest and a continual struggle rather than a mutual surrender and self-discovery. Other attributes include the ability to "simulate," that is, to pretend to be what one is not and more importantly, to "dissimulate," to camouflage oneself, to blend in with the background, with the object of going unnoticed.6

The Mexican mask - the self-imposed isolation, the seeming detachment, the pretending and dissimulation, which are by far the easiest and surest ways to avoid being offended or offending others - is ultimately self-alienating. As Paz says in the last sentence of the quote which opened this chapter, the Mexican, besides being remote from the world and from other people is "lejos, también de sí mismo." When a person is trained to pretend his emotions do not exist or are unimportant, he is ultimately cut off from these emotions.

The personality configuration of one who is constantly
trying to protect himself from real or imagined aggression is alien to a person coming from a culture in which such a thing is not the norm. A preoccupation for self-protection seems a waste of mental energy which in the long run sti¬
fles psychological growth. It is also likely to be per¬
ceived as symptomatic of pettiness and of a rather silly overemphasis on pride and self-importance.

The Mexican mask and the resultant alienation are unfortunate, uncomfortable and unenviable. In Mexican culture, however, they are not gratuitous. The perception by people in this culture that they live in a hostile en¬
vironment - the most threatening element of which is other people - is not entirely erroneous. The mask is a response to historical, political, economic and social realities.

The historical roots of the mask are both Spanish and indigenous. The old Hispanic pundonor, under which all affronts had to be avenged because the preservation of honor was more important than the preservation of life it¬
self, contributed to its formation as did the Indian sense of having been violated at all levels - culturally, eco¬
nomically and physically - during the Conquest. Political¬
ly, a long list of perfidies and betrayals (starting with Cortés and going on through the Church-State oligarchy of the Colony and early Independence, Maximilian, Santa Ana, Porfirio Díaz, nearly all of the parties to the Revolution
of 1910, Calles and Alemán, to name only a few) has been more than enough to cause people to mistrust authority and to take proper precautions against being "taken in" by it. Probably, however, the most important circumstances leading to the syndrome are economic and are present in any society characterized by economic deprivation.

The phenomenon of self-isolation as described here is part of a larger behavioral system. George Foster, an anthropologist from the University of California at Berkeley, has made a landmark study of the Mexican peasant village of Tzintzuntzan (Foster 1967). He considers self-isolation and masking to be a manifestation of what he terms the Image of Limited Good. In order to understand the exact significance of the Mexican mask, it will be necessary to do three things: first, to explore the anthropological and sociological concept of a cognitive model; second, to explore the Image of Limited Good in particular as it operates both in rural and urban society in Mexico; and third, to define the place of the Mexican mask within this particular model.

The Cognitive Model and the Image of Limited Good

A cognitive model is a construct used by behavioral scientists to explain and, to a certain extent, predict behavior within a social group. The cognitive model, while similar to a "world view" or "cosmology," differs from these
in that people who subscribe to the model are not conscious of its workings, whereas they can more or less easily articulate the attitudes associated with a world view.

A closer parallel, and indeed a historical precursor of it, is the linguistic model, which describes the individual and collective use of a language. The speakers of that language use the linguistic system competently without ever being aware of what they are doing. To use a trivial example, a phonological description of English would include an aspirated [ph, th, kh] series in word-initial positions but an unaspirated series in word-final positions. Unsophisticated-speakers of the language perceive the initial [ph] and the final [p] as being the same sound and yet they never fail to make the distinction in speaking.

A cognitive model serves much the same purpose for describing social behavior as a linguistic model does for the use of a language. Foster (1965) explains it this way:

The members of every society share a common cognitive orientation which is, in effect, an unverbalized, implicit expression of their understanding of the "rules of the game" of living imposed upon them by their social, natural and supernatural universes. A cognitive orientation provides the members of the society it characterizes with basic premises and sets of assumptions normally neither recognized nor questioned which structure and guide behavior in much the same way grammatical rules unrecognized by most people structure and guide their linguistic forms. (p. 293)
The particular cognitive model Foster posits for Mexico is one which he calls the Image of Limited Good. This is a zero-sum game model of which the central premise is that almost all desirable things in life (money, property, health, friendship, love, honor, manliness, respect, security, etc.) exist in limited quantity and that that quantity is not enough to fill everyone's needs. Since it is perceived, in this system, that there is no way to increase available quantities of these goods, "an individual or a family can improve a position only at the expense of others."

The result of this unconscious assumption is that much social behavior is geared to maintaining an equilibrium in the society, because otherwise not only would the society itself soon fall apart but many of its members would perish or, at the very least, suffer grave physical and psychological consequences.

Although not all social scientists accept Foster's model (see Foster 1972 for a refutation of some of the major criticisms), the proposition seems to explain a remarkable amount of social behavior in Mexico. A few examples, taken from Foster (1967), will suffice to illustrate this fact.

**Machismo**, for one thing, finds its definition in the Limited Good system. People are in the habit of saying that the true *macho* must be "fuerte, feo y formal." Upon
analyzing this expression, one finds a positive term ("fuerte"), a negative term ("feo") and a neutral term in which positive and negative elements balance themselves out ("formal" - that is, a person who preserves social form at all costs).

Attitudes towards food and medicine are understandable in light of the striving for equilibrium, as well. Many foods and curative herbs in Mexico are said to possess the properties of cold and heat. These terms are totally independent of any reference to temperature. Rather, they are historical vestiges of the old Galenic system of body humors, each of which was defined as an opposition between wet and dry on the one hand and hot and cold on the other. The opposition gradually became reduced to only two terms, and these were extended to describe properties of foods and herbs as well as bodily states.

There is a certain tendency to balance hot and cold foods in a meal in the same way that a balance is struck in ideal masculine behavior as described above. That is, there will be an equal number of hot and cold elements and and one or more foods which have an internal combination of hot and cold elements. This is analogous to the balance among positive, negative and neutral elements in the description of machismo. A typical fiesta meal in Mexico, for example, consists of rice, turkey in mole sauce and beans. Rice, which is served as a first course, is a cold
food. Beans, usually a separate course served at the end of a meal, are hot. The turkey in mole, served as the middle course, is a combination of a hot substance (the mole) with a cold one (the turkey). Tortillas, which are eaten throughout the meal are also made of a combination of hot mineral lime and cold corn. Many food taboos are also based on the hot and cold system. One of these is the idea that the consumption of cold foods at night (certain fruits like watermelon, for example) is hard on the digestion because it robs the body of its heat and may even bring on illness.

In folk medicine, illness is generally attributed to an imbalance among the hot and cold elements in the body. There is a common ailment called calor subido, which as its name suggests, consists of bodily heat rising to the head. Its treatment is the application of poultices of cold herbs to the head to force the heat back downwards. Another frequently encountered illness is the mal de ojo or evil eye, caused by another person's envy. Mal de ojo is considered to be a hot disease and is cured by passing a chicken egg (cold) over the sufferer's body to draw out the evil.

Envy and jealousy are common phenomena in rural Mexico. This is to be expected in a society in which goods and emotional gratification are seen as being difficult to obtain. However, unlike other societies, in which envy is looked upon as being more detrimental to the envious person than
to the one envied, in the Limited Good society of Mexico envy is thought to have a very real and harmful effect on its object. The illness known as mal de ojo, mentioned above, is a manifestation of this. People constantly protect themselves from envy, usually by trying to conceal or compensate for good fortune. Thus, expressions of admiration are usually deflected with such self-deprecating expressions as "No es nada," "The newly acquired object] es muy feo, ni me gusta," etc. The custom of the bolo (a handful of coins tossed to waiting children at a baptism) is a symbolic means of giving something away to compensate for the parents' good fortune at having the new child. Likewise, the remojo is a custom whereby a person who has recently acquired a new material possession either puts it symbolically at the disposition of his acquaintances with the social formula "Es suyo" or, if the article is very costly, compensates by giving his close friends a small gift on the occasion of the acquisition.

Jealousy, which is envy occasioned by an emotional tie rather than a material possession, is evident when the mother of a small child becomes pregnant again. The youngest child often becomes whiny and clingy and might even suffer from stomach upsets and kwashiorkor (protein deficiency). This condition is referred to as the child's being chipil. In spite of the fact that all these symptoms
probably arise from nutritional deficiencies associated with the weaning of the youngest child, which comes about in rural Mexico exactly at the time a woman discovers she is pregnant (and for which reason the last child in the family may be nursed until the age of five or six, since there is no new pregnancy to cut breast-feeding short), the condition of being *chipil* is attributed to the child's jealousy of the unborn sibling. The newborn will obviously demand its own portion of the mother's affection, thereby robbing the other child of some of its share of mother love, and for this reason the child is unhappy.

It should be noted here that protection against envy is one of the stronger components of the Mexican mask. One must dissimulate good fortune lest another's envy diminish it or cause it to disappear altogether. A great deal of mental energy is spent on this sort of endeavor, as will be seen particularly in the discussion of the protagonist of *Hasta no verte, Jesús mio* in the next chapter.

Although for the most part people in this society are driven to selfish behavior, each trying to hold onto what is felt to be rightfully his or others, there are a few cases in which the opposite is true. One of these is the traditional religious ceremonial cycle, in which conspicuous consumption serves to level economic differences. The religious ritual centers around an institution called the *mayordomía*. The wealthiest people in the community, usually
married couples, take turns from year to year being mayor-domos, persons who are appointed or elected to organize, and of course pay for, the major feasts and ceremonies throughout the year. The exact way in which the mayordomía system is carried out varies widely in Mexico, but the final result is the same: the wealthiest have spread some of the wealth around the whole society in the form of food, drink, gifts and more expendable items such as votive candles, flowers and decorations for the church.

These are only a few examples of how seemingly unrelated parts of a social structure fit into the Limited Good system. Other prominent examples would be attitudes toward authority, mechanisms for solving communal problems, and a curious reciprocal relationship established among members of the society, which Foster (1961) terms the dyadic contract. The dyadic contract may take one of two forms. In one form, the participants are social equals. The name of this institution is the compadrazgo. The other form is a patron-client type of relationship, in which one of the participants is wealthier, more powerful or of a higher social standing than the other. Nevertheless, in both types of dyadic relationship, a formal obligation is contracted for mutual aid. In the patron-client relationship, this is usually done by a verbal agreement between the participants. The compadrazgo, however, is usually
solemnized by the saying of a mass and by certain other ritual behavior, and the relationship usually comes about at the time of some important event in the life of one of the participants, such as the birth or marriage of a son or daughter.

It must be pointed out that in all of the foregoing examples, the members of the society would not understand the relationship of all the behavior described to a Limited Good model. The idea that good is limited is not explicit but implicit. However, in spite of the fact that people cannot articulate the principles of the model, the consistency of behavior throughout all social institutions and relationships firmly suggests its existence.

The Mexican Mask in the Limited Good System

It should be obvious by now that masking, that is to say disguising one's motives and emotions, as well as concealing information which might be detrimental to one's own well-being and spreading false or half-true information which might be to one's advantage, could be an important and necessary mechanism for those who subscribe to the Image of Limited Good in Mexico. It must be remembered that a Limited Good society is playing a zero-sum game, so that while masking does not encourage social cooperation nor does it foster improvement in the society, it does contribute to the equilibrium of the group in the long run.
And, of course, equilibrium is the goal in such a society.

The connection between the Mexican mask and the Image of Limited Good is important. The two characteristic elements of the mask are that the individual must 1) prevail over anyone with whom he comes in contact and 2) avoid yielding any of his personality to domination. In other words he must take and not be taken from. In the Limited Good society, the threat is always present that one's person will be diminished by others in the society. The mask protects against this eventuality and even allows one to add to his own stature by diminishing that of others: the zero-sum equilibrium of the Limited Good model is maintained.

This discussion has dealt separately with the concepts of Limited Good and the Mexican mask, although the latter is demonstrably a subcategory of the former. The reason for this is that while the entire Limited Good orientation appears as a literary element in Hasta no verte, Jesús mío, in La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro, for all practical purposes, only the Mexican mask is used.

It is not difficult to see why this situation obtains. Hasta no verte, Jesús mío is about a lower-class woman. La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro is about a woman who belongs to the upper middle class. The Limited Good orientation is basically a proletarian phenomenon, that is to say, it
arose in a social group which was deprived both materially and in other ways, especially as regards having an effective power base in the society. Limited Good behavior is fairly logically grounded in this class in that it represents a response to an existing situation. However, as in any behavioral system, once certain tenets are established and accepted without question, a large body of behavior is sanctioned which conforms to these assumptions, but which makes no real difference to the survival of the system. This situation is particularly noticeable when the economic basis of such a system is no longer the same one which existed during the system's development.

The middle class in Mexico, as in many developing countries, is a more or less direct outgrowth of the proletariat, and especially of the peasantry. Thus in the middle class, vestiges of the overall Limited Good system survive. But the middle class is no longer economically deprived in the way in which the unlanded campesinos are, and for this reason only fragments of the original system are found, the Mexican mask being one of these.

It is interesting to note that the masking which goes on in the middle class runs to the trivial - or perhaps it only seems trivial in the absence of true economic need. The following examples will illustrate this point: 9

1. A woman admires another's cooking and asks for the
recipe for a particular dish. When the dish is attempted, it fails. The woman who has given the recipe is faulted for not giving all the ingredients. The comment is that this person is very selfish and has not wanted to give the recipe correctly so that she might be the only one who is able to make the dish successfully. One of the two is masking: either one has failed to give all the necessary information or the other does not wish to admit she cannot cook. In a Limited Good society, by the way, both possibilities are equally likely.

2. In Mexico City, young men and women ride around Chapultepec Park in their cars on Sunday morning. Unless they are already attached to each other, men all ride together and women all ride together, because what they are doing is, in common U.S. parlance, "cruising," that is to say, trying to make contact with one another for dating purposes. When contact is make, the man and woman involved exchange telephone numbers. However, depending on the level of attraction on either side, a real or a false phone number is given out. In this way, the social niceties are preserved, but the young man or woman is not necessarily entangled in an undesirable relationship. The ideal outcome, if one is truly interested in the other person, is to have obtained a real phone number while giving out a false one. In this way one's own mask is maintained while the
other person's is penetrated-- an important step along the way to the romantic conquista. Unfortunately, it seldom works out this way. Usually both are frustrated because both have given erroneous phone numbers.

3. Dress is also a means of preserving anonymity, the anonymity of affiliation to a particular social class (the idea here is, of course, to be mistaken for a person of a higher class). Mexicans of the middle class dress much more nicely than do their American counterparts. In spite of the fact that average middle-class income in Mexico is much lower than in the United States, members of this class in Mexico spend more on clothing than Americans do. In this way, many Mexicans disguise their middle-class affiliation, at least on the street, and they certainly eschew any identification at all with the barefoot or sandal-clad proletariat.

The foregoing, although a perfunctory summary of the Limited Good model, is necessary so that the reader may understand the ways in which Limited Good manifests itself in daily life in Mexico and thus understand its occurrence in contemporary Mexican literature. We are now in a position to examine Hasta no verte, Jesús mío and La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro in light of the Limited Good code which informs them.
CHAPTER III

Elena Poniatowska is one of the most highly respected journalists in Mexico. She was the 1977 winner of the prestigious Premio Nacional de Periodismo and has written for the newspaper Novedades for more than twenty-six years. She has published collections of crónicas and one short story, Querido Diego, te abraza Quiela (1978). Hasta no verte, Jesús mío (1969) and La noche de Tlaltelolco (1971) are the only long works she has attempted thus far, although she is working intermittently on a life history of Demetrio Vallejo, a Mexican railroad union organizer.

In spite of the fact that Hasta no verte, Jesús mío reads like a novel, Poniatowska wrote it not as fiction but as a tribute to the person her public now knows as Jesusa Palancares. She met Jesusa when she was doing a series of articles on prison life in Mexico. At that time, Jesusa worked at a prison in Mexico City washing uniforms and linens. Poniatowska began interviewing her and continued to do so on a regular basis for about a year. Their meetings were not undertaken with any particular sort of publication in mind, but because Poniatowska was captivated by Jesusa's personalty and her ability to survive - and survive well - in a system which had defeated many others.

Hasta no verte, Jesús mío is an oral history of Jesusa Palancares' life. She was born in 1900 in the southern part of the state of Oaxaca, in the town of Miahuatlán. Her
mother died when she was about the years old. Although she had two brothers and a sister, they had all died by the time Jesusa reached the age of fifteen. Her father, an itinerant laborer, took jobs wherever he could to support his family. This effort, however, was thwarted by Jesusa, who foiled most of his attempts to provide his children with a stepmother who could take care of them during the day. Jesusa was always jealous of her father and resented any intrusion of this sort. She was also very strong-willed and usually got her way. Since there was generally no one at home to look after the children, Felipe Palancares, her father, had to come home during the day to cook for them. For this reason, it was difficult for him to keep a job. The family was finally forced to begin traveling from place to place so that Felipe could find work.

Felipe at last found a stepmother whom Jesusa could accept (or who was stronger-willed than she). This woman, Evarista, was the daughter of the warden of the women's prison in Tehuantepec. Between Evarista and her mother, they taught Jesusa how to cook and do housework. The relationship, one of great respect, lasted even after Felipe grew tired of Evarista and ran off with another woman.

As time passed, Jesusa was placed, either by her father or her stepmother, in households in different cities
as a maid. Her duties included cooking, washing and taking care of children, the last of which she particularly enjoyed. When the Revolution reached Oaxaca, however, her father joined Jesús Carranza's troops and she went with him.

During the Revolution she helped both by cooking and washing for the soldiers and by fighting in several battles herself. During this time she was married to a young captain named Pedro Aguilar - he was seventeen and she fifteen at the time of their wedding. By the end of her stay with the troops, both Pedro Aguilar and her father had been killed. She ended up in Mexico City with no means of getting back to Oaxaca. She stayed there working at such diverse jobs as washing, domestic service, making boxes at a cardboard factory, running a restaurant and operating a barber shop. She spent a brief time in the city of Oaxaca in the late 1920's when she joined up with the troops who were fighting the Cristeros, groups of ultra-conservative Catholics who sought to win back all of the Church's pre-Revolutionary privileges.

Jesusa's character has been shaped by adversity of all kinds. She has an aggressive, no-nonsense personality. She is proud and self-sufficient, and she works and has fun with equal intensity. At one point in her life, she worked all day and then went drinking and dancing all
night. The loss of her ability to do this because of advancing age is a source of great chagrin to her.

In her later years she took up spiritualism as a religion, an unusual decision in predominantly-Catholic Mexico. Spiritualism, according to her, has helped her gain insight into her life and to evaluate her past actions. At the very least, it has provided her with an inner strength at the time when her physical fortitude is abandoning her.

Jesusa's account ends when she is about 67 years old, at about the time Poniatowska is interviewing her. She left the employ of the prison soon after Poniatowska began to meet with her, and for most of this period she washed overalls at a printing company for a living. Although Poniatowska has not seen her for a time, she is apparently still working for the printing company at age 79.

Gustavo Sainz, at present the director of the Literature Section of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, is a professor of sociology and a novelist of some note in Mexico. He has published four novels, Gazapo (1965), Obsesivos días circulares (1969), La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro (1974) and Compadre Lobo (1976). Some of his novels, especially La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro, Compadre Lobo and another one in progress have a strong sociological element. His idea seems to be to introduce certain sectors of Mexican society to the society as a whole, or to
allow certain groups to see themselves in a new light.

Sainz (1979a) says of his own writing:

Entonces el novelista al escribir, al dar estas ideas, debe incrementar la experiencia de los lectores, incrementarla en el sentido de que el lector asimile, y de ser posible aprenda, una posibilidad de tener o de ganar un pensamiento crítico, de manera que puede verse a sí mismo, a la sociedad en la que vive, a la comunidad en la que vive, a la ciudad, al país en el que vive críticamente. (p. 10)

Bueno, entonces yo quiero hacerte un libro que si tú vives en la Colonia del Valle y no sabes cómo son en Netzahualcóyotl, cuando yo te cuente esas historias de ahí, te las cuente además con el tono en que hablan esos de allí. (p. 13)

One of Sainz's other main purposes in writing is to change his readers' perceptual habits:

...el lector común y corriente está habituado a ver televisión, a ver películas, a leer novelas prefabricadas ¿no? y entonces está adormecido en su percepción. Mis novelas lo están permanentemente retando a que recapacite, a que piense, a que coordine, a que relacione, en fin a que actúe frente al libro, que no sea pasivo frente al libro... (p. 10)

La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro is a portrait-of a fairly wealthy upper middle class woman. The novel consists of a monologue delivered by the woman to an unidentified listener, whose participation in the conversation is omitted but whose presence is made obvious by certain deictic references in the monologue. At the time the protagonist is speaking, she is grown and married. However, the episodes she narrates have occurred when she was between
the ages of about fourteen and twenty-five, while she was still single. Many critics have sought to place a time frame on this novel and have done superior works of literary detection, but Sainz himself has purposely avoided pinning down too many exact dates and is surprised that there have been so many comments about it (Sainz 1979b:5).

The Princesa (she never reveals her name, so the nickname which appears in the title of the book will have to suffice as a referential device) had three close women friends, one whom she calls "La Vestida de Hombre" because of her masculine attire and two sisters whom she refers to variously as "La Tapatía Grande" and "La Tapatía Chica," "Las de Guadalajara" and "Las de Guadalajara pues" (this last in imitation of a certain linguistic construction often used by people from that region). Other women, "such" as Mercedes, her brother's ex-girlfriend and Carmelita la Piernudita, a prostitute, appear only incidentally. She also has a number of male friends, some of whom, like Gabriel Infante and Tito Caruso, are only friends and others of whom have been involved romantically with her. Among these latter are a man she refers to as "el guapo guapo" (also known as el Loco Valdiosera), an intellectual law student from Guadalajara whom she speaks of as "el Monje de Jalisco," a gangster from Acapulco named Alexis Stamatis and Mauricio, a nightclub singer and owner of a lamp factory.
The Princesa calls up events from the past more or less by free association and relates them in an apparently open and unstructured way. She tells of an incessant string of nightclubs, love affairs, items of gossip, betrayals by friends and lovers, trips to Europe, well-placed relatives and friends of the family, seductions and underworld activities. She feels that her parents suffocate her and she seeks escape from them through various outlets: a short-lived university career; a job at the Palacio de Hierro, a large and elegant Mexico City department store, first as a clerk and later as a model; and finally a long and expensive year of psychoanalysis which seems to have been of questionable value.

The only real character in the novel is the Princesa herself. The others are merely voices who, as Elena Urrutia (1974:7) points out, interest her only insofar as they reflect her. The narration is ultimately a monologue about a single subject, the Princesa herself, and she reveals herself to be an insecure and superficial woman in great need of approval by and affection from others.

It is interesting to ask just how much of Hasta no verte, Jesús mío and La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro is documentary and how much is fiction. Both are written in the form of first-person confessions, that is in the form
of a fictional narrative. Both, in some way or other, remit the reader to an external reality. The way in which the two were written will shed some light on this problem.

The material for Hasta no verte, Jesús mío was gathered before the widespread use of the cassette recorder made tape recording of interviews almost indispensable. Although Poniatowska did record some of her interviews with Jesusa, she did so on a non-portable reel-to-reel recorder. It was an extremely heavy and cumbersome piece of equipment and prevented any mobility during the interview. Since Jesusa refused to stop working during these sessions, and in fact often put Poniatowska to work as well, there was usually a great deal of moving around, which proved a hindrance to taping. Jesusa also objected to the amount of electric current such a machine would use. Although Poniatowska offered to pay her share of the electric bill, Jesusa, in her typically egalitarian fashion, pointed out the impossibility of this since Poniatowska would not know exactly how much of the bill was hers. The idea of recording the interviews was finally dropped.

What eventually happened was that Poniatowska would meet with Jesusa for a few hours every Wednesday and rush home to write up what she had learned that day. Although Poniatowska is an experienced interviewer, not even she has total recall, and by the very nature of the process she used, some of her material was altered. These alterations may or
may not have been trivial. This is not a criticism of her account of Jesusa's life, but is only meant as a clue as to where Hasta no verte, Jesús mío might fall within the documentary-to-fiction continuum. Naturally, anyone who had spent as much time with a subject as Poniatowska had with Jesusa would know the person very well and would be able to present a fair portrait of her.

Poniatowska herself (1979:2-3,7) admits manipulating her text in certain ways. For one thing, while the language in the book is characteristic of a certain social class in Mexico, it is not always the language Jesusa used and is not the language of a particular geographic region. Besides Jesusa's natural way of speaking, which includes elements from Oaxaca and Mexico City, there are many expressions used most commonly in western Mexico, especially in the state of Jalisco. Much of the language is Poniatowska's own invention, based on expressions she has heard from people in a social position more or less equivalent to Jesusa's.

In addition, a large amount of editing was done in order to maintain a fairly even tone in the book. As Poniatowska herself says:(1979:7):

Hay muchas dificultades para que una gente hable. Jesusa no hablaba todo el tiempo como un caballo al galope, Yo le hice hablar al caballo al galope. Entonces, si quieres, en este sentido hay creación, en forzar un poco el ritmo del relato.

Poniatowska certainly does not take the same distance
from her subject as Sainz does. She accepts Jesús's evaluations of herself and reports them. Indeed, though the narrative cannot be said to be pure documentary because of the manipulations of language and rhythm, the elimination of certain kinds of material (Jesús's constant complaints about her neighbors, for example) and its narrative form, it occupies a place very close to the documentary end of the continuum.

Of course, this judgment is made easier to render since the reader knows a priori that Jesús is a real person and Poniatowska's expressed intent was to present her as realistically as possible. Sainz's protagonist is, at best, a composite. According to him (1979a:4), he interviewed about thirty young upper middle class women for this project. These interviews, in which the women were asked to describe their daily lives, were taped. However, in writing the novel, Sainz made little use of the content of these recordings. Instead he studied very carefully the linguistic patterns the women used when they spoke. It was these that he incorporated into La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro, very faithfully and quite successfully.

Speaking of these linguistic patterns and his reasons for writing the novel, Sainz says in an interview with Josefina Millán (1974:1):

Siempre he pensado que las mujeres son estupendas narradoras de historias - la tradición empieza con Scheherazada.... Pero
en la literatura mexicana esa voz no está rescatada. Hay muchas mujeres personajes, pero no urbanos, no contemporáneos.

Ahora bien, por su estructura social ese lenguaje está corroído por la costumbre, imbuido por la familia y encerrado en sí mismo; tienen un vocabulario muy limitado y ninguna imaginación sintáctica. Todo esto era muy atractivo como para dedicarse a escuchar la voz, la voz de una mujer que contaba cosas y cosas y que era un instrumento casi musical.

As a result of the emphasis on linguistic accuracy, the novel reads as if one were listening to a friend talk about things which had happened to her. Many readers will have the strange sensation of having heard this person before. Sainz (1979a:6-7) relates two anecdotes about this fact. In one case, he was in Sanborn's, a Mexico City department store and restaurant, looking for magazines, when he heard two women behind him engaged in a conversation which sounded like it had come directly from a chapter in his book - the Princesa did exist and not only in his imagination! In the other he was at a concert and overheard a banal and verbose monologue which another person reprimanded with "¡Estás hablando como la Princesa del Palacio de Hierro!"

The two authors have made their reasons for writing these texts explicit. Since the reasons are substantively different - one wrote with the intention of presenting a life history while the other was parodying a certain type
of woman as well as playing games with language - we may suppose that the texts will differ in significant ways.

One of the first things the reader notices, however, is a number of structural similarities between Jesusa's narrative and La Princesa's. In the first place, both protagonists are women. Not only that but both narrations are first-person monologues and each of the protagonists is remembering past events in her life. Jesusa is looking back over her whole life from the vantage point of old age and as such is able to evaluate her own actions with the maturity of one who has seen and suffered much. Speaking of the harsh treatment she received from her stepmother Eva-rista, for example, she says:

...a pesar de tantos trancazos que me dio
¿qué sería de mí si no me hubiera enseñado
a mal lavar los trastes, a mal lavar la ropa?
¿De qué me mantendría yo? ¿En qué hubiera
ido a parar? (p. 52)

Even the Princesa's telling of her story comes several years after the period in which the events occur (from two to eight years later, according to different estimates\textsuperscript{11}), so that she also brings a kind of maturity and an attempt at evaluation to her account.

Of course, in spite of these similarities, the differences in the two texts are striking. The class affiliation of the two protagonists is radically divergent. Jesusa is a member of the lower class while the Princesa
belongs to the upper middle class. The economic and social differences in the two impose vastly different possibilities for the content of the narrated world in each case and there is little or no possibility of shared experience between the two women: they live in two different spheres which are only tangential to each other.

The class difference and all that it implies for these two works is fairly obvious. There is another, more subtle disparity between them, however, which is the difference in focus of the two novels. Hasta no verte, Jesús mío centers around the events in Jesusa's life, that is around the narrational content. La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro, on the other hand, must be understood in terms of the structure of its discourse, the exact events described by the Princesa being of secondary importance.

The nature of this difference in focus is clarified when we realize that, although the first-person memoir is used in both works, in La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro it is essential to the telling of the story while in Hasta no verte, Jesús mío it is one of many possible forms that the novel could have taken. Although the author chose this particular form because she feels it adds to the verisimilitude of the work, it is not hard to imagine Jesusa's story told by a third-person disguised narrator with a level of privilege high enough to allow access to Jesusa's thoughts. Such a change would not alter the net effect of the story on the
reader very much because the importance of the text does not lie in its narrative structure.

La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro, however, is quite another matter. It is a study of language and how it can be used to simulate and dissimulate. The story had to be told in the words of the protagonist because the story is the words of the protagonist. It would be difficult to imagine the following passage written in any other way, because the language itself reveals to the reader something about the Princesa's character:

A veces nos juntábamos para hablar de nuestros problemas... Fíjate por ejemplo que la Tapatía Grande hacía el amor con dos muchachos al mismo tiempo, y para evitar que terminaran pronto les hacía unos pases misteriosos, yo qué sé. ¡Contaba unas historias! La Chica un día pescó tricomonas, ya casada con Napoleón, dizque en un baño público. Y La Vestida de Hombre había ido al consultorio de Gabriel Infante, que ya sabes que es el tipo más grosero del universo, pero groserísimo. Y contó que le dijo pásale pinche flaca. Y así no, no seas tan grosero Gabriel, que no sé cuánto...

Bueno, el otro día le hablé... Y no, gorda, la onda está gruesísima. Fíjate que el otro día me fui a Acapulco y te venden marihuana en las calles, te jalonean, de a devis, porque unos tienen mejor mota que otros. (p. 180)

What the Princesa says here is trivial. Her need to narrate incidents which will astonish the reader and her way of doing so are the important phenomena in this passage.

The idea that the focus in La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro is on linguistic form and that in Hasta no verte,
It is on content is important for the analysis of the manifestations of the Limited Good orientation in each one. It is precisely in the events of Hasta no verte, Jesús mío and in Jesusa's conscious evaluation of them that this orientation becomes apparent: the characters, and more specifically the protagonist, exhibit behavior which would be in accordance with the norms of a Limited Good society. Jesusa's personality is a case study of Limited Good on an individual level, and that is exactly what this study examines.

The protagonist of La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro thinks of herself as a sophisticated, well-traveled, worldly person who has transcended her social environment. For this reason, in the account she gives of events in her life, she consciously or unconsciously filters out most of the behavior which would attach her to such a system, choosing to narrate surprising, out-of-the-ordinary events rather than mundane, tedious, everyday ones. However, she is not nearly as free from her social surroundings as she thinks she is. She structures her discourse in such a way as to tie her irrevocably to Limited Good, or at least to the part of the Limited Good orientation called the Mexican mask. This fact is the central point in our study of La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro. As was mentioned in our summary of Limited Good and the Mexican mask, it is to be expected that outside the proletariat the manifestations of Limited Good might confine themselves to a fragmentary part
of the total system, such as the mask, and this is exactly the case in La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro.

Hasta no verte, Jesús mío: Jesusa Palancares in a Limited Good Society

Many of the traits of Jesusa Palancares' personality center around the avoidance of contact with or dependency on her fellow man. This is a possible solution for a person living in a Limited Good society because one of the greatest threats to the equilibrium of the group is seen to be the excesses of others: the other members of the community are thought of as grasping, selfish, uncaring, ungrateful. Jesusa, over the years, has been the victim of a self-centered father, a violent and abusive husband, government officials who steal what little money she is entitled to as a Revolutionary war widow (she fought herself but is not allowed a pension for that), men who seek to take advantage of her, women who prove to be false friends and acquaintances who simply do not care about the fact that she has nothing to eat and no place to sleep.

Jesusá's reaction to all this is to cut herself off from others and to fend for herself. Certain motifs run through her account of her life which confirm this idea, not only as a consciously expressed outlook on life but also as an unconscious underlying cognitive orientation. Jesusa cannot help speaking in terms of these motifs because it is
in these terms that she assimilates information from the physical world into her consciousness.

Fatalism is one of the main threads which runs through Jesusa's speech. "Si ya le toca a una morir del temblor, pues que le aplaste a una la voluntad de Dios," she says (p. 38). There is no thought that her situation will ever be better, so that alongside her fatalism, there is a strong current of pessimism. Of Zapata and his ideals she says:

Zapata no tiraba a ser presidente como todos los demás. El lo que quería era que fuéramos libres pero nunca seremos libres, eso lo alego yo, porque estaremos esclavizados toda la vida. ¿Más claro lo quiere ver? Todo el que viene nos muerde, nos deja mancos, chismuelos, cojos y con nuestros pedazos hace su casa. (p. 78)

On another occasion she comments on her own destiny:

Al fin de cuentas no tengo patria....No me siento mexicana ni reconozco a los mexicanos. Aquí no existe más que pura convenien-cia y puro interés. Si yo tuviera dinero y bienes, sería mexicana, pero como soy peor que la basura, pues no soy nada. Soy basura a la que el perro le echa una miada y sigue adelante. Viene el aire y se la lleva y se acabó todo....Soy basura porque no puedo ser otra cosa. (p. 218)

This pessimism expands into a certain general disappointment with her fellow man. Jesusa expects nothing from her friends, for example, when she thinks she is dying and decides to give away all her worldly goods before she leaves her neighbors and goes off to die alone. This is one of the few cases in which she is surprised: her friends look all day until they have found her and brought her back
home. They return all her possessions to her, except for the money in the little bank which she has given to doña Lola, her landlady, so that she has a chance to express her disillusionment anyway: "Pues si yo todo lo había regalado, por mi loquera de la enfermedad, ella se aprovechó." (p. 197)

Usually Jesusa expects nothing and receives precisely that from her friends, neighbors and loved ones. A long-standing friendship with doña Adelina de la Parra comes to nought when doña Adelina and her sister begin to have affairs with men and because of this to neglect their family obligations, an attitude of which Jesusa does not approve. Later on in her life she takes in a young boy, Perico, and raises him as her son. As he grows up, she feels that he has not been properly grateful for all she has done for him and is quite hurt when he moves out of her house when he is about sixteen, leaving her more alone than ever.

Because of all the physical and psychological abuse Jesusa has received in her life, such a pessimistic outlook is natural. However, in spite of the fact that she has had a very difficult life, Jesusa's reaction to it has been to face up to adverse situations and fight them rather than to allow them to defeat her. One of the symptoms of this reaction has been a general refusal to believe in others, manifested in a mistrust of almost everyone, a re-
jection of any affection proffered her, a leary attitude toward authority and a refusal to be governed by anyone else's rules.

Jesusa seldom takes interaction with other people at face value, and for her there is no such thing as idle conversation. When a young man on a horse offers to let her ride too so that she will not get tired, her reply is "¿Y a usted qué le importa que me canse o no me canse?" (p. 81)

Once when she is in a store in Oaxaca, the owners ask her if she is from there:

Yo ya no daba pie con bola, si decirles que sí o que no. Soy muy desconfiada y además me había venido de huida por lo del policía que me iba a meter presa....
Y de veras ¿qué le importaba al tendero que yo fuera de abajo? Ni él se ganaba nada ni yo tampoco. (pp. 217-218)

Jesusa has apparently rejected all of the romantic overtures ever made to her, including the one she received from the man she married. Indeed, she was incensed that he would dare pay attention to her:

Mi marido se llamaba Pedro Aguilar; tendría unos diez y siete años, dos más que yo. No tenía por qué haberse atravesado en mi camino. Fue una sinvergüenzada de él, un abuso porque yo no le había dado ninguna voluntad ni a él ni a nadie....¿Con qué derecho?.... Yo no se lo tomo a bien. (p. 84)

She always felt that any unsolicited attention from men was an intrusion on her privacy. Her relationships with men almost always tended toward friendship, and in fact she had many men with whom to go dancing and drinking, but with
whom she would have nothing more to do. This attitude certainly did not stem from the lack of an affectionate nature. Many times in her life she took in animals and small children to raise. In these cases, however, the idea was hers and not someone else's.

Her rejection of intimate male companionship had more to do with her not wanting to be controlled by anyone else's rules than with an absence of the need to be loved. Mexican society is one in which women are still often seen as instruments of male ego, and wives are frequently treated as their husbands' property. This behavior is especially prevalent in the lower and lower middle classes, but is not entirely absent in any social stratum. Jesusa has perceived this and her avoidance of the whole male-female relationship is one more of her ways of masking herself, that is of not exposing herself to the threat of diminishment so feared in Limited Good societies. She says of this problem:

Como padece tanto con Pedro dije yo: "Mejor me quedo sola." Dicen que el buey solo bien se lame ¿y por qué la vaca no?...Para ser malo el hombre, lo mismo es extranjero que mexicano. Todos pagan igual. Todos le dan a uno. Son como el león y la leona. El león cuando está conquistándose a la leona, la relame, la adula, la busca y todo. Nomás la tiene en sus garras y le pega sus buenas tarascadas....Por eso nunca me ha llamado la atención la casadera. Mejor pasar necesidades que aguantar marido. Sola. A mí los hombres no me hacen falta ni me gustan, más bien me estorban aunque no están cerca de mí... (p. 173)

Para todas las mujeres sería mejor ser hombre,
seguro, porque es más divertido, es uno más libre y nadie se burla de uno. En cambio de mujer, a ninguna edad la pueden respetar, porque si es muchacha se la vacilan y si es vieja la chotean....En cambio, el hombre vestido de hombre va y viene: se va y no viene y como es hombre ni quien le pare el alto. (p. 186)

The wish to refrain from participating in other people's "games" extends to other situations as well, some of which would seem trivial to anyone but Jesusa. Once she was arrested because the officer on the street mistook her for a prostitute. Her first reaction was to attack the officer and, since she was very strong and quite a fighter, she was almost able to give him a beating. When she finally arrived at the police station, she was absolved of the charge of prostitution but was jailed for assaulting an officer. There was a matron who was in charge of seeing that all the women entering jail take a bath. Jesusa refused, saying that she was not dirty. In spite of the woman's threats, Jesusa stood firm and did not bathe. She criticized her friend Guadalupe Escobar, who was with her, for allowing herself to be washed because she thought that Guadalupe "siempre fue muy borrega, muy dejada." (p. 181)

There are even attempts to escape from natural laws. When someone killed a coyote she had been raising and then offered to pay for the animal, Jesusa responded:

Yo no necesito el dinero, lo que necesito es la coyota. A ver resucítémela....Así como le quitó la vida tiene que dársela
otra vez... (p. 116)

She had a similar reaction when she learned of her brother Emiliano's death and of the autopsy that was to be performed on him: "Les alegué que si le iban a devolver la vida, los dejaba y si no, que no lo rajaran." (p. 62)

Jesusa shows a mistrust of authority typical of individuals in a Limited Good society. Since all members of the society are suspected of trying to increase unfairly their advantage over others, those in positions of authority are doubly suspect because the position itself gives them the means of fulfilling their greedy desires. Speaking of a general's wife she says, "Era la mujer de un general, pero entonces no eran ricos los generales. ¡Ah, los bandidos, ahora son ricos porque se roban los bienes de la nación!" (p. 135) She expresses herself in a similar fashion regarding policemen:

Hasta la fecha son muy rateros los gendarmes. Son más sinvergüenzas que los rateros porque ni siquiera exponen su vida y no hay quien los lleve presos, ni modo que unos a otros. La gente, con tal de que no se la lleven, le da a los policías todo lo que piden. ¡Bandidos! (p. 214)

At the end of the Revolution, no less than the President of the Republic, Venustiano Carranza, refused her and several other war widows their pensions, saying that they would all soon be married again. Jesusa's supposition was that Carranza himself had pocketed this money (p. 136):

While the foregoing character traits - mistrust, rejec-
tion of affection and refusal to be governed by others - represent Jesusa's efforts to keep intruders out of her life, there are other features of her personality which constitute an attempt at self-assertion. In a Limited Good society an individual must try to keep others from dominating him and at the same time try to maintain his own personality or even dominate others. Since it is assumed that both efforts will only be partially successful, in all probability an equilibrium will be reached.

Pride, hardness of character and aggressiveness are the traits through which Jesusa asserts her character. She has always been proud in that if she cannot do something for herself, she will not allow others to do it for her. When she becomes ill, for example, she shuts herself in her room until she is well, no matter how serious the illness. If any sort of cure is needed, she cures herself and not only is not grateful for help from others but is positively outraged at the invasion of her privacy. (pp. 315-316). The few times in her life when she has had no place to live and was forced to accept the offer to stay with other people, she was very careful about not making her presence felt. She would sleep on the floor of either the kitchen or the zaguán, a sort of entryway, covering herself with a few old newspapers. She describes mealtime in one of these houses thus:

Como estaba arrimada, cuando iban a comer
me salía a la banqueta de la calle porque me daba vergüenza que me tuvieran ahí de mirona. No veían que tenía hambre. Comía a veces, una tortilla. Esta señora Raquelita no tenía ninguna obligación de darme el alimento. Yo estaba allí nomás, ése no es mal trato. ¿Por qué ha de ser mal trato cuando las cosas están predestinadas por la mano omnipotente de Dios? No tienen otro remedio. (p. 135)

Jesusa's hardness of character and aggressiveness are probably products of a difficult and deprived existence. Of course, many people are conquered by the same circumstances, but apparently Jesusa's answer to adversity is to become toughened by it. She lives by her own rules which provide for no nonsense: she works hard, minds her own business and expects others to do the same. She is a fighter, both verbally and physically. "Yo no soy querendona, no me gusta la gente....Soy muy reñonona, hablo muy fuerte," she says of herself (p. 283). Jesusa does not forgive affronts easily: "...soy rencorosa, hasta las cachas. El que me la hace me la paga. Y con todo y réditos, porque en eso de los odios soy muy usurera." (p. 197)

She has physically attacked both men and women, from the time she beat one of her stepmothers who was mean to her. Although she received quite a lot of physical abuse from her husband, one day she decided she had suffered enough and threatened him with a gun. She considers this the beginning of her aggressiveness:

Después dije que no me dejaría y cumplí la palabra. Tan no me dejé que aquí estoy....
Me hice muy peleonera, muy perra. Y con los años me fue aumentando el instinto de dar antes de que me den. El que me tira un jijazo es porque ya recibió dos por adelantado. (pp. 101-102)

Later she says of her young adulthood:

En esos años del señor yo era terrible. Si las gentes testereaban conmigo en la banqueta, les sonaba. Volteaban a preguntar por qué y yo les decía insolencia y media, todas las majaderías que se me venían a la cabeza. (pp. 176-177)

Besides this nucleus of protective and aggressive behavior, there is another nucleus which consists of worldly suffering as the payment of a spiritual debt. Many of the episodes and comments in this book center around these ideas. Jesusa describes this suffering eloquently:

Y desde entonces todo fueron fábricas y fábricas y talleres y changarros y piqueras y pulquerías y cantinas y salones de bailes y más fábricas y talleres y lavaderos y señoras fregonas y tortillas duras y dale y dale y dale con la bebedera del pulque, tequila y hojas en la madrugada para las crudas. Y amigas y amigos que no servían para nada, y perros que me dejaban sola por andar siguiendo a sus perros. Y hombres peores que perros del mal y policías ladrones y pelados abusivos. Y yo siempre sola, y el muchacho que recogí de chiquito y que se fue y me dejó más sola y me saludas a nunca vuélves y no es por ai María volteate y yo como lazarina, encerrada en mi cazuela, y en la calle cada vez menos brava y menos peleonera porque me hice vieja y ya no se me calienta la sangre y se me acabaron las fuerzas y se me cayó el pelo y nomás me quedaron unas clavijas por dientes...cada vez más desmadejada en esta chingadera de vida. (pp. 147-148)

Among the causes of her suffering were a lack of affection from the people by whom she really wanted to be loved
(her father, especially), the amount of hard work she has had to do just to make ends meet, the violence she has witnessed and been the victim of, the callousness of others who saw her suffering and did not care, and bad health caused by overexertion and undernourishment.

However, for Jesusa, suffering is a natural part of life. The religion she has adopted, spiritualism, explains suffering in life as a means of paying a spiritual debt incurred in a previous incarnation. In Jesusa's words:

Por eso todo lo que yo atraviese son purificaciones....Mi deuda debe ser muy pesada ya que Dios me quitó a mis padres desde chica y dejó que viniera a abonar mis culpas sola como lazarina. Debo haber sido muy mala; por eso el Ser Supremo me tiene en la quinta pregunta para poder irme limpiando de mi cizaña. (p. 10)

El Ser Supremo nos envía a la tierra a lavar nuestras almas porque nos hizo limpios la primera vez y para poder retornar a él tenemos que regresar como nos mandó. ¿Y cómo nos vamos a limpiar? A fuerza de dolor y de sufrimiento....Allá solo El tiene apuntado lo que debo. Y no es poco, porque en esta última reencarnación he sido muy perra, pegaloná y borracha. (pp. 12-13)

This idea of a debit-credit accounting of a spiritual debt to be paid by suffering and purification in life is a clear use of the Limited Good orientation to explain certain kinds of experience: the debt has already been incurred and all kinds of suffering - poverty, loneliness, betrayal, illness, hard work and all of the other things which abound in an economically deprived society such as Jesusa's - must be
endured to reduce the debt.

Another nucleus of behavior in **Hasta no verte, Jesús mío** centers around the fantastic element, especially the supernatural. Manifestations of the fantastic in Limited Good societies are usually abundant. The explanation for this lies in the importance of the fantastic in the Limited Good system. Although folk beliefs and witchcraft, which are mentioned only in passing in the book, are part of this system and controlled by it (that is, they are seen to operate under the same equilibrium-seeking forces as any other abstract good) the supernatural is viewed as coming from outside the system. The supernatural, on an abstract level (and hidden treasure, or any other form of unexpected wealth such as the winning of a lottery, on a concrete level) represent the only ways of injecting any additional good into the system. In any other case, the system is seen only to distribute and redistribute a fixed quantity of good. (See Foster 1967 for a more complete treatment of this idea.)

The first chapter of **Hasta no verte, Jesús mío** deals with Jesusa's beliefs regarding spiritualism. The book starts very abruptly with Jesusa's explanation of a vision she has had:

> Esta es la tercera vez que regreso a la tierra, pero nunca había sufrido tanto como en esta reencarnación ya que en la anterior fui reina. Lo sé porque en una videncia que tuve me vi la cola. Estaba yo en un Salón de Belleza y había unas lunas de espejo grandotas, largas, desde el suelo hasta
The reader is caught off balance by this apparent side-trip into the, for him, dubious world of spirits until he understands the importance of the fantastic element in the Limited Good orientation and the importance of spiritualism for Jesusa. Indeed, several chapters in the book are devoted exclusively to her spiritual "adventures," and in many other instances Jesusa explains episodes in her life in spiritualist terms. She believes, as has already been said, that suffering and cleansing of the soul are integral parts of life prescribed by this religion and she accepts them as such. She also has been told by spiritualist counsellors and mediums that she has three protectors in the spirit world: Don Antonio Mesmer, the most important of the three; Manuel Allende; and Luz de Oriente, who is actually the spirit of her dead husband Pedro Aguilar. It is ironic that this last one should be one of her spiritual protectors when he treated her so badly in real life. Jesusa finds, over a period of time, that she has great spiritualist powers herself, not as a medium but as a priestess who can control mediums.

Once, Jesusa had returned to Oaxaca with government troops who were fighting the Cristero bands. She took up residence there while the troops were stationed nearby. One day she was attacked by a man who had a pistol in his
hand. The man had mistaken her for his wife who had deserted him, and he was going to kill her. The man's gun became entangled in Jesusa's *rebozo*, so that when it went off, Jesusa thought the shot had missed her. When she undressed that night, she realized that her clothing had a powder burn on it which went all the way down to her innermost undergarments, and that by rights she should have a bullet lodged in her side. The fact that she had not been shot was attributed to protection by Don Antonio Mesmer. She went to a spiritualist temple right away to give thanks. Mesmer himself spoke to her confirming this and said simply that her time had not come yet (p. 228).

In another episode, Jesusa had had some trouble with a man nicknamed Manuel el Robachicos, a syphilitic cripple who took advantage of her economically until she had no more to give. When she finally refused to give him more money, Manuel, who it was said had dealings with the devil, sent the devil himself (el hermano Luzbella) to visit her. He did so, but only looked in the window without saying anything to her. She was livid at this presumption on the part of both Manuel and Brother Luzbella, so that the next day she demanded of her protector that she be allowed to confront the devil again and settle accounts. Her protector allowed Luzbella to enter her body and fight on physical rather than spiritual grounds. Jesusa became so ill she almost died (this was the occasion of her distributing all
her possessions among her friends), but now considers that she has conquered the devil and foiled his designs on her (p. 194).

Of all possible behavior in a Limited Good society, Jesusa's actions and attitudes seem to run along three lines. There is the nucleus of action involving an attempt to keep others from diminishing her character while she herself tries to bolster it up. The second nucleus centers around the spiritual debt and suffering as a means of paying the debt. The last nucleus centers around the supernatural and other manifestations of the fantastic which allow the influx of outside good into the system. These types of behavior do not by any means exhaust the possibilities of the Limited Good system, but the Limited Good orientation is posited at the social and not the individual level. No one individual will reflect the whole system, just as no one utterance can reflect the whole grammar of a language.

La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro: Language as Mask

Several reviewers have referred to the Princesa of Gustavo Sainz's novel _La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro_ as a modern-day Scheherezade. Even Sainz himself alludes to this possibility in an interview with Josefina Millán (1974:1). The idea of a woman who talks and talks to
save herself from death understandably comes to mind when one finds oneself in the midst of the torrent of words the Princesa unleashes on her listener. However, while the Scheherezade metaphor throws an interesting light on the Princesa's character, it is exaggerated. The Princesa talks to save herself from something, but that something is not death. It is anonymity.

As has already been mentioned, the Princesa speaks very little of the Limited Good behavior we have been examining here. Her anecdotes, banal and repetitive as they are, generally recount things which to most people would be out of the ordinary, such as her trip to Acapulco during which her uncle constantly cautions her not to sit next to certain women because they own two of the largest brothels in Mexico City or next to another woman because she is his best friend's paramour, or the time she asked the President of Mexico himself to help her fend off the overtures of a highly placed government official. The normal elements of the Limited Good orientation - envy, jealousy, mistrust, selfishness, complementary relationships (compadrazgos and the like) - emerge very seldom here. On the contrary, the Princesa is used to having everything in apparently unlimited abundance. There is no lack of admirers, alcohol, sex, money, places to go, fast cars, status symbols or any of a number of things which her social group sees as important. The constant theme is
escape - escape from tawdry everyday affairs, escape from boredom, escape from an onerous reality.

But ironically, there is no real escape. Although the content of the Princesa's narration is relatively free of the elements of the equilibrium model discussed here, the form of her discourse is that of the perfect mask, which as we have seen is definitely a part of the Limited Good model.

The Mexican mask, as Paz has said, both simulates and dissimulates. That is, the wearer of the mask pretends to be what he is not and, at the same time, attempts to hide his real self from view. There is the double intention of placing before the public a false image (one which by definition in this particular culture must be aggressive and dominating) and avoiding exposure of true feelings and attitudes.

The construction of a mask is a verbal activity, and Sainz admits that in this novel language is really the subject:

Yo decidí contar una historia. Pero entonces era la historia de un lenguaje...que la gente usa para enmascararse, para ocultarse, para no decir y que yo iba a usar para decir, para desenmascarar, para acusar....Era volver narrativo un lenguaje que habitualmente no es narrativo. (1979a:3-4)

En realidad lo que a mí me hubiera gustado mucho era hacer un libro en que fuera sólo lenguaje, que no contara nada..., pero me doy cuenta que es absurdo porque trescientas páginas así sería muy cansado para un público
Entonces para que el público lector vaya aceptando ese vocabulario, esa manera de hablar, yo voy injertando muchos acontecimientos banales, cómicos, satíricos, con el fin de irlo animando a leer. (Sainz 1979b: 3-4)

Since language as theme is such an important element in this novel, the analysis of the manifestations of Limited Good in it has been undertaken at a thematic, semantic and syntactic level. The content of the Princesa's narration is only incidental to the way in which she expresses herself.

The "dissimulating" elements in the Princesa's mask, those by which she effaces her true self, are

1) the omission of important data,

2) a self-centeredness which substitutes for self revelation,

3) the maintenance of a certain distance from the content of the discourse, coupled with a deliberate sameness of tone in her delivery and

4) prevarication.

Although the Princesa's monologue seems to tell the listener quite a lot about her, perhaps the most interesting part of her narrative is what is not revealed. For one thing, we never find out the Princesa's real name. "Princesa" is a nickname her mother gave her as a small child, but we do not even know if she continues to use it, because no one addresses her. The question of names in the novel in general is an interesting one. Most of the char-
acters, like the Princesa, have nicknames: La Vestida de Hombre, Las de Guadalajara, el guapo guapo (whose other name, El Loco Valdiosera, is only slightly more revealing), El Monje, Carmelita la Piernudita, etc. The net effect of this nicknaming is to keep the characters at the level of mere voices rather than to portray them as three-dimensional beings; they are simply appendages of the narrator's personality.

At the time she tells her story, the Princesa is married. Although there are vague references to her husband, we never know anything about him - his name, his occupation, his likes and dislikes - nor does the Princesa ever reveal her attitude towards him. Is she happy? Is she miserable? Is she indifferent to him? All such information is hidden safely behind the mask.

The Princesa's account of herself is very self-centered. The people who surround her are shadows who are portrayed only as they reflect her own ego. Even the fictitious listener, the person who is supposedly hearing this monologue, is vague. Even though the person is probably a woman (this is not the kind of confession a person like the Princesa would make to a man, no matter how close a friend he was), her relationship to the Princesa is ambiguous. The Princesa talks to her as if she had previous knowledge of most of the characters and much of the action, and yet she never figures more than peripherally in any of the
episodes narrated.

The other characters, as far as we can tell, exist only to participate in the Princesa's discourse. They are two-dimensional figures who can be summed up in a phrase: her mother - cold and uncompromising; her father - a typical macho; El Monje - intellectual and self-consciously sensual; La Vestida de Hombre - a good friend but one who takes advantage of others. These people are stock figures which show no development; from the beginning of the novel to the end they are the same. Only the Princesa shows any signs of change, and these are slight. David Decker (1977: 122) points out that towards the end of her monologue, starting after chapter 16, she shows some glimmer of self-understanding. That she is not entirely satisfied with what she sees is reflected in the fact that her self-evaluations begin to falter, to show a certain fatalism and frustration.

Of course, since the novel is a monologue, the prominence of the protagonist is only natural. Yet the Princesa's speech is self-centered rather than self-revealing. The ego she centers her discourse around is her public image, as when she refers to herself as "La Popular" (p. 12). Her choice of subject matter calculated to impress her listener and the hyperbole and exaggerated syntactic constructions she uses to relate this subject matter hide more than they reveal about her. Vicente Leñero has a
very interesting observation to make about this facet of the Princesa's personality (1974:9):

...la clave que permitiría resolver todas las claves de _La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro_ se encuentra en el hecho de que Sainz ha creado - consciente o inconscientemente - un personaje mentiroso.

Si por un momento se considera a la protagonista como un ser de carne y hueso que se planta delante de un interlocutor pasivo en un lugar donde el escritor ha instalado el micrófono oculto de una grabadora, resulta fácil conceder que la actitud de chisme, de interminable chisme que adopta esa mujer, tiene una alta dosis de mitomanía. Ella sospecha que su historia, que sus aventuras no tienen nada de extraordinarias, no son suficientemente insólitas, ni apasionantes, ni maravillosas, y porque lo sospecha su empeño mayúsculo consiste en amplificar con todos los recursos posibles esas aventuras. No cesa de hablar tratando de conseguirlo y cae en los absurdos, en la deformación, en la exageración característica del que engaña para interesar, para convertirse en importante.

One of the most effective masking techniques involves the protagonist's distance from the content of her discourse. She is, of course, speaking of events which took place some years prior to her telling of them, and the feelings associated with certain events cannot be the same as if they had happened yesterday. However, there is no apparent sense of perspective. Trivial events are given exaggerated importance. On the other hand, those things which might have caused her emotional pain at the time they happened are recounted in the same style as the more unimportant ones. The criterion, rather, seems to be to
maintain the same impact on the listener throughout the narrative. The Princesa desperately wants us to find her interesting, as Leñero says above.

Relatively unimportant episodes are related in great detail, especially if they have a certain entertainment value, as for example when two men she was going with at the same time came to visit her within a few minutes of each other (pp. 120-131). More serious anecdotes are often pared down until only the entertaining elements are left, such as her telling of how Napoleón and Andrés spent a day stealing wallets on a bus, an episode which figures sporadically in chapter 9. More earth-shattering things may be given short shrift, especially if they have little to do with the Princesa herself. She describes La Vestida de Hombre's mother in the following way:

Un tipo de señora que tú no crees que exista, que tú no aceptas que sea normal... Yo no soy sicóloga ni mucho menos, pero la señora necesita empadarse en un sanatorio, te lo juro... Ella estuvo en campos de concentración, tiene su número grabado en el antebrazo y todo. (p. 212)

The only way in which the Princesa can come to terms with this woman's tragic past is to suggest that she be institutionalized!

The Princesa does not wish to provoke a great emotional response in her listener, especially if this response might be stronger than the listener's fascination
with her. The most important thing to the protagonist is that we find her interesting and enviable. Everything that happens to her, whether elating, frightening, depressing or indifferent, is given to us in a smooth "package."

The last element of the dissimulating side of the Princesa's mask, that of invention, is probably the first element in the simulating side as well. As Leñero pointed out, the Princesa is "un personaje mentiroso." The Princesa uses her lies both as a substitute for real information about herself and as building blocks in the edification of her "public," or masked, personality.

How much of her tale is true and how much has been made up as she goes along is difficult to pinpoint. There is also a very thin line between outright lying and mere hyperbole, to which she is also highly prone. The American reader, at least, can spot the falsehoods in this passage about a trip to Miami:

Con decirte ¿cuándo crees que fue ese viaje? ¿Cuánto tiempo habrá pasado de esto? ¡Cuando mataron a Quenedi! Estábamos ahí... El día que lo mataron llegamos en la mañana y todo el mundo estaba contentísimo, todo el mundo, toda la gente, hasta las criadas, que porque eran mejor los republicanos. (p. 243)

Kennedy did not die until the afternoon (around 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time), very few people expressed happiness about it and the Republicans did not come into office as a result of his death.
The simulating side of the Princesa's mask involves the creation of a public image and the domination of the listener. Besides lying, other elements which help to build up her public personality are exaggeration and an attempt at intellectual and worldly sophistication. If the Princesa does not actually make up episodes all the time, she certainly embroiders on the ones she relates. Leñero has already mentioned to us that she is engaging in "la exageración característica del que engaña para interesse sar, para convertirse en importante."

Her attempts at sophistication, which is just another device by which she tries to make herself interesting, consist mainly of the use of earthy sexual imagery. Her speech is liberally salted with vocabulary which is normally considered unladylike in Mexico. She also uses several quaint expletives of her own creation — "¡Ladillas sin calzones!" "¡Canguros capados!" "¡Vientres rasurados!" etc. — which make her seem not only daring but also inventive. When she receives a bouquet of roses from her Italian friend Yiovani, she says:

En vez de oler las rosas ola la tarjeta... Olía a antifaz, a bragueta de marinero, a tabaco húmedo... Recuerdo perfectamente el olor pero no el texto de la tarjeta. Era como inseminación a domicilio. (p. 258)

It has already been mentioned that the simulating part of the Princesa's mask must not only build up a presentable image of her self, but it must also keep anyone else from
doing so at the same time. The dominating part of the Princesa's discourse consists of an effort to "hold the floor," that is, to keep the listener engrossed in what she is saying and to avoid leaving a pause in her speech during which the listener can interrupt with meaningful dialogue. The devices by which she does this are of three types: 1) those which maintain the flow of her speech so that there is no significant pause in it, 2) those that draw the listener into the discourse and 3) those that hold the listener's attention.

The best way, perhaps, to understand how this ascendency over the listener is achieved is to do a close textual analysis of a passage in the book. The passage could be chosen at random, because the rhetorical processes which operate throughout the novel are basically the same. However, the first few pages of the first chapter have been selected because this is one of the passages in which a fairly large number of these processes are brought to bear. This confluence of rhetorical elements at the beginning of the narrative is probably intentional on the author's part, because it serves the reader as an excellent introduction to the Princesa's personality and gives several clues as to what to look for in the rest of her exposition. The text analyzed has been presented in an appendix at the end of this study with numbered lines to facilitate the location of the portions under discussion.
The importance of maintaining the flow of discourse in a conversation is just beginning to be understood. Labov (1972) and others have analyzed the dynamics of conversation and found that when a speaker pauses for any reason, he is liable to lose his turn to another member of the group. This can be avoided by the simple expedient of not pausing or of covering breaks in discourse with "filler" constructions. Characteristic fillers in this passage are parenthetical expressions, empty syntactic constructions, repetitions and non-progressive syntagms.

The narrative opens with the parenthetical expression, "Oye." Others which appear are "tú" (1, 2), "Bueno" (1, 3), "¿no?" (1, 5), "¡eh?" (1, 7), "¿cómo se dice?" (1, 40), "¿verdad?" (1, 57), "¿te imaginas?" (1, 60), "hazme favor" (1, 89), "pregúntame si..." (11, 6 and 99-100) and "Imagínate" (1, 104). These expressions act as fillers which cover any pause in the conversation with noise, so that the most the listener can do is nod assent or look puzzled at something that has not been understood.

The empty constructions (those which add little or no semantic content), repetitions and non-progressive syntagms function in more or less the same way; they also serve to stretch out the narrative in order to give the content items time to be absorbed by the listener and to give the Princesa time to think of what to say. Examples of empty constructions are "eran de un nervioso" (1, 29), "había
señoras haciendo estreptís y cosas así" (II. 68-69) and "Entonces el muchacho dijo que iba a dar parte y que no sé qué..." (II. 108-109), in which the underlined words add nothing to the meaning of the utterance.

The repetitions in the passage may be of the reduplicating type ("eran flacas flacas," I. 28), anaphoric ("se ponía a maquillarse igualito, a peinarse igualito," I. 8) or only approximate ("Y corría unos pasitos y tenía que alzar los pies, porque el coche iba demasiado aprisa ¿no? Unos pasitos y volaba un cachito," II. 93-95). Non-progressive syntagms include the following: "Se vestía de hombre, con sombrero, corbata y todo" (II. 1-2), "masajear, sobar, acariciar" (II. 23-24) and "como gorrioncito achicopalado, o resfriado, o agónico" (I. 35).

Another way to keep the listener silent is to draw him (or more probably in this case, her) into the discourse by means of second person forms or rhetorical questions. Some of the parenthetical expressions mentioned above also fall into this category: "tú," "¿no?," "¿verdad?" Other questions and comments addressed to the listener are more complete: "...¿te acuerdas de Mercedes, la que era novia de mi hermano?" (II. 3-4). These deictic references involve the listener in the discourse and tend to make her more willing to keep listening.

Not only does the Princesa wish to continue to "hold the floor" and to give the listener a vested interest in
the discourse, but, as we have said before, she also wants to arouse the listener's curiosity, amazement and admiration. She does this in many ways in this passage. In the first place the discourse is richly textured. It winds sinuously rather than traveling a straight path. In 1. 41 she begins to talk of the place called Las Dos Tortugas. She then speaks of her popularity among those who frequent this nightclub and then of how her brother's hubcaps were stolen. In the last sentence of this passage there is an abrupt reversion to her popularity. The listener may glean a great deal about the Princesa from her narrative, but must be alert enough to follow the thread of the discourse as it meanders from place to place.

Actually, this task is made easier by the fact that the speech itself is very seductive. It has its own rhythm that carries the listener along. Sainz has seen to it that the language used here should have a certain "beat" which induces the listener to follow the narrative no matter how trivial the subject matter becomes:

Entonces lo que yo hice como planteamiento fue que mi novela sería como una obra musical estocástica. Haz de cuenta por ejemplo una obra en que hubiera instrumentos de percusión muy extraños, vamos a decir cuarenta motores de avión, diez botes de basura, una flauta, unas piedras sobre el pavimento. Entonces esos instrumentos de percusión, vamos a decir los cuarenta motores de avión, iban a estar representados en el libro por la palabra "entonces", que se repite constantemente y medida. Los instrumentos de percusión, los botes de basura,
The text is made up of a few principal anecdotes which have certain digressions interspersed among them. At the beginning of the passage, the Princesa is describing her friend La Vestida de Hombre. She begins to stray from her subject: "...¿y sabes a quién se parecía? Bueno ¿te acuerdas de Mercedes,..?" At the end of this sentence she goes farther afield: "...la que era novia de mi hermano." Now she is talking about Mercedes rather than La Vestida de Hombre: "Sí, diablos, esa que le ponía los cuernos, esa que le veía la cara ¿no?" Next she comments on her brother: "Pregúntame si para entrar se los tenía que limar detrás de todas las puertas ¡eh?" Following that, she returns to La Vestida de Hombre and her similarity to Mercedes, which was the first digression: "Y no era que se pareciera sino que se ponía a maquillarse igualito...." Finally, she takes up her original train of thought again, which is that La Vestida de Hombre dresses like a man. This sort of digression forces the listener to pay close attention to the narrative in order to follow the Princesa's ideas.

Another attention-holding device is that of ellipsis.
Elliptical references in the Princesa's speech give the listener a sense of being an accomplice to these events, of having privileged information about the antecedents of the story and of being clever enough to understand what is left out of these expressions. The first sentence of the book contains an example of this: "Oye, pero la tipa estaba de sanatorio." We know that the Princesa means that La Vestida de Hombre was crazy, without her saying so directly. The Princesa's way of reporting direct discourse is also a form of ellipsis: "...la detenía un agente de tránsito y ella se metía la mano al sobaco, como para sacar su credencial de influyente y no, ay no, señor estoy muy fea..." The last seven words her are those of La Vestida de Hombre, but it requires an agile mind to follow the Princesa in and out of her quoting of other people.

The Princesa adds interest to her speech with such devices as vivid imagery, irony and humor. She calls the cream which La Vestida de Hombre squeezes out of its tube a "gusanito blanco" (1. 22). She describes La Tapatía Chica's swings of mood as going from that of a "gorrioncito achicopalado" (1. 35) to a "luz de bengala" (1. 38). When she and her friends have a bad scare, she describes their faces as being like those one gets from "indigestión con chayotes" (1. 100). She brings irony into play when she says of an officer of the Secret Police, "...era tan secreto que todos lo sabíamos!" (1. 104). Humor is involved
when she calls her friends from Guadalajara "Las de Guadalajara Pues" or when, in a later passage, she refers to La Vestida de Hombre as "La Desvestida de Hombre" because of a particularly revealing article of clothing she is wearing.

However, the Princesa is not content to simply hold her listener's interest. She feels compelled to indulge in a certain overkill which will assure that her listener is not only interested but fascinated. She paints a life for herself that is exciting, sophisticated, even a little bit dangerous. Her use of obscenity goes from the highly inventive interjections ("¡Diablos circuncidados!", "¡Ranas sifilíticas!", etc.) to an extremely vulgar street language ("sobaco" instead of "axila," l. 14; "venida" for male orgasm, l. 12) to the usual assortment of groserías ("pendejo," "cabrón," "ni madres," "carajo," etc.) found in the Mexican lexicon. The purpose of this obscene language is to shock the listener and to impress her with the casual and worldly way in which she uses these words.

The Princesa's anecdotes are always told with a great deal of hyperbole, and she chooses her subject matter in a way that emphasizes unusual and enviable situations. In this passage, for example, we are told that she frequents night clubs although she is under age, she is one of the most popular clients of Las Dos Tortugas, she watches as
her brother is almost killed by some people who had been trying to steal his hubcaps, she actually knows a Secret Police agent. "Pero lo más importante es que alrededor de la pista estaban colgados como treinta pares de zapatos míos. O cuarenta. Era yo La Popular ¿te imaginas?", as she readily tells us at the end of the passage.

Although the focus of this analysis has been more sociological than literary, this type of "fabricating" personality can, as Leñero points out, ultimately be tied to a wider aesthetic consideration: "Lo apasionante del libro no depende tanto de esas falacias, sino del hecho de que ella...esté construída como un símbolo feliz de la enorme mentira que es al fin de cuentas toda novela." (1974:9). Indeed, it is possible that Sainz is playing with his readers in just the way that the Princesa plays with her listener: he has given us a text which sounds so real that it might be a tape transcription, a sociological case study, but which is, after all, "only" fiction.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS

Two goals were set for this study. One was to explore a literary form called, for our purposes, documentary fiction. While documentaries and imaginative fiction each have their own rhetoric, their own rules of persuasion, a literary work may be considered to be closer to one extreme or the other of the documentary-to-fiction continuum depending upon the amount of "real life" material (tape recordings, interviews, field observation, etc.) used and to what extent this material is mediated by an author. Of the two examples of documentary fiction analyzed here, Hasta no verte, Jesús mío comes nearest to being documentary because, although there is little reliance on exact data-gathering techniques like tape-recording, the information derived from the field study was reported with very little manipulation. La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro comes closer to being a work of fiction, because in spite of the fact that precise tape-recorded linguistic studies were undertaken for this work, the material was highly mediated by the author for his purposes. La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro stands as a social document but it also stands as a work of fiction.

Literature can heighten philosophical awareness and aesthetic pleasure. It can also entertain. However, many
writers who have produced works of documentary fiction believe that literature can be even more: it can be an educational tool whereby man learns about his fellow man; it can be the road by which man gains access to his own society; and, ultimately, it may be the catalyst for desperately needed social change.

The second goal of this study was to examine the relationship between a society and its literature in the light of cognitive realities. The particular case chosen was Mexican society, for which a cognitive orientation, known as the Image of Limited Good, was described. It was suggested that authors and readers share this cognitive structure and that authors' texts would be generated at least partly based on this orientation. An attempt was made to examine Hasta no verte, Jesús mío and La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro for indices of Limited Good. Elements were found in both. In Hasta no verte, Jesús mío the content was seen to have a strong Limited Good structure. The indication of this cognitive code in La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro, on the other hand, was found to reside in the structure of its discourse.

Of course, when reader and author share the same cognitive code, the text will seem to them infinitely richer than if this were not the case. However, that is not to say that a reader coming from a different cognitive background than the author will not understand the text. On
the contrary, a text of this sort may provide a key to the understanding of the other culture which could not be obtained by other means.

It is felt that the disciplines of anthropology and literary criticism have too long dwelt apart. Anthropology has either ignored or paid little attention to the function of literature and of the literary text in different societies, in spite of the fact that the vast majority of the earth's inhabitants are members of literate communities. Literary criticism, by the same token, has been too ethnocentric and has often studied literature only in its aesthetic as opposed to its broader cultural manifestations, which for the deepest understanding of what literature is and how it functions cannot be ignored. This study has been a limited attempt to draw the two disciplines closer together by indicating certain ways in which they might take each other into account.
APPENDIX

La Princesa del Palacio de Hierro: Text for Analysis

Oye, pero la tipa estaba de sanatorio. Se vestía de hombre, con sombrero, corbata y todo, tú, ¿y sabes a quién se parecía? Bueno ¿te acuerdas de Mercedes, la que era novia de mi hermano? Sí, diablos, esa que le ponía los cuernos, esa que le veía la cara ¿no? Pregúntame si para entrar se los tenía que limar detrás de todas las puertas ¿eh? Y no era que se pareciera, sino que se ponía a maquillarse igualito, a peinarse igualito, a vestirse ¿no?, a fumar igual, todo igual igual.

Y en la bolsa, tú, donde los hombres traen sus credenciales y las tarjetas de crédito y el pañuelo para limpiar sus venidas, ella traía las pomaditas. No me lo vas a creer, pero la detenía un agente de tránsito y ella se metía la mano al sobaco, como para sacar su credencial de influente y no, ay no, señor, estoy muy fea, y chïngale, un tubito como de pasta de dientes, tú, lleno de pomada que se tiene que aplicar en la pierna, pues cada vez que se asusta, o se sobresalta, o se altera, o se pone nerviosa ¿no?, le sale una ronchita roja en salva sea la parte, y ella tiene que sacar un tubito y levantarse la tela del pantalón y exprimir sobre la manchita el gusanito blanco y masajear, sober, acariciar, mientras el agente repite su licencia. Vestí-
da de hombre ¿no? Y era muy amiga de mis vecinas, las de Guadalajara. Pues, y estaba siempre en su casa o les hablaba a todas horas o venían a visitarme. A veces salíamos juntas ¿no? Casi siempre salíamos juntas.

Las de Guadalajara eran flacas flacas pero tenían muy bonita cara. Y eran de un nervioso, tú, como una pareja de pájaros, la mayor con cierto aire resuelto, manoteando siempre como si nadara entre nosotras o marchara golpeando una gran tambora ¿no?; la otra riendo, abriendo desmesuradamente los ojos, chisporroteando como un cerillo para después deprimirse como gorrioncito achicopalado, o resfriado, o agónico, para al rato volver a palmotear con las manitas huesudas, toda feliz, exhalando suspiritos cortos y fulgurantes ¿no?, como una luz de bengala. Junto a ellas, La Vestida de Hombre y yo parecíamos de cartón ¿cómo se dice?, de papel maché.

Ibamos con frecuencia a un lugar que estaba en un sótano, en el sótano de una casa muy antigua. Se llamaba Las Dos Tortugas y el dueño era un señor muy chistoso. Entonces fíjate que él tenía todo el sótano decorado de manera muy burdelesca, así, como de casa de citas, porque ponía, en unas cuartos ponía... Sótanos, sótanos como los que se usaban en las casas antiguas para almacenar cosas... Ponía redes, en otro
pintaba cosas, pero donde estaba el cuarto principal,
donde se supone que se concentraba la gente y ¡vaya
si se concentraba!, tenía todo lleno de brujas, bru-
as con escoba y todo ¡no? Colgadas. Chiquititas así,
colgadas. Y a todas les enchuecaba las patitas para
que se parecieran a mí, digo, todas las brujitas eran
yo, tenían las patitas hacia adentro, como camino yo,
como me paro yo. Entonces, cuando se iban acabando
mis zapatos tenía como consigna ineludible ¿verdad?,
que los tenía que ir dejando allí, porque como yo
siempre bailaba, bueno, era la que animaba más, la
que bailaba más. Era conocidísima ¿te imaginas? Y
todos me querían mucho... Aparte de que no deja-
ban entra gente de mi edad ¿no? Aunque a veces
llegaba y tampoco me dejaban entrar, porque había
espectáculos medio fuertes. Entonces me decían no,
no entres. Con mi hermano siempre ¿eh? Nunca sola.
O con Las Tapatías o con La Vestida de Hombre,
pero nunca sola. No, no entres, porque ahorita está
medio fuerte. Y es que había señoritas haciendo es-
striptis y cosas así. Pero iba gente de toda, de toda...
Iban saliendo de fiestas, del cine, de moteles, claro,
si conocían al dueño, digo, a ese muchacho alto, mo-
rado y con la panza en forma de pera. Iban prostitu-
tas, iban golfas, iba Gabriel Infante, siempre de
zapato blanco y pantalón así entubado de abajo y de
Aquí muy ancho. Entonces allí bailábamos. Era un lugar para bailar y siempre se concentraba allí la gente de ambiente, los chéveres y los superchéveres. Y una vez íbamos saliendo mi hermano y yo y dijo mi hermano hijos, escucha eso, yo creo que a algún pen... dejó le están robando los tapones. Y le digo puta sí, sí es cierto. Entonces empezamos a ver los coches, todos los coches que estaban estacionados allí, y que vamos viendo que era nuestro coche, que lo estaban desarmando tres tipos. Entonces mi hermano dice ay carajo, si es mi coche, y que empieza a correr para alcanzarlos. Entonces los rateros vieron que se atravesaba corriendo y subieron a un viejo ford que estaba estacionado en doble fila. Entonces mi hermano, el idiota, hazme favor, en lugar de dejarlos ir alcanzó al ford y se agarró de una ventanilla, digo, trató de abrirles la portezuela pero arrancaron como chiflido y apenas y pudo agarrarse de una ventanilla, como en las caricaturas. Y corría unos pasitos y tenía que alzar los pies, porque el coche iba demasiado aprisa ¿no? Unos pasitos y volaba un cachito. Los tipos le pegaban en la cara, le daban de cachetadas y él aferrado, bien aferrado. Hasta que se soltó ¿no? Entonces regresamos y nos metimos volados en Las Dos Tortugas. ¿Qué les pasó? Porque teníamos una cara que pregúntame
si de indigestión con chayotes. Y mi hermano resolviendo como toro de lidia. Entonces uno de los muchachos que estaban allí trabajaba en alguna cosa de servicios, una oficina de agentes secretos o algo así. Imagínate, era tan secreto que todos lo sabíamos.

Para esto, mi hermano venía como loco, repite y repite, nueve veintisiete doscientos cuarenta y tres, y repite y repite y repite así su placa, la placa de los tipos esos ¿no? Y ya fue y dio los datos. Entonces el muchacho dijo que iba a dar parte y que no sé qué, que no nos preocupáramos. Total, nunca hizo nada ¿verdad? Y nos quedamos sin tapones. Pero lo importante es que alrededor de la pista estaban colgados como treinta pares de zapatos míos. O cuarenta. Era yo La Popular ¿te imaginas?
NOTES

1 See Tyler (1969) for readings in cognitive anthropology.

2 Julio Cortázar and Mario Vargas Llosa have expressed themselves very strongly on this point. Many Latin American writers consider that they are writing for a literary elite.

3 It should be noted that the opposite phenomenon, that of making fiction seem like true-to-life reporting, is arbitrarily excluded from the term "documentary fiction" in this study, although it might be an interesting topic for analysis elsewhere.

4 One of the most fascinating examples of this sort of novel is The Daughter of Time (1951) by Josephine Tey. Ms. Tey attempts not only to document a certain historical period (the reign of Richard III of England) but to prove that history's judgment of events in this period has been totally wrong.

5 Booth (1961) provides an excellent treatment of the problem.

6 This is a paraphrase of information contained in Ch. 2 of El laberinto de la soledad (Paz 1950).

7 See especially Culler (1975), pp. 3-31, for a cogent exposition of this linguistic theory.

8 Foster (1965:301) makes this observation:

People who see themselves in "threatened" circumstances, which the Image of Limited Good implies, react normally in one of two ways: maximum cooperation and sometimes communism...; or extreme individualism. Peasant societies seem always to choose the second alternative....Cooperation requires leadership....Peasant societies are unable to delegate authority....The truncated political nature of peasant societies, with real power lying outside the community, seems effectively to discourage local assumption and exercise of power, except as an agent of those outside forces.
9. These examples are drawn from the writer's own experience.

10. La noche de Tlaltelolco is a report on the political upheaval in Mexico in 1968, which culminated in the severe repression of a street demonstration in the area of Tlaltelolco in Mexico City on the night of October 2 of that year. Although it is an outstanding example of documentary, it is presented in the form of an essay rather than as a narrative.


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