

## El héroe revolucionario desmitificado en *Los relámpagos de agosto*

*The Demystified Revolutionary Hero in Los relámpagos de agosto*

*O herói revolucionário desmistificado em The Lightning of August*

**Mayra Margarito Gaspar**

Universidad de Guadalajara, México

[mayram\\_g@hotmail.com](mailto:mayram_g@hotmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1743-6700>

### Resumen

Los héroes nacionales son personajes míticos en los que se busca encarnar los valores y las actitudes que sirven como ejemplo de grandeza, de humanidad y de patriotismo. La heroicidad no puede ser una característica de cualquier individuo, sino solo de quienes posean las cualidades necesarias para guiar a todo un pueblo hacia los ideales humanos más elevados, tales como la libertad o la igualdad. Debido a esto, es común que la historia oficial presente a los héroes nacionales como seres llenos de virtudes y omita las características que considere inconvenientes. En su obra narrativa, Jorge Ibarguengoitia critica esta depuración de los héroes y utiliza la literatura para convertir a las figuras históricas en personajes complejos. Desde esta perspectiva, se ha analizado la novela *Los relámpagos de agosto* para observar cómo se desmitifica y reconstruye el carácter de uno de los principales personajes de la historia de México: el caudillo revolucionario, representado por Don José Guadalupe Arroyo, protagonista del relato.

**Palabras clave:** desmitificación, héroe, Ibarguengoitia, mito, novela histórica.

## Abstract

National heroes are mythical characters in whom we find an example of the values and attitudes that represent the grandeur, the humanity and the patriotism that every citizen should follow. Heroism cannot be an attribute of any individual; only those who have the needed qualities to guide a whole country to the highest human ideals, such as freedom or equality, are meant to be leaders. Therefore, it is common that official history portrays national heroes full of virtues, omitting those descriptions that are considered undesirable. On his narrative work, Ibargüengoitia is very critical about this cleansing their temperament, so he uses the literature to convert historical figures into complex beings. From this perspective, the novel *Los relámpagos de agosto* has been analyzed to observe how its author changes the myth and rebuild the character of one of the most important protagonists of Mexican history: the caudillo pro-revolution, represented by Don José Guadalupe Arroyo, the main character of the story.

**Keywords:** demystification, hero, Ibargüengoitia, myth, historical novel.

## Resumo

Os heróis nacionais são personagens míticos que buscam incorporar os valores e atitudes que servem como exemplo de grandeza, humanidade e patriotismo. Heroísmo não pode ser uma característica de qualquer indivíduo, mas apenas aqueles que possuem a necessária para liderar todo um povo para o superior, tais como a liberdade ou igualdade qualidades ideais humanos. Por isso, é comum a história oficial apresentar os heróis nacionais como seres cheios de virtudes e omitir as características que consideram inconvenientes. Em sua obra narrativa, Jorge Ibargüengoitia critica essa purificação de heróis e usa a literatura para transformar figuras históricas em personagens complexos. A partir desta perspectiva, analisamos o romance *The Lightning de agosto* para ver como ele desmistifica e reconstrói o caráter de um dos personagens principais da história do México: o líder revolucionário, representado por Don Jose Guadalupe Arroyo, protagonista da história.

**Palavras-chave:** desmistificação, herói, Ibargüengoitia, mito, romance histórico.

## Introduction

The official story presents the heroes as beings full of virtues. His intervention in national life is a consequence of his innate interest in the common welfare and his natural inclination towards freedom and justice. In this way, the hero is presented as a mythical being that embodies certain values and attitudes that make him an example of greatness, humanity and patriotism. The mythification of the characters that intervene in crucial moments in the history of a country requires that aspects of their personality that are considered inconvenient or contrary to this image of rectitude be omitted. This elaboration of the heroic character is what Carrera (2003) has called the "pruned personality" of the heroes, that is, the reconstruction of their life so that they are worthy of glory, taking away all the human defects that they possess and endowing them with the qualities necessary to guide an entire people towards the highest human ideals, such as freedom or equality.

Jorge Ibargüengoitia criticizes this strategy for the construction of the heroic character, since he considers that the pruned personality transforms the characters into statues ready to "get on the pedestal". The historical figures, when officially becoming heroes, are presented as model men who "adopt a path that takes them straight to the wall, and acquire a physical feature that makes their figure unmistakable: a bald, a frock coat, a bandana, mustache and hat wide, one arm less "(Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p.34). From the point of view of this Guanajuato writer, when the weaknesses and defects of the heroes are suppressed, they become stereotypes, static effigies that have lost their most interesting features. Thus, in *The Lightning of August*, Ibargüengoitia decides to introduce us to a revolutionary leader with characteristics and motivations that are far from the official Manichaeism, through the figure of José Guadalupe Arroyo.

### Theoretical-methodological reference

Reyero (2003) has observed that, as an influence of the Christian tradition, the official history presents Manichean stories with heroes and villains with static personalities that always carry out actions according to their function. Thus, as a consequence of this link between the religious and the national myth, the hero is personified as a mythical savior, as a righteous man who represents the ideal values of a nation (Carrera, 2003).

The protagonists of the national history frequently show themselves with a status close to the divine. It establishes, in this way, an analogy between heroism and divinity: a heroic figure achieves glory by fighting for the ideals that will make up a nation, just as the saints arrive at virtue by sacrificing and defending their beliefs in God. In these values and the responsibility that they imply, we find the explanation of their rebellion before a world full of injustices, inequalities and dangers that must be faced in favor of the common good.

In spite of its relation with the divinity, the hero is not a creator; his role consists in reconstructing, in renewing from chaos (Siemens, 1997, p.87). His life is exposed as a series of situations that lead him to fulfill those actions for which he was predestined. In this way, to become a heroic character, two fundamental functions must be fulfilled: a symbolic function, which makes him a model representative of the people, and a messianic function, which allows him to impose order on a deranged reality (Siemens, 1997 ).

The symbolic function refers to the fact that the personification of the hero highlights certain qualities and values to characterize him in a social prototype, which allows him to become a symbol of his people, a representative of his nation and the ideals that are intended to be achieved (Siemens , 1997, p.202). As a symbol, it exceeds its individual human condition in favor of a national representation, so its actions should not be understood only in its literal form, but also the implications that lie behind them should be sought. By characterizing the hero as a being full of virtues, we not only make him a model man, but also the aspiration of his compatriots, who admire his qualities and seek to follow his example.

The messianic function is instituted in the sacrifice to which the hero submits of his own will to save - literally or metaphorically - the other. The protagonists of the national history are always action figures that put the needs of society before their own. As a

consequence of its mythical character, the hero - like the gods and other supernatural beings - departs from the everyday world (Eliade, 1991), and becomes an example of virtue, close to the divine. If the hero, being a just and upright man, participates in an armed struggle, it is only to ensure justice and freedom that have been violated by some event or an oppressor.

The symbolic and messianic functions are part of the mythical character of the heroes; so that they are constituted as irrevocable elements of history, whose arrival and participation seems to need no explanation. Rank (1993) states that to build a myth we must go back to its origins; Because of this, the presentation of the hero always refers to his childhood.

The elaboration of a mythical character must be based on the past - in childhood and youth, the foundations for the formation of an integral character. This is why it is common to observe that the biographies of the heroes mark the qualities and achievements obtained from the first years of the character's life. On the contrary, the antihero, whose main exponent is the rogue, is distinguished by belonging to a low social level openly marginalized, which is why he must resort to tricks and tricks to survive in always unfavorable conditions (Zamora, 1962).

The heroic character is located on a different level from the rest of humanity due to his moral merit and, at times, his physical strength. His superiority leads him to develop a commitment to other men, to help them, to protect them, to save them. For this reason, Carlyle (2012) points out that history presents its protagonists as figures, as incomprehensible shadows, not as credible men. In this way, the author manifests the need to present us with a more critical historical account.

Krauze (2010) he also considers history as an "imaginary construction of the past"; however, he recognizes that this identity construct promotes the cultural conformation of a nation, "although historical truth demystifies 'bronze history' and revolutionary theology" (Krauze, 2010, p.16). The work of Ibarguengoitia does not intend to present itself as a historical truth. The August Lightning, rather, seeks to demystify those heroes who have constituted "revolutionary theology" by reconfiguring heroic nature to characterize them as complex characters. On the other hand, it also establishes a deconstruction of heroic functions to present contradictory and confusing actions, in accordance with the historical account of an event with an infinity of edges and implications.

## Results

The heroic character is shown as a differentiated character from the beginning of his story; Before the event that will make him the protagonist of national history, there will be elements that place him above his peers. What usually distinguishes him is always his interest in others, his authority and his proactive nature, because the other details of his character are always left out of his heroism. If "he was a model husband and father, or if he had love with a whole chorus of second tipples and had as a motto for the education of his children that of 'the letter with blood comes in', they are issues that do not matter to us" (Ibargüengoitia, 1990 , p.23).

Since the myth of the hero consists in the reconstruction of his personality and in the fabrication of an impeccable life trajectory, we return to these two elements to analyze the manner in which the revolutionary leader is demystified in *The Lightning of August*. In such a way that our analysis starts, at first, from the "biographical" revision of the character to determine the characterization of the heroic nature of the character; and, in a second moment, of the functions he performs not only as a protagonist of the movement but as a rebuilder of the social order in post-revolutionary Mexico.

### The heroic nature

The protagonist of *The Lightning of August*, José Guadalupe Arroyo, does not want to delve into his early childhood, arguing that "nobody cares where I was born, or who my parents were, how many years I studied, or why they appointed me Private Secretary of the Presidency" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.11). However, he points out that "I was not born in a duffel bag, as Artajo says, nor was my mother a prostitute, as some have suggested, nor is it true that I have never set foot in a school, since I finished Primary school with the praise of the teachers" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.11). With this explanation, Arroyo intends to silence the voices that proclaim his dishonorable ascendancy. In this way, the character is compared to an anti-hero, who tries to hide his marginal past, product of a dysfunctional family, poor and without academic training.

Arroyo tells, in the prologue of the novel, that he feels slandered by those who at some time were his allies. The intention of writing a text with his memoirs is to confirm his

revolutionary position and clarify the intentions of his actions with a view to solving the misunderstandings that have arisen from the statements of other leaders. Thus, from the same text, it is stated that the lightning of August is the way in which Arroyo responds to the memories of Artajo, the accusations of Vidal Sánchez and the slander of Trenza

Ibargüengoitia plays with the situations that have occurred in history: the changes of sides, the handling of events, the different versions of the same event. Margarito (2012) has observed that this narrative resource allows Ibargüengoitia to present two perspectives of the same character in the novel: the other one -which responds to the interests and points of view of those who were his fighting companions- and his own- it seeks to sublimate its qualities and justify its actions. Despite the fact that two different positions regarding the events that occurred are exposed, Ibargüengoitia does not present them as contrary versions, but as complementary stories that allow him to build a complex protagonist, oblivious to the myth of the monolithic hero.

In three situations that we consider key, *The Lightning of August* presents the two versions of the story to reveal a demystified revolutionary hero and observe how this novel moves away from that vision of "the Revolution as a western, with bad and good, successful and defeated and where virtue prevails at the end "(Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p.52).

The first of these anecdotes refers to the meeting of Arroyo with Artajo and Trenza in a bar called *La Ópera*. The two versions admit that, before the conformation of two political parties, Artajo, Trenza and Arroyo forget their differences and come together in *La Ópera* where they agree to support Valdivia. The meeting ends with a hug, of which the characters have different explanations: according to Artajo, Arroyo hugs them because he is drunk; Arroyo, for his part, affirms that the three embrace to seal the pact they have just made. Although the difference between the two stories does not refer to a specific action, but to the motivation of that action, this represents an important qualitative change in the personification of the caudillo. While Arroyo is shown as a key player in the military and political field, who should be asked for support; Artajo evidenced him as a manipulable subject thanks to his liking the drink.

In this regard, although Arroyo denies his drunkenness after this specific meeting, during the novel several episodes are narrated where the same protagonist admits his constant

abuse of alcohol: a) "Yes, champagne has always been one of my weaknesses" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.13); b) "As is easy to understand, that night I could not sleep, despite the bottle of Martell that I took to appease myself a little" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.37), and c) "The boys concealed the seventy-two boxes of appetizers, cordial, sparkling, digestive and stimulants that were intended for the consumption of the guests "(Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.70).

In addition to his weakness for intoxicating drinks, Arroyo's anecdotes also reveal that, as his detractors claim, he is easily manipulated. Their decisions often show a lack of vision and apprehension; even, he himself accepts various errors on his part:

It was discovered that although Melitón Anguiano had been a puppet and Pérez H. was a puppet, I was also a puppet. All managed, of course, by the despotic and bullying Vidal Sánchez.

(...) It never occurred to us that if we had spent two hours thinking about how to eliminate people, Vidal Sánchez had been there for six months.

(...) And we all went, thus consummating one of the most notable 'blunders' in the Political History of Mexico (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, pp. 43, 57 y 61)

The errors committed could be contrasted with the heroic character that the protagonist intends to expose of himself. For this reason, the character hides, as far as possible, in the crowd, which reduces their responsibility in the acts, and turns them into failures of the community, not properly in their carelessness. The errors that are completely individual-like beating Pérez H., just before being appointed interim president, or ordering a Spaniard to be shot for insulting and throwing food at him-are described by Arroyo as a "streak of misadventures" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.43), whose only culprit is the "perfidious and capricious fortune" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.27).

A second fact that helps us shape the characterization of Arroyo is the settlement of his brigade in Santa Ana. Germán Trenza affirms that the proposal to park the brigade there was "just a pretext to spend a few days with Ellen Goo" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002 , p.111); Arroyo qualifies this statement as a "true infamy", although he admits that there was no reason to have settled in Santa Ana and that "of all the different ways of disposing of our cash, this was evidently the most awkward" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, P. 111).



The relations of the caudillos with several women is a known fact, so, in *Los livilas de agosto*, the protagonist is not the only revolutionary who has problems with them. For example, at the funeral of Marcos González, "four mourners and at least a dozen unrecognized offspring were presented (to which, incidentally, the disappearance of the Venetian cutlery and glass was attributed)" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p. twenty-one).

Being a common practice among insurgents, their encounters with women should not pose a problem for Arroyo. However, the implications of his love affairs in history, far from presenting him as a virile man, show negative aspects of his personality, which are an important part of his bad reputation and lead him towards his defeat. The stay of a thousand men in Santa Ana causes that vital time for the combat is lost, which leads to advance the enemy troops, lose a battle, cut off communication with Trenza and to lose, finally, in the dark, a battalion complete due to the haste of the exit. In this way, Arroyo's decision manifests itself as a selfish disposition that opposes the heroic spirit of humility and sacrifice, which uncovers a man who puts worldly needs before the ideals of struggle and causes great losses for his allies.

The third situation that allows us to characterize the protagonist of *The Lightning of August* is his meeting with Macedonio Gálvez on the train from Juarez to Mexico. The story of the novel begins when Arroyo receives a letter from the president-elect, Marcos González, where he appoints him Private Secretary of the Presidency of the Republic and asks him to move to Mexico as soon as possible. For this reason, the protagonist takes the train to the capital and, during this trip, stumbles upon Macedonio Gálvez, a general who had been banished by González. In this first encounter between these two characters, Arroyo has a good position, while Gálvez is a fugitive; Due to his political and economic condition, Galvez asks two things to his old companion: that he keep secret his return to Mexico and a loan of three hundred pesos.

Although Arroyo states that "I have always distinguished myself by my good nature, my loyalty to my friends, and my generosity towards people who are in disgrace" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.14), he does not access any of the two requests from Gálvez: he does not give him the money because he considers the loan as an abuse to his good disposition, although he invites him to eat to compensate him; and gives it away because he steals the

gun after eating. In this way, this scene reveals two little honorable revolutionaries: Arroyo is missing his word as a response to courage, while Galvez takes the first opportunity to loot his comrade-in-arms. In the same way, as we have observed that Arroyo exposes a version of events, where he omits, denies or conceals his faults, Gálvez also tells a different story that covers his theft in the train meeting: "you invited me to eat and you gave me your gun for me to pledge "(Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.127).

The novel ends with a second encounter between Gálvez and Arroyo. On this occasion, the papers have been reversed and now it is Arroyo who is on the fringes of justice and Gálvez in a position of power: Arroyo has been accused and convicted of the following:

As a traitor to the Homeland, a violator of the Constitution, abuse of trust, faculties and powers, of a murderer, of perjury, of fraud, of a pervert of minors, of a smuggler, of a trafficker of whites and even of a Catholic fanatic and cristero" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, pp. 125-126)

Gálvez, on the other hand, is the Commander in Chief of the Garrison of the Plaza del Cuartel de San Pedro. Now, the inversion of the roles of these characters not only consists of their hierarchical position, but also in the actions they carry out: Arroyo, at the beginning of the work, telegraphs the garrison of Plaza X so that they can arrest and shoot Gálvez to avenge the theft of his gun; In the end, the court places Arroyo at the disposal of Gálvez, who forgives him in gratitude for the gun and the train's food.

This change in the roles of the characters is interesting because it reflects a common tendency in the revolutionary struggle: the alternation of the insurgents in one or another side depending on the political moment, as well as the social and governmental instability of the second and third decade of the century. XX. This criticism of the inconsistencies between the alliances and the antagonisms of the revolutionary caudillos also appears in Instructions to Live in Mexico (Ibargüengoitia, 1990). In this work, regarding Zapata, the author comments on the following:

What is more difficult to explain is how, being good, he fought against Madero, who was also good, and about Carranza, who was also good; and how being good, he died as a result of an intrigue in which, everything seems to indicate, Don Pablo put his

hands, another good one, that years before had fought the irredentist archvillano of the Revolution, Victoriano Huerta (Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p. 52).

Although the change of position of Arroyo and Gálvez is evident from the fact that the starting and investment positions are presented in the first and the last chapter, respectively, throughout the novel there is a gradual movement in the relations and the positions of the insurgents. In fact, the characters who present themselves as Arroyo's current slanders began as their allies in the armed struggle. These changes that occur throughout history allow us to observe the functions that José Guadalupe Arroyo acquires as a revolutionary general, as we will discuss below.

### **The functions of the revolutionary hero**

The protagonist of *The Lightning of August* presents himself as a memorable leader of the revolutionary movement. However, the story reveals his mediocrity and does not expose him as an opportunist full of imperfections, with worldly needs and passions. This prevents him from carrying out the messianic function and the symbolic function that corresponds to him as a hero (Siemens, 1997).

### **The symbolic function**

The story begins in a quiet moment: Arroyo lives in life away from politics and wars beside his wife Matilde peace, when summoned to join the cabinet of the president. At this time, he assumes his role of "favorite son of the fatherland" and in an idyllic but ironic description, leaves behind his life of comfort to answer the call of social duty and service to his country. However, his assignment as one of those responsible for the country's course ends before it starts because the president-elect is murdered. Then, he begins his search for a position within Mexican politics, and exposes himself as an upstart in search of his own benefit.

Arroyo wants to prove that he is a "moral man" and an "integral revolutionary military man". However, in the story these two characteristics of his personality are tested again and again, and each time prove to be only a satire of the reality that crosses the country. Thus, the protagonist of the story becomes a symbol of double morality and an accommodating

military. Double morality is observed in the benevolence with which it justifies its acts and words, as well as in the way in which it tries to blame others for its mistakes. When there is no way to incriminate someone else, he shields himself from bad luck or adverse fate; He even excuses himself by saying that he followed his own "inviolable principles".

The actions of others are classified as improper acts, misdeeds, baseness. This situation is evidenced in the narration of the solutions proposed by the characters to escape the site:

- Arroyo affirms: "If we wanted to stay alive, it would be best to break the siege, as I had just expressed it with so much opportunity" (Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p.67).
- "Canalejo, which was not practical, [on the other hand] proposed that we continue to Acapulco and from there, by ship, to Manzanillo" (Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p.68).
- "Let's go to the border! Said Valdivia. This phrase should have given us an idea of the great size of his cowardice "(Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.68).
- "Someone proposed to wait until nightfall" (Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p.68), but Arroyo answered: "If we wait, dusk will find us very stiff" (Ibargüengoitia, 1990, p. 68)

This story reveals the different discursive tone used by Arroyo according to the person he refers to: "He is always the voice of reason and the others are, to a greater or lesser extent, characters who act by instinct, without thinking or meditating well. "(Margarito, 2012). This anecdote allows us to observe in its fullness the logic of Arroyo. The protagonist is presented as an impulsive military man who is not able to visualize the situation properly. In fact, Arroyo thinks that they have been besieged because he discovers that the telephone does not have a line; However, in a twist of the fine irony of Ibargüengoitia, we discovered that the device was simply broken.

The actions and decisions taken by Arroyo have two fundamental interests. The first is that of the revolutionary leaders who sought to benefit from the armed struggle, that is, achieve a political appointment. The second is more mundane and shows a personality without vision to the future, namely to satisfy immediate needs without reflecting on the possible problems that may arise.

In this way, it moves away from the heroic function by putting its convenience above the common welfare of the country or the search for the truth: "Afterwards we were discussing what each one was going to say and do the next day and then our political program, which consisted in a campaign of defamation of the socialist parties "(Ibargüengoitia, 1990, page 63). Thus, Ibargüengoitia presents us with a revolutionary leader who takes unilateral decisions, guided by greed, without a commitment by the people and without a clear idea of his intervention in national politics and in subsequent battles.

### **The messianic function**

The messianic function arises from a moment of rupture that demands the action of the hero. In the case of the novel that concerns us, the event that changes the course of the apparent tranquility is the assassination of the president-elect. From that moment on, sides are established and actions are developed that mobilize the caudillos to stabilize the crisis and maintain their position in power. The first meeting between the revolutionary generals takes place during the funerals of Marcos González, with the purpose of avoiding a political chaos that jeopardizes the gains and positions obtained up to now.

The discourse of the revolutionaries in this first meeting of agreements seeks to maintain the dignity proper to the messianic function of the revolutionary insurgent. This is evident in a very interesting dichotomy proposed by the author. On the one hand, the caudillos state that only they have the capacity to guide the nation "towards the high postulates of the Mexican Revolution" (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p.25); On the other hand, their entanglements and interests provoke all situations and events that occur during history. In this way, the redeeming hero becomes an opportunist who uses laws and institutions to stay in power and oppress those who oppose:

In short, that everything could be fixed by the good. He ended up making some considerations that leave us all very impressed: Who decides who is President? Previous. Who is the previous one? The Interim Who names the Interim? The camera. Who dominates the House? Vidal Sánchez. So, it's very easy. It is enough to arrange with Vidal Sánchez an interim for Artejo, who in turn will arrange an overwhelming majority election for a server of you (Ibargüengoitia, 2002, p. 25).

The case of the protagonist of the novel is even more transcendental for the demystification of the hero. Arroyo not only fails in his mission of restoring order as it would correspond to the saving hero, but he himself causes chaos, both for himself and for others. One of the clearest examples of how the actions of Arroyo are managers of conflicts and not solutions, is the situation of the clock that the late Marcos González inherited:

1. When the widow informs her of the theft of the watch, she asks him to leave things as they are because he did not want scandal; nevertheless, he looks for the culprit, interrogates him and, finally, hits him impelled by "the impudence, the cynicism and the cowardice" of Pérez H. to deny the theft. This outburst causes the ill will of who would be named interim president.
2. His companions want to restore peace between Arroyo and Pérez H., for which they ask Arroyo to apologize. His refusal causes a first break with the members of his political group.
3. After he learns that he unfairly accused Pérez H., in a moment of drunkenness, he considers the possibility of apologizing, but these noble feelings dissipate as soon as he hears that Vidal Sánchez wants to see him: he prefers to ally with who until then seen as an antagonist, to apologize. In the meeting with Vidal Sánchez, Arroyo obtains the post of Chief of the Military Zone of Viera, which later would bring problems and take him to risk his life and that of several battalions.

One of the characteristics of the saving hero is his absolute surrender that culminates with a tragic death that transforms him into a martyr and a myth of a cause (Eliade, 1991). Due to this, the demystification of José Guadalupe Arroyo as a revolutionary hero has as a key moment the end of the novel: instead of assuming the function of savior, he becomes the saved, with which he descends to the level of the common person and, in counterpart, Galvez is exalted, who forgives the condemnation of the protagonist of the story. Throughout the novel, Arroyo makes mistakes that reveal the character's descent; for this reason, his capture and his judgment are shown as a logical consequence of his acts in the narrative. Thus, all of Arroyo's errors mentioned during the trial serve as support for his death sentence.

Many of Mexico's historical heroes were shot. This final destiny gives them a certain dignity of sacrifice to their deaths; Because of this, there are legends and myths about the

execution of some of them. Arroyo is sentenced to the wall victim of Pérez H. and Vidal Sánchez; however, the protagonist does not die, but is rescued by Gálvez. His heroic redemption does not materialize, given that the tragic death that would give him the status of a revolutionary martyr does not materialize. In this way, the end of *The Lightning of August* puts it back as an anti-hero and strips it of all messianic pretensions. To highlight the lowness of the indignity of Arroyo's situation at the end of the novel, Ibarguengoitia uses a tone that pretends to be elevated, similar to the picaresque narrations.

The heroes who have achieved the dignity of being called "parents of the country" are characterized by sacrificing their lives to obtain the well-being of their countrymen, in such a way that they become martyrs of some historical movement (Connaughton, 2003). In counterpart, an antihero always appears as a marginal character, who has not left an important footprint for society, but, on the contrary, tries to take advantage of situations by showing few moral values.

## Conclusions

The revolutionary leader who shows us *The Lightning of August* is involved in a demystification process that metaphorically places him in a downward spiral. In this way, the hero is transformed into an anti-hero through a story full of humor that little by little shows us the weaknesses of its protagonist. Thus, Arroyo, with his own story, becomes a parody of himself that, to affirm his integrity, denies flatly having helped at some point who is forgiving his life and reiterates that Galvez stole his gun and that he did everything possible so that they could arrest him and pass him by the arms. What's more, if he did not deny it at the moment when Gálvez released him, it was because he was not encouraged to contradict it.

The lightning of August demystifies the revolutionary hero through the figure of José Guadalupe Arroyo. Thus, with its sharpness and characteristic humor, Ibarguengoitia exposes its own critical vision of national reconstruction in post-revolutionary Mexico, where the ideals of the armed struggle were only distant cries and phrases that were repeated without a meaning of their own. This novel exposes a story where satirizes the ups and downs and the actions of the caudillos who forgot the promises of the Revolution to strengthen an

institutionalization of government power that does not propose any change or benefits for the people.

The heroes of immaculate personalities are only symbols to venerate on certain dates. From the perspective of Ibargüengoitia, the real characters are more complex and interesting. For this reason, *The Lightning of August* presents a leader with human problems, weaknesses, interests and weaknesses, with the aim of returning the revolutionary hero his worldly character and demystifying it. Arroyo is not a savior or someone who fights for his country or even a good strategist, so he can not become the character that symbolizes a national ideal.

The correlation between civic and religious personalities is lost in the work of Ibargüengoitia. The official story aims to present the heroes with moral characteristics close to virtue or sanctity. On the other hand, *The Lightning of August* presents us with living characters with a complex personality that star stories with many angles and variations.

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