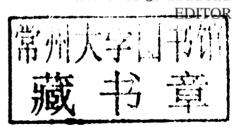
Contemporary Literary Criticism

CLC 362

# Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights, Short-Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and Other Creative Writers

Lawrence J. Trudeau





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### **Preface**

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Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science-fiction writers, literary and social critics, world authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews selected from hundreds of review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning an author's career from its inception to current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other works that offer insight into the author's works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
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# Bless Me, Ultima Rudolfo Anaya

(Full name Rudolfo Alfonso Anaya) American novelist, playwright, short-story writer, children's fiction writer, poet, and essayist.

The following entry provides criticism of Anaya's novel *Bless Me*, *Ultima* (1972). For additional information about Anaya, see *CLC*, Volumes 23, 148, and 255.

#### INTRODUCTION

Bless Me, Ultima, the first novel by Rudolfo Anaya (1937-), has been considered a classic of Chicano literature since its publication in 1972. The novel explores themes of childhood, spirituality, and cultural conflict through the story of Antonio, a young boy torn between his family's contrasting worldviews: his father's indigenous way of life and his mother's Catholicism. Like his protagonist, Anaya was born in a rural New Mexican village; his father was a vaquero ("cowboy") and his mother was the daughter of farmers. The family later moved to the city of Albuquerque, where Anaya pursued a degree in literature at the University of New Mexico. Shortly after graduating, Anaya began to formulate ideas for a story about his life, a work that could present the experiences of a young Mexican American boy and the events that arise from his confusion over his identity. Though he initially struggled to gain distance from the story, Anaya's breakthrough in writing the novel came when he conceived of the character of Ultima, a curandera ("medicine woman") to act as a guiding force for Antonio and to provide perspective on the boy's psychology during a time of transition. Bless Me, Ultima remains popular among readers and critics for its lyrical style, mythic elements, and exploration of Chicano culture.

#### PLOT AND MAJOR CHARACTERS

Set in World War II-era New Mexico, *Bless Me, Ultima* tells the story of the Marez family: Gabriel, the father, a rebellious and somewhat irreligious *vaquero* who grew up roaming the *llano* ("plain"); his wife, Maria, a devout Catholic and the daughter of farmers; their son Antonio, the first-person narrator of the novel; and Antonio's two sisters and his three brothers, who are away at war. As the story opens, the family has moved from Gabriel's home on the *llano* to a more developed village with an established religious and social infrastructure. The dynamics of the Marez household provide the central tensions of the story; the family is divided by religion and identification with place, torn be-

tween the rural wilderness and the stability of the village. Antonio begins telling his story as a precocious and thoughtful six year old. He explains that when his family lived on the *llano*, the *curandera* Ultima, who is called "la Grande" out of respect, had aided his and other families with her extensive knowledge of natural and spiritual cures. The action of the story begins when Ultima comes to stay in the Marez household during the last few years of her life. From the moment she enters, Antonio feels that Ultima has secret knowledge of his destiny.

In a series of dreams, Antonio envisions Ultima's presence at his birth. He also sees the arguments between his relatives over his future. His mother's family wants him to be a Catholic priest, hoping it will provide a stable life for him. His father's family wants the adventuring life of a vaquero for Antonio. He struggles with these dueling expectations throughout the novel, depending on Ultima as his guide and conscience. A patient teacher, she leads him through his transition from childhood to the complexities of adulthood. Antonio's gentle, thoughtful internal life is presented in contrast to the violent and troubling world around him. He witnesses the murder of a man suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, the laying of an evil curse on his uncle, the swearing and fighting of older boys at school, the sadness of his father, and the cruelty of the Catholic Church.

Eventually, Antonio becomes frustrated by the harsh realities of his life, and begins to question the two mentalities that his parents embody. His religious faith wanes when his first Communion rites fail to provide him with the spiritual awakening that he had anticipated. His reverence for the rough and wandering ways of his father begins to dissipate after continuous exposure to Gabriel's lawless, debauched, and often violent lifestyle. With Ultima's guidance, Antonio begins to develop as an individual, learning of new stories, new traditions, and new perspectives. In one of the novel's critical scenes, a friend tells Antonio the tale of a golden carp, a parable about how the gods punish people by turning them into carp, but one god also turns himself into a carp to protect and live among the punished. Upon hearing the story, Antonio begins not only to question God but also to see the possibility of an alternative to the choices his parents have offered him. By the end of the novel, Antonio is no longer a naive and reticent boy, but a mature individual with the capacity to question his reality and choose his future. Ultima's time as his mentor and protector is concluded, and she dies.

#### MAJOR THEMES

Bless Me, Ultima is an allegorical novel in which the intersecting themes of family, faith, culture, and place are explored in the characters and situations Antonio encounters. Antonio's difficult path involves several important trials: a personal conflict over cultural identity, the questioning of his faith, his development of a moral individuality, and the transition from childhood to adulthood. Antonio's father represents both native sensibility and unconventional existence. He and the other vaqueros "clung tenaciously to their way of life and freedom." His mother's character reflects a need for stability and community; her Catholicism constrains her understanding of "the coarse men who lived half their lifetimes on horseback." The character of Ultima is a personification of Antonio's own unconscious. A listening and accepting presence, she absorbs and reflects the boy's internal musings, skepticism, and development. Her very presence eases Antonio's confusion. "My soul grew under her careful guidance," Antonio says, and in her company, "the four directions of the *llano* met in me, and the white sun shone on my soul." Ultima's character exemplifies both the supernatural and a mythic wisdom, symbolized by her owl, who watches over Antonio. The comfort offered by Ultima stands in contrast to the roughness of the real world. Antonio is eventually able to resolve his crisis of identity, and by the time Ultima dies, his individuality is fully formed.

The novel also presents themes of historical and cultural change through its use of setting. The *llano* represents the primitive frontier, the land of the indigenous population, which is disappearing. The town stands for positive aspects of modernity, but it is also haunted by the lasting influence of European colonization. The context of World War II-era New Mexico is also critical to *Bless Me, Ultima*'s thematic content. In the novel, the first atomic bomb test is described as a "white heat beyond the imagination, beyond hell," and the terrifying explosion represents the potential dangers of technological advancement, as well as the more frightening aspects of change.

#### CRITICAL RECEPTION

Reviews of *Bless Me*, *Ultima* praised the novel for its variety and nuance. In the *Library Journal* Frank Cinquemani (1973) commended Anaya's ability to combine "myth and legend with ordinary life in a fairly convincing manner" that "raises the novel beyond the commonplace." A reviewer for the *Southwest Review* (1973) wrote that the book profoundly "embraces religion, myths, dreams, and the tug between the farm and the ranch." Early critical analyses of Anaya's novel concentrate on Antonio's identity crisis, either as an expression of "psychological maturation," as William M. Clements (1982) proposed, or as a broader reflection of cultural and literary tensions. Héctor Calderón (1986) argued that the novel is better understood as a ro-

mance in the English literary tradition than as a Chicano coming-of-age story. According to Calderón (2004), such a reclassification would relieve the work of its isolation as part of the Chicano literary canon and allow it to be seen as a more subtle work that acts as "the link between this earlier tradition in English and the emergent Chicano narrative." Horst Tonn (1989) maintained that the narrative of *Bless Me, Ultima* is essentially forward-looking, and that the book "thrives on a sense of anticipation for the future."

Critics have also examined the novel's binary presentation of linguistic, cultural, and religious conflicts. Reed Way Dasenbrock (1987) argued that the book is dynamic in that it "represents a bilingual society, but not one whose bilingualism is stable." Jean Cazemajou (1988) focused on stylistic disparities, exploring the novel's paradoxical use of myth and the rawness of real life, and discovering a resolution in Antonio's narration, which he called the "perfect mediator" of the "artificial barriers between reader and story-teller." Roberto Cantú (1990) argued that the novel itself acts as a mediating force, calling it an "artistic fragment of a vast expressive culture which belongs to Mexicans living on both sides of the Border." Frederick S. Holton (1995) detailed the religious tensions in the novel "between the formalism and rigidity of the Old Testament and the higher law revealed in the New," while Ken Hada (1999; see Further Reading) analyzed the relationship between "ultimate goodness" and "religious institutionalism." Summarizing the views of many critics, Ramón Saldívar (1990) argued that Bless Me, Ultima is about the "the dialectics of difference" and the attempt to overcome that difference.

Katrina Oko-Odoi

#### PRINCIPAL WORKS

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- Roadrunner's Dance. New York: Hyperion, 2000. (Children's fiction)
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- *The Man Who Could Fly and Other Stories*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2006. (Short stories)
- The First Tortilla: A Bilingual Story. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2007. (Children's fiction)
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- Billy the Kid and Other Plays. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2011. (Plays)
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#### **CRITICISM**

#### Southwest Review (review date 1973)

SOURCE: Rev. of *Bless Me, Ultima,* by Rudolfo Anaya. *Southwest Review* 58.2 (1973): vii. Print.

[In the following review, the anonymous critic praises Anaya's novel Bless Me, Ultima as a Chicano story with resonant literary merit, as opposed to the typical "Chicano

<sup>\*</sup>These works were published in The Anaya Reader.

novel" which, the reviewer argues, "is journalistic and packed with propaganda."]

Winner of a National Chicano Literary Award of \$1,000 is *Bless Me, Ultima*, an outstanding novel of Mexican-American life. The author, born and educated in New Mexico, is director of guidance and counseling at the University of Albuquerque. The novel takes its title from the name of an old and wise woman who comes to live with the family of the narrator when he is nearly seven. As he grows toward manhood, the guidance by Ultima is providential.

The author avoids the usual type of Chicano novel, which is journalistic and packed with propaganda. This is a literary work that penetrates deeply into family and village life. It embraces religion, myths, dreams, and the tug between the farm and the ranch. The story makes a strong impact; but, since it is directed mainly to Anglo readers, the author should have translated his many Spanish quotations.

#### Frank Cinquemani (review date 1973)

SOURCE: Cinquemani, Frank. Rev. of *Bless Me*, *Ultima*, by Rudolfo Anaya. *Library Journal* 98.3 (1973): 433. Print.

[In the following review, Cinquemani singles out Anaya's nuanced portrayal of spirituality as the factor that "raises the novel beyond the commonplace."]

This first novel, winner of the Premio Quinto Sol national Chicano literary award, is set in New Mexico during the 1940's. The narrator is a young boy, Antonio, who tells of his experiences with his family and friends, his schooling, and, most important, of his special relationship with Ultima, a *curandera* (curer) who comes to live with his family. Anaya interweaves myth and legend with ordinary life in a fairly convincing manner; what finally raises the novel beyond the commonplace is Antonio's spiritual quest seeking to reconcile evil with the existence of God, and learning of other gods and forces such as sorcery. The novel has warmth and feeling as well as naïveté and awkwardness. (There is an abundance of expletives, mostly in Spanish.) Not concerned with social protest, it reflects Chicano life and dignity.

#### William M. Clements (essay date 1982)

SOURCE: Clements, William M. "The Way to Individuation in Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima.*" *Midwest Quarterly* 23.2 (1982): 131-43. Print.

[In the following essay, Clements traces the maturation of the protagonist, Antonio, through the application of Carl Jung's analytic psychology. Discussing Jung's theories of the collective unconscious and individuation, Clements argues that this psychological interpretation of literature "enhances our understanding of the novel."

Even the most vehement critic of psychological approaches to literary analysis must admit that literature and psychology are related. Not only is "the human psyche . . . the womb of all the sciences and arts," as C. G. Jung has written, but most literature in some way explores human psychology. In his essay "Psychology and Literature," Jung suggests two types of literature in which such exploration occurs. On one hand is "psychological literature," in which the author consciously delves into the consciousnesses of the characters he creates. On the other hand is "visionary literature"; here the author unconsciously articulates symbols which represent archetypes from the collective unconscious and reverberate through the psyches of his readers.

Jung rightly asserts that psychological literature may often be shallow and that the psychologically oriented investigator may wind up dealing more with the author than with the work itself when he looks at such material. Yet acceptance of Jung's claim that visionary literature can be interpreted in terms of his own theories of analytic psychology requires a commitment to concepts such as the collective unconscious which many readers are unwilling to make. Moreover, studying visionary literature from a Jungian perspective often results in little more than a taxonomic exercise; images in the literary work are conveniently plugged into a predefined Jungian category. As Walter Sutton recognizes, the process becomes "stultifying rather than enlightening."

Although the reader who is not a true believer in Jung's ideas might find little of value in the Swiss psychologist's theories, analytic psychology has at least a heuristic applicability to a kind of literature which Jung omitted from his dichotomy between "psychological" and "visionary." This is the literature in which an author consciously traces his characters' conscious and unconscious development. Such writing may be called "individuational literature" in reference to the "slow, imperceptible process of psychic growth" which Jungian theorists have identified. When an author writes individuational literature, particularly in the portions of the work which treat the unconscious, he may consciously or unconsciously depict character development in Jungian terms. When this occurs, analytic psychology provides the appropriate theoretical construct to employ in understanding the work. A novel of individuation for which Jung's ideas seem especially suitable as an interpretative device is Bless Me, Ultima by Chicano writer Rudolfo A. Anaya.

Jung's theories constitute a psychology of health and emphasize the role of various unconscious forces in effecting psychic maturation. Unlike the impulses in Freud's personal unconscious, these forces are not produced by the subject's socialization experiences. Instead, they are common to all men at all times, for, according to Jung, the most important

layer of the psyche is the collective unconscious, the "common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us." The collective unconscious consists of components called "archetypes," units which represent in broad terms the most fundamental and universal elements of personality. As one matures, undergoing the lifelong process which Jungians call "individuation," the archetypes emerge from the collective unconscious into conscious life, particularly during dreams and creative activities. On emergence, they are cloaked in symbols whose nature is determined primarily by factors in the subject's individual and cultural heritage, but which also seem to manifest similar qualities universally. The healthy subject recognizes that these symbols represent components of his own psychic life and, though he may find some of them distasteful, accepts them as part of his own psychology. Neurosis or psychosis occurs when one rejects an unpleasant archetype as a unit in one's collective unconscious or when one allows any archetype to become overly prominent.

Bless Me, Ultima depicts the process of psychological maturation. Actually, the book is a novel of twofold maturation. As Frances Malpezzi has pointed out, "We follow two parallel but different lines of ... [the male protagonist's] development." One involves his participation in the rituals of the Catholic Church, and the other is his psychological development, a process understandable in Jungian terms as the way to individuation.

The psychological growth of Antonio Marez, the protagonist/narrator of the novel, is tied to his relationship with the mysterious Ultima, an old woman viewed as benevolent *curandera* by her friends and as evil *bruja* by her enemies. The novel begins when Ultima, a longstanding benefactor of the family, comes to live in the Marez household and ends with her death. During the meantime Ultima engages in a spiritual struggle with Tenorio, whose daughters have bewitched one of Tony's uncles. Also during the meantime Tony matures. That maturation is apparent in his changing view of what goes on around him as well as in what Vernon E. Lattin recognizes as "ten Jungian dreams."

The coming of Ultima into the family signals Tony's burgeoning awareness of forces of tension and conflict around him. His first recorded dream occurs soon after he overhears his parents discussing Ultima's impending arrival. They are seemingly a mismatched couple: the father is a vaquero of the New Mexico *llano* who longs for the freedom and rootlessness of nomadic life; the mother comes from the Luna family, settled farmers who are mainstays of the community and strong supporters of the Church. Tony's first dream deals with his own birth (pp. 4-6). His uncles, both Marez and Luna, argue over the disposition of the afterbirth. The former wish to scatter its ashes over the *llano*, thus ensuring that the child will become a vaquero. But the Lunas wish to guarantee a future farmer by burying the afterbirth in the rich soil. Ultima, though, present in her

role as midwife, takes the afterbirth herself. "Only I will know his destiny," she says (p. 6). This early dream introduces one of the major tensions in Tony's psyche, that between his Marez and Luna heritages. It also reveals Ultima as a mediating figure who both resolves and transcends that tension.

Jolted from childhood security as he becomes aware of the Marez/Luna conflict, Tony soon feels the effects of tension caused by his three brothers, who are away at war. They appear as giants in a dream that occurs after Tony witnesses his first death, the shooting by vigilantes of the murderer Lupito (pp. 23-24). The brothers assert in the dream that they support their father's yearning for the *llano*. This support makes them true sons of Marez, while Tony is a Luna, his mother's child. The dream ends with a mysterious wailing. Tony recognizes that the eerie sound comes from "the soul of the river" (p. 14), with which he has become psychologically in harmony under the guidance of Ultima, who has taught that his "spirit shared in the spirit of all things" (p. 14). The tension perpetrated by the brother-figures in this dream extends the family conflict that has already begun to affect Tony's psyche. In the dream the water of the river, whose significance has been made apparent by Ultima, not only separates, but also provides a linkage between llano and village, the two heritages.

The brothers return from the war, but their Marez blood will not allow them to be tied down at home. In a dream which follows their decision to abandon the household again, Tony sees them as providing a focus for another level of psychic tension (pp. 65-66). Now the dream-brothers try to lure him into a brothel. He struggles to resist and preserve his innocence, but his mother and the priest assure him that loss of innocence is inevitable. His only comfort comes from Ultima, who reminds him that his innocence still exists at his birthplace, a site, however, growing steadily more distant from him. This dream clarifies some of the unconscious associations Tony is making. On one hand, his brothers represent the Marez heritage, the consequences of maturation, and guilt. Significantly for Tony's later psychological symbolism, that guilt is sexual and Oedipal, for the flesh of the dream-girls in the brothel reminds Tony that when his mother washed her hair, he could see "her shoulders and the pink flesh of her throat" as well as "the curve of her breasts" (p. 65). On the other hand, Tony associates himself with the Luna heritage and the childish innocence he fears to lose.

The conflict between guilt and innocence leads Tony into a third realm of tension. This involves his commitment to the doctrines of the Church. His mother has hopes of his becoming a priest, thus reviving a tradition begun by an ancestor of the Luna clan. Although Tony has rather tacitly accepted her ambitions for him, several factors sway him from the priestly vocation. One is his father's lack of religious faith; Marez rarely attends Mass. Another involves

Ultima's cure of his bewitched uncle. The local priest had already been consulted in the case to no avail. Ultima's success calls into question the power of the Church and puts her, the most positive figure in Tony's life, in contrariety to its rituals. A final factor in Tony's developing doubts is the golden carp. During the summer after his first year in school, he has been introduced by one of his young friends to the myth of the golden carp, an incarnation of an ancient god who swims the river near Tony's home. The golden carp exists in antithesis to the Catholic God, and Tony feels, as he is later told directly, "The god of the church is a jealous god, he cannot live in peace with other gods. He would instruct his priests to kill the golden carp" (p. 227). After Tony experiences a pagan epiphany by actually seeing the gleaming fish in the river, he dreams (pp. 112-113). He sees his mother, enshrined on the moon which in previous dreams he had associated with the Virgin of Guadalupe, come to rest on the waters of the river. She disputes with his father over whether baptism need involve the holy water of the Church or can be valid with the salt sea water from which the Marez family derives its name. Their argument extends to the efficacy of religion, the Marez and Luna heritages, and the golden carp, until a violent storm breaks over the waters. Ultima calms the storm and reminds Tony that all water is one: the holy water of the Church, sea water, the water in the river of the golden carp. The dream broadens the associations developed in Tony's earlier dreams so that the Marez heritage includes the paganism of the golden carp and the Luna tradition is bound to the Church.

Thus Tony learns that life is not simple, but filled with tensions. His own experience encompasses on one hand his father's family, maturation and guilt, and pre-Christian mythic images; on the other are the Luna family of his mother, the vocation of the priesthood, and the Church. His dreams reveal that his psyche is becoming aware of these tensions. Tony is now ready to begin the way to individuation.

That Tony has entered the first stage, that of ennui, is apparent in his next dream (p. 132). Significantly, Tony's dream life to this point has not involved the major external conflict of the novel, Ultima's struggle with Tenorio. Now, though, this conflict becomes a factor in his dreams. An uncle has described the funeral for one of Tenorio's daughters, a witch apparently slain by the countermagic of Ultima. Tony dreams later: "I saw all, and it was exactly as my uncle had described it. Then my dream-fate drew me to the coffin. I peered in and to my horror I saw Ultima!" (p. 132). The bleakness and desolation of the death image of his treasured friend clearly recalls the standard symbols which Jungian analysts have discovered in the dreams of subjects entering the threshold of individuation.

After Tony's unconscious is awakened, both his dreams and his perceptions of life around him begin to reflect his psychic growth, the next stage of which brings him faceto-face with the evil within himself and all people. As Jung points out, an individual's initial tendency upon confronting the Shadow, the archetype associated with inherent evil, is projection; the subject views others—figures in dreams, art, or even life—as embodying the evil that actually exists within himself. To move from projection to incorporation of the Shadow is a difficult, but major step in individuation, for Jung writes, "The effect of Projection is to isolate the subject from his environment, since instead of a real relation to it there is now only an illusory one." Thus Tony must see the evil in himself and even in Ultima if he is to mature. But first he projects evil. His early dreams are filled with "giant spectral figures ... looming over me" (p. 57), and his waking life is dominated by the maleficent Tenorio. This bent toward seeing evil outside himself precipitates in a feverish dream which occurs shortly after Tenorio's murder of Narciso, a supporter and defender of Ultima (pp. 165-168). The dreamer beholds a merging of the brother figures who had terrorized his early dreams, the sinful girls at the brothel, and Tenorio's witch-daughters. They join to taunt him with denials of God's grace and eventually mix a potion which causes his dream-death. Tony then envisions an Apocalypse of destruction from which only the golden carp emerges. Doubts about God and responsibility for destruction, though, are safely projected away in the dream; Tony sees the evil in others, but not in himself.

Afterward, plagued by nightmares of hell and of Ultima's death, Tony begins to recognize his own culpability. That recognition becomes apparent at three major turning points. The first occurs on Holy Saturday as Tony and his agemates wait outside the church for their first confession. Knowing of Tony's tentative plans to become a priest, his friends urge him to rehearse them for the confession. As he hears them boast of their sins, Tony is sickened at the degeneracy of individuals his own age. The process climaxes when one of the girls, egging her companions on, shouts, "Everybody has sins!" (p. 203). Tony knows that this "everybody" must include himself. Shortly thereafter a second turning point takes place. Still in his role as mock priest, Tony is encouraged by his friends to prescribe penance for Florence, an outspoken nonbeliever among them. When Florence commits the blasphemous act of outrightly doubting God's justice and grace, the children are incensed. Tony refuses to condemn Florence despite physical abuse from the others. He realizes that Florence has voiced his own covert feelings, and that realization makes everything in him seem "loose and disconnected" (p. 205). The third turning point happens at Tony's first communion. As he waits to receive the sacrament, he anticipates that ingestion of the wafer will bring answers to the questions about God's benevolence that he has previously tried to repress:

God! Why did Lupito die?

Why do you allow the evil of the Trementinas [Tenorio's daughters]?

Why did you allow Narciso to be murdered when he was doing good?

Why do you punish Florence? Why doesn't he believe?

Will the golden carp rule—?

(p. 210)

Tony expects that the communion experience will resolve these troubling matters, but the result of the experience is disappointingly simple: "Only nothingness" (p. 211). Thus Tony comes to see not only that he has sin just as everyone else and that he shares a special kinship with the skeptical Florence, but also that the destruction-causing doubts which he has attributed only to others actually spring from his own psyche. They constitute his personal experience of the Shadow.

Tony's next dream reveals his new perception of himself and the presence of evil (p. 225). He sees his three brothers, disembodied but driven to wander by their Marez blood. Instead of proffering the help they plead for, Tony baits a fishhook with their livers. Only after he removes the livers from the hook are the brothers released from their intense agony. Tony casts himself in the dream as purveyor of pain rather than as its victim.

His next step toward maturation brings him into contact with the Anima, the archetypal feminine principle. That contact involves Tony in four progressions before he realizes the transcendent wisdom that this archetype can bring. First, he perceives the Anima in purely sexual terms. Here the archetype becomes manifest in his perceptions of the prostitutes at the local brothel with whom his brothers, the projected Shadow, are guiltily involved. Next, the Anima appears on an idealistically romantic and spiritual level, personified by Tony in his view of his mother, whom his dreams also associate with the prostitutes. The Anima then appears in a third guise, that of love mingled with spirituality. Tony symbolizes this aspect of the Anima in the Virgin of Guadalupe, who because her statue stands on a crescent moon is associated with his mother, daughter of the Luna family. Ultima personifies the Anima in its transcendent wisdom stage, for she is the guide for Tony throughout his development. She has tutored him in the lore of the curandera, comforted him during illness and after nightmares, calmed his fears concerning Tenorio's wickedness, and, most importantly, counseled him regarding the doubts and disturbances of maturing. And she knows that only he can fully appreciate the experience of his own maturation, telling him, "a man's destiny must unfold itself like a flower, with only the sun and the earth and the water making it blossom, and no one else meddling in it" (p. 213). Individuation is an individual matter. When Tony is able to adopt this view, thus ceasing to worry about his role in either the Marez or the Luna heritage, he has incorporated the wisdom of the Anima and is ready for the realization of the Self.

The ultimate step on the way to individuation invests one's dreams and creative consciousness with symbols of merging and wholeness. The mandala sphere is Jung's typical example of a symbol of the archetype of the Self. The symbol by which the Self makes itself known to Tony must merge all the conflicting forces in his personality: Marez vs. Luna, guilt vs. innocence, golden carp vs. God. The integrative force is represented by Ultima, but since the Self seldom appears in the guise of a person of the opposite sex from the subject, the actual symbol of the Self for Tony is the owl which serves Ultima as familiar spirit in her magic. The owl appears on the scene when Ultima appears, it accompanies her in her various pursuits, and its death is a harbinger of hers; the spirits of the owl and Ultima are totally interwoven. Thus the owl comes to represent the mediation and merging which characterize Ultima's identity and activities. This identity presents itself from the beginning in Tony's dream life: Ultima resolves the Marez/ Luna conflict in the first recorded dream and is responsible for the water image (perhaps an associated symbol of the Self) which mediates between *llano* and village in a later dream. Yet throughout the novel she functions as resolver of tension. For example, she is a practitioner of healing arts, a longtime benefactor of the Lunas, but the herbs for her medicine are gathered on the *llano* of the Marez. She also stands between guilt and innocence. Her goodness is held in relief against the evil of Tenorio, but she may be tainted by evil herself. When a test is proposed to determine if she is a *bruja*, the outcome is equivocal. The cross of needles stuck in the door through which she must pass to prove her innocence has fallen to the earth as she walks through (pp. 127-128). Furthermore, Ultima represents both paganism and Christianity, for she regularly attends Mass and respects the mythology of the golden carp. That the owl as symbol preserves these mergings is revealed when Tony perceives that the bird is "the spirit of the night and the moon, the spirit of the llano" (p. 242).

Tony attains maturity when he assumes the integrative qualities of the Self, represented by Ultima through the symbol of the owl. This stage in individuation occurs at the end of the novel as Tony rushes to save his friend from a final attack by Tenorio. As he races across the *llano* to warn Ultima of her adversary's threats to kill her (pp. 242-245), he realizes that he is truly a son of the *llano*. But he also realizes that the beauty of the *llano* derives from the moonlight that is shed upon it. So Marez and Luna, the original sources of tension in Tony's psychic life, come together. He arrives too late to save Ultima, for Tenorio shoots the owl. But Ultima, lying on her deathbed, blesses Tony: "I bless you in the name of all that is good and strong and beautiful, Antonio. Always have the strength to live. Love life, and if despair enters your heart, look for me in the evenings when the wind is gentle and the owls sing in the hills, I shall be with you" (p. 247). Even though Ultima dies and Tony buries the owl, he will continue to draw sustenance from the Self, the archetype which Ultima has helped him to assimilate.