



*Pedro Paramo*

“Innumerable interpretations have been spun about Pedro Páramo. It has been said to represent, embody, allegorize or illuminate: the times of Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship, the social context of the Revolution, patriarchal rancher culture and the repression of women, the poetic qualities of rural speech, Mexico’s relationship with death, the lingering influence on Mexicans of Aztec cosmology, Mexican deruralization and the ghost towns it created, Mexican culture, Mexican history, Mexican modernity, universal myths and archetypes. All of these interpretations are right, except those asserting that they alone are right.”

Carmen Boullosa

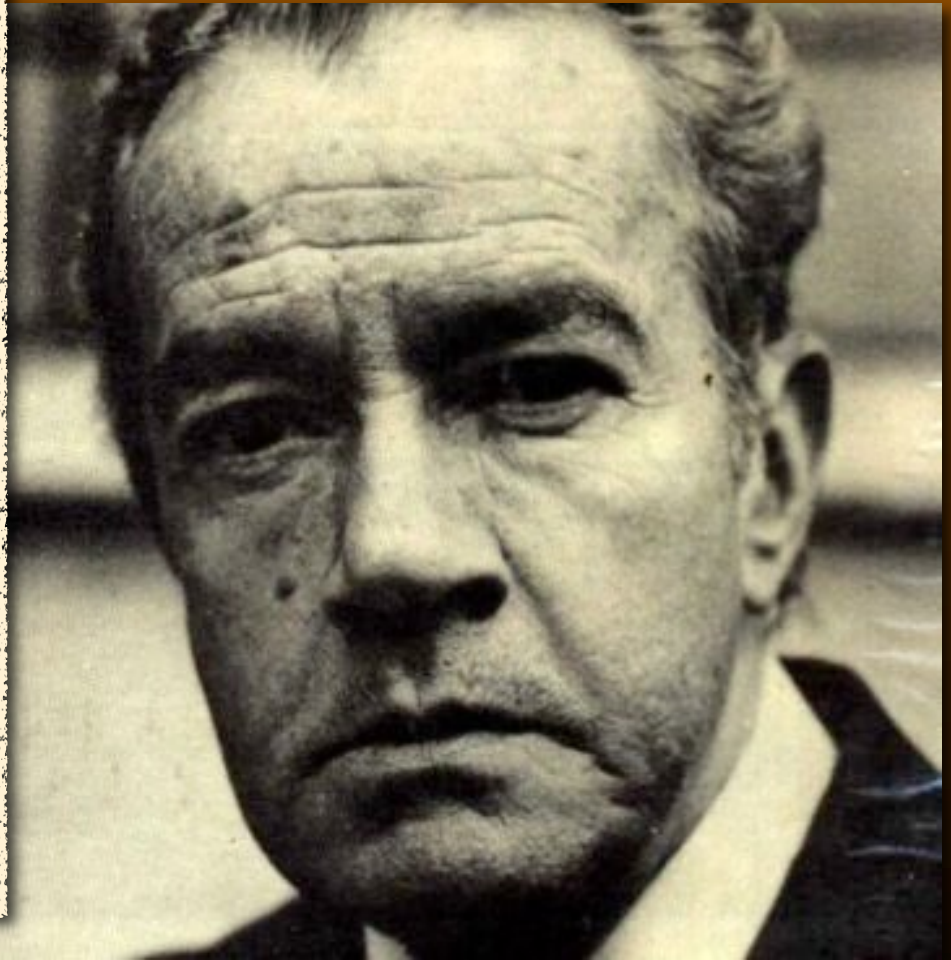
## *Pedro Paramo* Juan Rulfo



- ❖ Find out what you can about Juan Rulfo.
- ❖ Learn something about Surrealism and Modernism/Postmodernism and consider how this novel might be connected with these movements.
- ❖ Investigate what was going on in Mexico in the early 20th century that forms the background of the novel.
- ❖ Track the events in the novel by narrator and chronology.
- ❖ Make notes on characters, consider possible symbols, think about the impact of style, & identify devices (imagery, etc.) as you begin reading. All this might be important. Or, it might not...

# *Pedro Paramo*

## Juan Rulfo



# *Pedro Paramo*

## Juan Rulfo

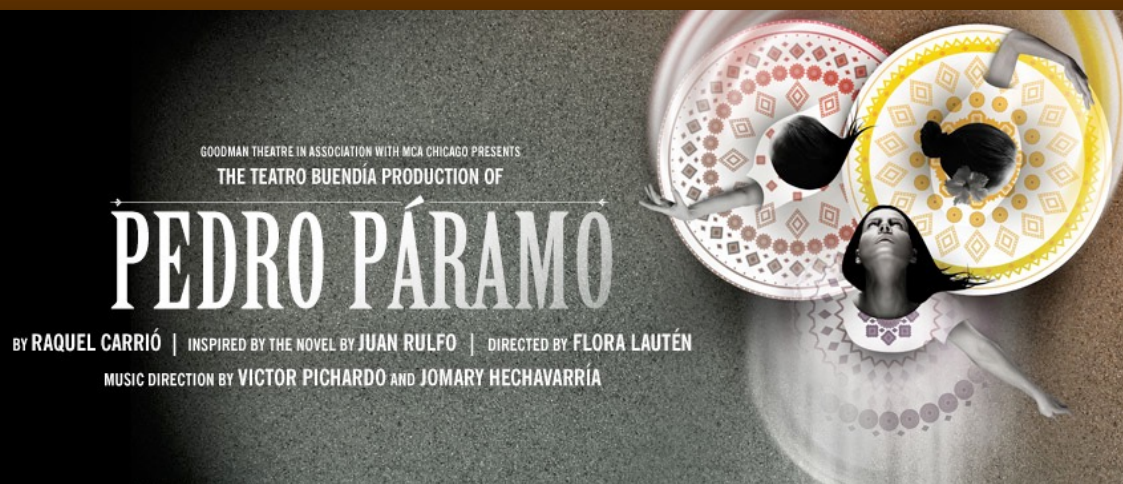
- ❖ What do Dolores and Juan want from Pedro Paramo?
- ❖ What might be Rulfo's purpose in having Juan meet Abundio on the road?
- ❖ What first impressions does the reader get of Comala?
- ❖ What is suggested by the scene in which Juan comes to Eduviges' house?
- ❖ What do we learn from the episode describing Pedro Paramo as a boy?
- ❖ What cultural ideologies can be noted in these early stories?



# *Pedro Paramo*

## Juan Rulfo

- ❖ Is Juan still narrating? Justify your answer.
- ❖ Why is young Pedro's remark about "patience" significant, now that we see his actions as an adult?
- ❖ Cite the references to death in this section and explain what they might mean.
- ❖ Why do you think Comala seems to be populated with the dead?
- ❖ Consider the connection between the three sons--Juan, Pedro, and Miguel--and their respective fathers. Do we learn anything from this?





I see trouble up ahead, Don Pedro

Perhaps it is a Quiz on pp. 25-47, Fulgor

1. What two crimes has Miguel committed against Father Renteria's family?
  2. How does Damiana Cisneros know Juan Preciado?
  3. How did Eduviges die?
  4. Why does Fulgor Sedano hang Toribio Aldrete?
  5. Why does Pedro marry Dolores?
- Bonus (+5): Who does Damiana encounter at the wake?

# *Pedro Paramo* Juan Rulfo

- ❖ Describe the actions of Miguel Paramo.
- ❖ Describe the conflicting emotions of Father Renteria. What is your assessment of his character?
- ❖ What do we learn about life in Comala from Ana and Eduviges? What might Rulfo be saying about the rich and the poor in Mexico?
- ❖ Consider the connection between money and morality in Don Pedro's dealings with Father Renteria, Toribio Aldrete, and Dolores Preciado.

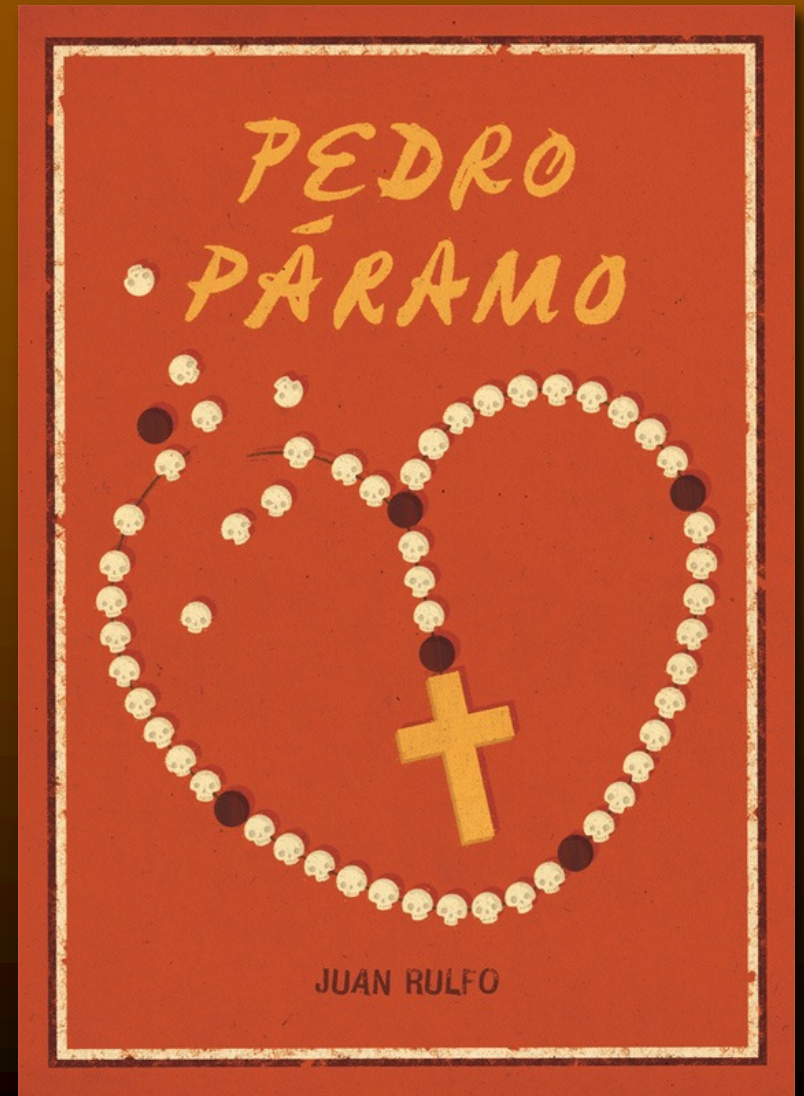
25-47



# *Pedro Paramo* Juan Rulfo

- ❖ Why do you think Rulfo considered titling his novel, *The Murmers*?
- ❖ How can the reader reconcile the thoughts of Pedro as a boy with his actions as an adult?
- ❖ Explain the situation of Donis and his sister. How does this relate to Juan?
- ❖ At what point does the reader realize that Juan has died, and that the story is essentially his narrative to Dorotea, who shares a common grave? Why are they together?
- ❖ What is significant about the rain?

47-61





- ❖ Do you see anything symbolic in Pedro's neglect of Miguel and its results?
- ❖ How does Pedro's obsession with Susana impact everything he does?
- ❖ In what ways are Pedro's and Susana's desires similar? How do they respond to loss?
- ❖ Analyze Susana's character. Why does she reject the priest?

61-96

*We tried to hang Aldrete but we could not get the noose around his hat, senior...*

*Fulgor, you idiot! You should have cut a hole in the brim for the rope!*

*Ah, don Pedro, you are very wise. But, we had no problem hanging Miguel's horse.*

*Good. Good.*



# *Pedro Paramo*

## Juan Rulfo

- ❖ Why is Susana's sensuality significant?
- ❖ How does Pedro's gradual withdrawal from life after Susana's death seem to affect the town?
- ❖ How is Father Renteria's defection to the revolutionaries related to Pedro's death?
- ❖ List and explain possible themes that you see emerging from the novel.
- ❖ Connect the fictional events in the novel with historical events that occurred in Mexico during this time. Could the novel be viewed as a political statement?



96-124

# Discussion Questions for Really Smart People

1. Juan Rulfo stated: “Yes, there is a structure in *Pedro Paramo*, but it is a structure made of silences, of hanging threads, of cut scenes, where everything occurs in a simultaneous time which is a no-time.” Explore this idea in your essay.
2. The two most powerful figures in *Pedro Paramo* are Don Pedro himself, who owns the land, and Father Renteria, who cares for souls. Compare the ways the landowner and the priest both fail the people who depend on them, citing historical and textual evidence as appropriate.
3. Identify a theme you think is important in *Pedro Paramo* (hope, etc.) and show how it is expressed through one of the characters. Note any recurring images, motifs, or symbols that add to the reader’s understanding of the character and what we might learn from him/her.

*Pedro Paramo*

English 4 IB HL

