

SOCIETY AND ARTISTIC TECHNIQUE
IN THE NOVELS OF THE
"GRUPO DE GUAYAQUIL"

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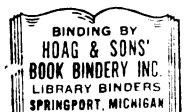
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ABSTRACT

SOCIETY AND ARTISTIC TECHNIQUE IN THE NOVELS OF THE "GRUPO DE GUAYAQUIL"

By

Karl H. Heise

During the thirties and forties a group of Ecuadorian novelists composed of José de la Cuadra, Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Enrique Gil Gilbert, Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, and Adalberto Ortiz formed a literary association known as the "Grupo de Guayaquil". Their aim was to analyze and denounce social ills in coastal Ecuador through novels that had artistic value.

Their point of departure was Los que se van (1930), a collection of short stories written by Gallegos Lara, Gil Gilbert, and Aguilera Malta. This book was hailed at the time as a phenomenon unique in the national literature for its bold and frank exposition of littoral society.

Society was treated in the novels with emphasis on positive qualities in lower class characters, in the light of their relation to other characters and the environment, and their role in history.

Interaction was stressed between the characters and their environment, as well as between the characters themselves. Language and syntax were imitative of the speech of the

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coastal poor. Characters were treated as individuals, even when they symbolized race or class. Lyrical attributes and a sense of beauty were often achieved in the portrayal of coastal Ecuadorian life.

Pareja Diezcanseco, Aguilera Malta, and Ortiz continued to write after the mid-forties. They no longer limited the scenario to the Ecuadorian coast, examined society more objectively than in previous work, viewed history primarily for its effect on the characters' psychologies, and experimented with contemporary narrative techniques.

The "Grupo de Guayaquil" again showed that it is possible to write novels of social concern that are also works of art.

SOCIETY AND ARTISTIC TECHNIQUE
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By

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TO MY ECUADORIAN FRIENDS

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INTRODUCTION

During the period from the thirties through the mid-forties the Ecuadorian novel experienced a revitalization. Ecuador's young writers were preoccupied with global and national political and socio-economic problems. They felt compelled to take a stand on those problems, using narrative fiction for the conveyance of their ideas and opinions. They focused attention on social ills through a process or "denunciation and protest."¹

Ecuador produced nearly a score of novelists during the thirties. Jorge Icaza divides them into three groups, according to geographical location.² One of these, based in the capital, was known as "El grupo de Quito." It was composed of Jorge Icaza, Fernando Chaves, Humberto Salvador, Enrique Terán, and Jorge Fernández. Another, located in the cities of Cuenca and Loja, was called "El Grupo del Austro." Angel F. Rojas, G. Humberto Mata, and Alfonso Cuesta y Cuesta were the members of this group. The third, "El Grupo de Guayaquil", was located along the coast. Originally it was made up of José de la Cuadra, Enrique Gil Gilbert, Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Demetrio Aguilera Malta, and Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco. Later, Adalberto Ortiz became the sixth member. This latter group is the subject of my study.

Although the groups worked independently of each other, they had a spiritual unity stronger than physical or geographical proximity. Jorge Icaza refers to their writings as "obras todas ... en las cuales, a pesar de sus diferencias regionales, latía un fondo unificador, un espíritu de emoción propia que era a la vez el espíritu del continente hispanoamericano."³ Icaza further states:

"Parece imposible que se pueda hablar de expresión unificada o de un solo espíritu en un país como el nuestro ... No obstante, fue la literatura --especialmente el relato ... --, la que ... advirtió con claridad meridiana ... la posibilidad y la existencia de un contorno y de un espíritu definitivos. En esas obras ... el contenido emocional era más trascendente y sincero que cualquier experiencia estética llegada de Occidente. Era más elemental, más nuestro--a pesar de su pobreza de recursos técnicos, a pesar de su ingenuidad primitiva, a pesar de su precipitación."⁴

As Icaza suggests, many writers of that period lacked artistic finesse. These Ecuadorians, not unlike many of their contemporaries in Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico,⁵ were interested in a literature of pragmatism, rather than escapism. For the most part, theirs was literature of urgent necessity, indignation, and anger. In their world brutal landholders exploited underlings in a state of neo-feudalism, poor people endured disease, overwork, short life-span, and the complete absence of dignity, with no ideal more important than the next meal, and sensualism born of desperation and resembling the

conduct of beasts. At times they emphasized the sordid aspects of society to such an extent that the final product had little more resemblance to reality than did the earlier modernists' excursions into fantasy and exoticism. Enrique Anderson Imbert points out that the "... lenguaje crudo, exageración de lo sombrío y lo sórdido, valentía en la exhibición de vergüenzas nacionales, sinceridad en el propósito combativo, dan a esta literature más valor moral que artístico."⁶ Arturo Torres-Ríosco is of much the same opinion as the Argentinian critic:

"... el tema indígena ha sido casi completamente acaparado por un grupo de novelistas militantes que se han dedicado a exponer los despiadados aspectos de la esclavitud india Estos jóvenes escritores, ecuatorianos en su mayoría, muestran un categórico menosprecio por la gramática, por el estilo, por la sintaxis y hasta or el sentido común. ... Sin embargo, sus libros tienen el mérito incuestionable de mostrar un estado de cosas espantoso y real ..."⁷

Both critics agree that Ecuadorian socially-oriented literature of the thirties owes its value more to content than to form. Nonetheless, the young novelists were just beginning to create a national literary identification and individuality. As Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco points out through a character in one of his novels, "Nuestra novela de hoy es una formidable novela, aunque recién nacida. Y es de suponer que mejorará. Porque un puñado de muchachos no puede hacer más en el primer momento."

¡Experiencia, sagrada experiencia!"⁸ The first appearance of a literary movement indigenous to Ecuador and applicable to only Latin America did not arrive until the thirties.

However, the new writers were not the first in their country to treat social **ills**. Ecuadorian men of letters have been aware of their country's social problems since they first began producing literature. If one is to accept as truth what is written by Ecuador's literati as they portrayed their countrymen, he must become aware that the physical and economic well-being of the lower classes is in a sorry state. In Juan León Mera's "chateaubriandesque" idealization of the Indian, Cumandá, (1879) the landholder-turned-priest protagonist speaks for the author when he observes the injustices suffered by the Indian and considers justifiable his savagery against the white men. Juan Montalvo once wrote: "Si mi pluma tuviese don de lágrimas, yo escribiría un libro titulado El Indio, y haría llorar al mundo."⁹ Gonzalo Zaldumbide's Egloga Trágica (1910), through the description of a love affair between a white landholder and an Indian girl, shows the vast differences in social status between the members of the two races. Similarly, Fernando Chaves, in Plata y Bronce (1927), shows the social and psychological chasm between the

white and the Indian, and in La Embrujada (1927) demonstrates how this gap can be broadened by hate then filled with violence when the vengeful Indian protagonist rapes the daughter of a white landholder. Thus sporadically, but consistently, social problems were treated in the Ecuadorian novel throughout the latter nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth.

There is furthermore one main precursor for the novels dealing with the Ecuadorian coast that appeared in the third and fourth decades of the present century. A la Costa (1904), by Luis A. Martínez, is of primary importance in understanding the Ecuador into which the six novelists of this study were born. In A la Costa Martínez presents a country of social suffering, class conflict, interior political struggle, and regional prejudices, that is not essentially different from the one with which the six authors of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" deal in their work.¹⁰

A la Costa is a novel of transition, whose action takes place around 1895, during the campaigns of the Liberal caudillo, Eloy Alfaro.¹¹ It is an ambitious novel in which every Ecuadorian human and social element is brought forth with the exception of the Indian, who is mentioned only in passing.

Most of the first part of the novel is not of great importance, since Martínez is most concerned with presenting

the triumph of Liberalism over Conservatism in Ecuador.¹² The second half is of value to this study, for there Martínez becomes an observer of the Ecuadorian coast and its ever-increasing importance in the national life.¹³

Martínez achieves admirable contrast between the two principal regions of his country. The tropical coast opposes the high Andes, the colorful language of the montuvio¹⁴ contrasts with the unaffected Spanish of the highland people, the liberal political ideals from the River Guayas area clash with the conservative ones from the sierra, and the growing and aggressive giant that is Guayaquil counters the serene and Catholic city of Quito.¹⁵

Like Martínez, the novelists of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" hope their novels will influence society. In its attention to social phenomena, ethnic elements, political division, and geographic influence A la Costa is the precursor for the next generation of novels.¹⁶

Nonetheless, the writers from the coastal tropics who appear in the thirties do not follow Martínez' technique of lengthy description. They attempt newer, more effective means of artistic expression, paying much more attention to dialogue. While Martínez is somewhat Olympian in his

treatment of Ecuadorian society, the later generation of novelists treat it from the point of view of belonging to it, especially where the lower classes are concerned.¹⁷

Martínez takes an important step in the development of the Ecuadorian novel. The novelists of the thirties and the forties quicken the pace and step more boldly.

Of the three novelistic groups, the one from Guayaquil possesses several distinctive features. It represents the first modern effort in the Ecuadorian novel to focus attention on the coast and its inhabitants as sources for artistic interpretation. It concentrates on the native socio-ethnic types. The Blacks, and especially the coastal cholo¹⁸ and the montuvio are the principal characters in its novels. It was the most prolific of the three groups.¹⁹ It was also the most concerned with balancing artistic awareness and social conscience. Its writers wanted to set the Ecuadorian novel on a course that was artistically sound, so their literature would have value beyond the given historical moment. Many of their novels are now in second or third editions, and some have been translated and have been favorably received by literary critics abroad. These facts attest to their continuing appeal.

Much of the critical evaluation of the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" novelistic production has been erroneous or

general. Anderson Imbert and Torres-Rioseco, whose work treats the panorama of Spanish American literature, tend to consider the entire novelistic production of Ecuador during the thirties as concerned almost exclusively with social commentary, having little artistic value. Apparently, they hold representative the work of novelists like Jorge Icaza, whose novels in that period do put thesis above technique. Even critics who concentrate on the novel, like Fernando Alegría, dedicate very little space to the Ecuadorian writers since the thirties, and fail to recognize sufficiently the artistic value of the work produced by the coastal authors.²⁰ Within Ecuador, there have been three major critical studies that deal specifically with prose fiction: Benjamín Carrión's El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano, (1958) Edmundo Ribadeneira's La Moderna Novela Ecuatoriana, (1958) and Angel F. Rojas' La Novela Ecuatoriana. (1948) While they recognize differences in artistic technique between individual writers and between groups, and attribute artistic value to the work of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", they neither consider it in depth nor distinguish its novels for being equally valuable as works of art and social documents. Perhaps the most perceptive study belongs to Rojas. However, he laments the general and schematic nature of his

evaluation of both social and artistic merit in the work of the coastal novelists.²¹ Other studies have treated individual authors of the group, or have dealt with it within a general context.²² In 1951 Reuben Siegel wrote a Doctoral Dissertation on the "Grupo de Guayaquil". His study is general, dealing with all the fiction written by the group. He states that his purpose is "to help shed light on the Guayaquil authors."²³ No study has appeared that evaluates specifically the novels of the group. Neither has one appeared that confirms both the social and the artistic values of the novels. This study proposes to fill both these lacunae.

After the mid-forties the "Grupo de Guayaquil" ceased to exist as a literary nucleus, because of the deaths of de la Cuadra and Gallegos Lara, the lack of literary activity on the part of Gil Gilbert, and the extensive travels of the remaining three. Nonetheless, these three have continued to evolve as artists and have been writing novels up to the present time. Ortiz, and especially Aguilera Malta and Pareja Diezcanseco, participate in the contemporary literary movements that have made the world look to the Spanish American novel for its artistic craftsmanship as well as its content.

While this Dissertation is concerned primarily with an evaluation of the work of the six writers when they functioned as a novelistic group, a secondary purpose is

to determine the extent of the artistic maturation in the contemporary novels of those who have continued their literary involvement.

As background for my study, I made brief visits to Ecuador in 1969 and in 1970 where I interviewed the surviving members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil". The purpose of those interviews was to gain knowledge from the authors' personal insights into the successes and shortcomings of the novels written by them in the past, to learn their attitudes concerning the goals of the novels they are writing in the present, and to ascertain the role they see themselves playing in the process of the Ecuadorian novel in particular and the Spanish American novel in general.

In addition, I obtained interviews with the novelists Jorge Icaza and G. Humberto Mata, and the critics Angel F. Rojas and Edmundo Ribadeneira. They are contemporaries of the novelists from the coast. The purpose of interviewing them was to gain breadth and depth in my appraisal of the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" novels.

I am especially grateful to Adalberto Ortiz, Angel F. Rojas, Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, and Jorge Icaza. They gave me many hours of their time beyond those allotted for formal interviews. They met with me in the most relaxed situations, in some cases introduced me to their families

and acquaintances, answered happily even my most elementary questions, and in general treated me as a friend. Moreover, they encouraged me in my project and offered their warmest support.

Finally, I must express gratitude to Albion College, which supported my trips through its Faculty Summer Research Fellowship Program. In addition to meeting leading novelists and critics, I was able to visit the Ecuadorian coast, particularly the regions of Guayaquil and Esmeraldas, and experience for myself something of what inspired the novelists of the "Grupo de Guayaquil".

NOTES

1. The writers themselves characterized their consistent theme in the novel as "denuncia y protesta social."
2. Jorge Icaza, "Relato, Espíritu Unificador en la Generación del Año 30," Letras del Ecaudor, No. 129 (1965), pp. 10-11.
3. Icaza, p. 10.
4. Icaza, pp. 10-11.
5. As points of reference, Ciro Alegría in Perú, Alcides Arguedas in Bolivia, and Mariano Azuela and Gregorio López y Fuentes in México are examples of writers from Spanish America who were contemporaries of the Ecuadorian writers under discussion and who also concentrated on social themes and the portrayal of lower class socio-ethnic types in their novels.
6. Enrique Anderson Imbert, Historia de la Literatura Hispanoamericana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961), p. 253.
7. Arturo Torres-Río, Nueva Historia de la Gran Literatura Iberoamericana (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1961), p. 191.
8. Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, El Aire y los Recuerdos (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1959), p. 35.
9. Juan Montalvo, El Espectador. The quotation is borrowed from Angel F. Rojas, La Novela Ecuatoriana (México: Fondo de Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1948), p. 27.
10. Manuel J. Calle, in Luis A. Martínez, A la Costa (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1946), Intro., p. XXVI.
11. Benjamín Carrión, El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), pp. 65-67.
12. Augusto Arias, Luis A. Martínez (Quito: Imprenta del Ministerio de Gobierno, 1937).
Arias points out that much of A la Costa is autobiographical. For example, he indicates (p. 108) that

Martínez was himself a middle-class Liberal, as is one of his protagonists. He also notes (p. 71) that the polineuritis palúdica from which another of his characters suffers was also an affliction of Martínez.

13. Edmundo Ribadeneira, La Moderna Novela Ecuatoriana (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 49.

Ribadeneira observes that "El problema social ecuatoriano, en su doble marco geográfico de sierra y costa, constituye la esencia y el sentido de A la Costa."

14. Throughout the Guayaquil area and generally more inland one finds the montuvio. Ethnically, he is a mixture of Indian, Black, and White. José de la Cuadra estimates that the montuvio is approximately sixty percent Indian, thirty percent Black, and ten percent White. One should bear in mind that his are only approximate figures. When one questions Ecuadorians today on the same matter, he finds a great deal of variation in the estimated percentages of racial composition. The montuvio is generally considered intelligent, introspective, and independent.

See de la Cuadra, "El Montuvio Ecuatoriano," Obras Completas (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 878.

15. Luis A. Martínez, A la Costa (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1946).

As the author begins the second part of his novel he gives the following description of the contrasting Andean and coastal Geography (p. 145):

"... se descubre otra zona, otra naturaleza, un mundo nunca imaginado por el habitante de las cordilleras. Los cerros ... se aplanan y casi se hunden en un abismo. El bosque trepa afanoso hasta las más altas cimas; ... al fin, cerros, colinas, barrancos, se confunden, disfundan, desaparecen ... para convertirse en una llanura infinita como el mar... . Y en esa inmensa pampa brillan aquí y allá algunos ... puntos que indican curvas de inmensos ríos; ... un aire caliente y denso baña ese gigantesco paisaje Hacia la izquierda del observador se levanta de la llanura una altísima cordillera azul turquí; es el último contrafuerte de los viejos Andes, que avanzan hasta el Pacífico. Esa tierra vaporosa, esa llanura infinita, es la Costa ecuatoriana."

Although Martínez' description is more that of an observer of the coast than a participant in the total environment, as is the case of the writers of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", it still must be recognized as the first major novelistic effort in that direction.

While Martínez does not go to the extremes of transposing the speech of the poor coastal inhabitant as do the next generation of writers, he does make some orthographical recognition of the coastal accent. Here is a segment of a conversation between a man from the highlands and one from the coast (pp. 186-87):

--"Está bien. Dende mañana Uté saldrá al campo con una cuadrilla. Como supongo que Uté no sabrá cosa de provecho en cacao, el guía de la cuadrilla le enseñará. ...

--Ya aprenderé.....

--.....¡Si Uté cree que trabajar de agricultor es cosa fácil, está equivocao. No es lo mismo que quemarse pestaña sobre libros. ¡Qué familia!"

After the first part of the novel, which is set in great colonial mansions and imposing cathedrals, the following description of Guayaquil offers a striking contrast (p. 173):

"... Al fondo de esta antesala de cerrillos de redondas cumbres, y como saliendo de las aguas del río, asoma Guayaquil, con sus esbeltas torres, las chimeneas de las fábricas, los claros y alegres edificios, los buques amarrados a los muelles, los grandes vapores del Pacífico anclados en la mitad del río, penachos de humo negro que sale de las fábricas y vapores, grupos de palmeras entre las casas, y un sol de oro, el sol de las cuatro de la tarde que hace centellear el río, ilumina mágicamente la ciudad ..."

16. Enrique Gil Gilbert, in Luis A. Martínez, A la Costa (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1946), Intro., p. VII.

Gil Gilbert says of Martínez, "Hombre de su tiempo, empapado de pasiones políticas, actor él mismo, no entiende esa sutileza encubridora, ese burladero del compromiso histórico que denominan serenidad; ni tampoco quiere que el artista ... y el hombre tengan distintos campos de acción. Se siente una sola persona y entiende que su obra literaria no debe estar divorciada de su acción cotidiana; antes bien, sabe que es parte de ella."

Gil Gilbert could well be talking about himself and his contemporaries with the same words he uses to describe Martínez.

17. Manuel Pedro González, "Trends in Hispanic American Literature," Books Abroad, XVII (1943), p. 19.

Speaking of Hispanic-American literature in general, González observes: "... In the past, the educated Indian or negro endeavored to emulate the white man and usually succeeded. ... But today, the educated Negro and Indian, far from striving to imitate the thought patterns of the white man, take pride in fostering and developing their own racial and artistic traits and characteristics."

With the exception of Adalberto Ortiz, the writers in the "Grupo de Guayaquil" are only sympathizers with the socio-ethnic types in their novels. They belong to the lower classes only in spirit.

Waldo Frank, "El Siglo del Mestizo," Letras del Ecuador, No. 42 (Febrero de 1949), pp. 15-16.

Frank's article points out that the time is ripe in Hispanic America for people of the mixed bloods of all races (such as the cholos and montuvios in coastal Ecuador) to become an important, self-expressive, and integral part of the continent. Again, with the exception of Ortiz, the writers dealt with in this study are essentially members of the upper (in this case middle) classes writing about people in the lower classes.

18. The cholo is an element of both the highlands and the coast. In the highlands the term is fairly synonymous with mestizo (the mixture of White and Indian). This cholo appears in the work of Jorge Icaza. The term is also used in the Peruvian highlands, where Ciro Alegría uses this cholo in his novels. On the Ecuadorian coast, however, the cholo usually contains an African element. Specifically, the Ecuadorian coastal cholo inhabits the arid Santa Elena peninsula, where he works in close proximity to the sea. This cholo appears in the novels of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", especially in those of Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, Demetrio Aguilera Malta, and Joaquín Gallegos Lara. Although he is not considered so independent as the montuvio, the coastal cholo is noted for his intelligence and his capacity for introspection.

19. Angel F. Rojas, La Novela Ecuatoriana, pp. 222-25.

Rojas lists more than seventy works of fiction published by Ecuadorian novelists from 1930 through the mid-forties. Nearly one third of these novels were written by the six writers who make up the "Grupo de Guayaquil".

20. Fernando Alegría, Historia de la Novela Hispano-americana (Mexico: Ediciones de Andrea, 1965), pp. 261-62.

Alegría dedicates seven full pages (261-67) to Ecuadorian novelists since the thirties. In three and one half of those pages he discusses Jorge Icaza. In the remaining pages he gives a paragraph to Pareja Diezcanseco, Aguilera Malta, and Gil Gilbert, and discusses briefly and in general the novelistic movement of that period in Ecuador. Although he does recognize the different artistic techniques of the individual writers, he commits some fundamental errors when he generalizes. In his opening remarks he talks about Los que se van, saying that it: "encerraba un ataque implícito al costumbrismo superficial de fines de siglo. Por desgracia, la obra ... adolecía de elementales defectos. ... la lucha del indio no siempre resulta de una crisis individual interpretada con profundidad psicológica y que complementa la descripción del ambiente; se trata ... de una condición fijada a priori en la cual los personajes juegan un papel asignado de antemano. Muy acertadamente afirma Angel F. Rojas que estos escritores trataban a sus personajes como hombres-masa y no como individuos, sin llegar jamás, entonces, a la creación del héroe singular."

The Indian is hardly mentioned in any part of the work of the "Grupo de Guayaquil". As this study shall affirm, the writers give careful attention to the creation of characters, and in general can not be accused justly of treating only the "hombre-masa". It appears that Alegría has given more careful attention to the "Grupo de Guayaquil" since he published his study, for on December 28, 1971, in Seminar 41 of the meeting of the Modern Language Association in Chicago, he declared that the novels of Aguilera Malta and de la Cuadra are worthy artistic precursors to highly discussed and acclaimed novels like Mario Vargas Llosa's La Ciudad y los Perros and Gabriel García Márquez' Cien Años de Soledad.

21. In my conversations with him both in 1969 and in 1970 Rojas lamented that his work as a lawyer kept him from updating his study of the Ecuadorian novel (published in 1948). He feels the work of his fellow Ecuadorian writers has not received the critical attention it deserves. He was especially pleased with the purpose of my study, for the members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" are among his closest friends.

22. The following general studies on the Ecuadorian novel are found in Dissertation Abstracts:

Wayne L. Allison, "A Thematic Analysis of the Contemporary Ecuadorian Novel," DA, XXV., 6612-13 (New Mexico).

Zenia Sacks De Silva, "The Contemporary Ecuadorian Novel," DA, XV. (1955), p. 2531 (New York University).

One Dissertation has been written on de la Cuadra:

Humberto E. Robles, "La Estética de José de la Cuadra," Northwestern University, 1968.

Also, an M. A. thesis was done on Pareja Diezcanseco:

Karl H. Heise, "The Novelistic Evolution of Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, Michigan State University, 1961.

23. Reuben Siegel, "The Group of Guayaquil. A Study in Contemporary Ecuadorian Fiction," University of Wisconsin, 1951), p. 1.

Siegel's study considers only the original five members of the group. He does not include Ortiz. He passes lightly over Los que se van, neither analyzing it nor affirming its importance. Since his study was completed more than two decades ago, it does not treat the contemporary novels of Ortiz, Aguilera Malta, or Pareja Diezcanseco. He dedicates a major part of his work to detailed biographical material.

CHAPTER I.

THE "GRUPO DE GUAYAQUIL": ITS MEMBERS AND NOVELISTIC AIMS

The young men who began the narrative movement from Ecuador's coast were associates in literature and intimate friends. Even when their group expanded to six members, neither individual fame nor non-literary interests marred the feeling of unity or friendship.¹ The strength of this spirit can be illustrated by Enrique Gil Gilbert's declaration at the graveside of José de la Cuadra: "Eramos cinco. Como un puño."², referring to the original five members of the group.

Some general observations should be made about the backgrounds of the individual authors. The chief concern pertains to those elements in their lives that have bearing on their work.

The novelist from coastal Ecuador considered by his contemporaries to show the most artistic development during their early years of association was the oldest member of the group. He was also the first to pass away, at the age of thirty seven. Born in Guayaquil on September 3, 1903, José de la Cuadra died there in February, 1941. He graduated from the Colegio Vicente Rocafuerte in Guayaquil and then continued his studies to receive a law degree.

His friends say that de la Cuadra was a man with a turbulent personal life, and at times appeared neurotic. However, his professional life provided the substance for his literary enterprises. As a lawyer who dealt often with criminal cases that involved the socio-ethnic types living along the coast, he came to know these people through incidents when they acted at the height of their passions. Murders, robberies, and sex crimes, sometimes against each other and other times against abusive patrones, gave him ample novelistic material. He often represented the poor, and was acquainted personally with many of them.³ In addition to observations of his countrymen that stemmed from his profession, de la Cuadra enjoyed more relaxed moments of human study. Demetrio Aguilera Malta makes the following observation:

"Amigo de los hombres de toga y justicia, alternando a veces con los gamonales, sabe también conversar, horas de horas, con los compadres que va cultivando a lo largo del camino. En las horas humosas del cigarro dauleño, bebiendo jugo de caña fermentada, oyendo el lamento de la vihuela dulce, bailando sobre los pisos de caña brava picada o simplemente escuchando la voz rumorosa de los ríos, va almacenando en su conciencia puñados de vida."⁴

De la Cuadra was a sensitive man intensely aware of everything around him. He was extremely interested in all types of people from his native Ecuador, and observed them carefully before transposing them to the pages of

his narrative.

Although he wrote many short stories, de la Cuadra has only two novels, Los Sangurimas (1934) and Los Monos Enloquecidos (1951).⁵ His complete works were published in a single volume in 1958 by the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana.

Another member of the group to die prematurely was Joaquín Gallegos Lara. He was thirty eight when he died in Guayaquil on November 17, 1947. He was born in the same city on April 9, 1909. He is most remembered by his friends for his courage in living with a severe physical handicap (he was a cripple, having been born with stunted legs) and for his consuming allegiance to Marxism.⁶ Since he was unable to attend school physically, he was educated at home through tutors and his own efforts. He was a voracious reader, and his early life was mostly contemplative. In spite of his disability, however, he managed to leave his room and enter the "real" world. José de la Cuadra points out that:

"Habría continuado leyendo, sin duda; pero, cierto día, desde la alta ventana de su buhardilla advirtió la vida que trajinaba allá abajo, en la calle, y quiso verla próxima, inmediata.

Bajó.

Fue un despertar violento. Mejor, el entrar en una pesadilla tras un amable ensueño."⁷

Gallegos Lara did not limit his relationship with the outside world to observation. In spite of his handicap,

he held a number of jobs, of a clerical and bureaucratic nature for the most part. During his late 'teens, however, he worked on a truck that hauled cargo between Guayaquil and the mountains. For a time he lived in the countryside, where he became acquainted with the montuvios who would appear in Los que se van.⁸

It has been theorized by friends and critics of Gallegos Lara that his physical condition indirectly led to his interest in montuvios and cholos, that he admired their virile way of life and would have enjoyed being like the masculine characters his imagination created.

Gallegos Lara was not from a wealthy family. He identified with the lower classes and saw their redemption through Marxism.

While de la Cuadra was the artistic leader of the group, Gallegos Lara was its spiritual leader. He appears to have compensated for his physical defect by concentrating on the growth of his intellectual capacity. Unable to dominate others through physical strength, he became a master of the polemic.⁹ His was a primary role during the many discussions about society and literature that took place among the members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil".

There is no evidence that Gallegos Lara hid his affliction or was in any way ashamed of it. To the contrary, "... brazos amigos se ofrecieron. Y pudo así

entrar en las ruas trajinadas, en las fábricas, en las
barriadas obreras."¹⁰ Ten years after his death, Alfredo
Pareja Diezcanseco recalled:

"... tú, feo como un apóstol, como un apóstol
conocías las calles y las casas, y las trajinabas
para que las gentes fueran mejores, los ladrones
robasen menos y los pobres comieran más. Yo te
he visto llorar por el dolor de los otros y reír
del tuyo."¹¹

Joaquín Gallegos Lara's only published novel was
Las Cruces Sobre el Agua (1946).

As of this writing, the remaining four writers of
the group are alive.

The youngest of the original five writers is Enrique
Gil Gilbert. He was born on July 8, 1912, in Guayaquil.

As was Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Enrique Gil Gilbert
has been deeply involved with Marxism for many years.
Unlike the other writers, however, Gil Gilbert does not
have his origins with the middle class. José de la Cuadra
notes that "... la familia de Gil Gilbert, [es] familia
de hidalgos campesinos con cuya tradición ha roto el
escritor."¹²

From accounts by his friends and personal impressions,
it appears that Gil Gilbert has been both the idealist and
the rebel during most of his life. As a youth he had access
to his family's library and became enamoured of the
Romanticists, especially the Spanish poet, Espronceda.

While in secondary school he became a leader in student activist movements and directed his romantic idealism toward Marxism. Rebelliously identifying with the working classes, he totally disavowed his own family's wealth.

Gil Gilbert is still a boyishly jovial figure. He does not give the impression of a "wild-eyed radical". Adalberto Ortiz once told the anecdote that during an extended period of bad weather Gil Gilbert declared that "el partido se encargaría del asunto y lo arreglaría."

When he was young he spent a good deal of time on his family's property in the country, where he became acquainted with the montuvios who lived and worked there. His experience gave him much of the material for his literature.

Enrique Gil Gilbert has published only one novel, Nuestro Pan (1941), with which he earned considerable fame. It won honorable mention in the Latin American novel contest held in 1941 by the Farrar and Rinehart publishing house. It placed next to the winning novel, which was Ciro Alegría's El Mundo es Ancho y Ajeno.

Gil Gilbert's education ended with completion of secondary school, and even then his political involvement caused him to change schools. Although he began university studies, his political activism dominated his life to the point that he dropped out after a short time. For the past several decades he has been much more involved in

politics than literature. He occupies important posts in the Communist party in Ecuador.

Of the three collaborators of Los que se van, Demetrio Aguilera Malta has been the most consistently involved in literature. He is also the least politically oriented, although he seems as interested in social reform as any of his colleagues. He sees the general direction of Socialism, rather than Marxism, as the course toward that end.

Aguilera Malta was born in Guayaquil on May 24, 1909, of a middle class family. He completed primary and secondary education there. Although he began law studies at the University of Guayaquil, he abandoned them after a short time. It was not political involvement that caused his leaving school, but a very restless nature. He is involved in drama, film, poetry, short story, novel, television, and anything else that excites him. He has had an active life with the arts and seems to follow every whim that possesses him.¹³

He has published four novels: Don Goyo (1933), Canal Zone (1935), La Isla Virgen (1942), and recently Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes (1970). In addition, he has published three volumes in a series of historical novels: La Caballeresa del Sol (1964), El Quijote de El Dorado (1964), and Un Nuevo Mar Para el Rey (1965).¹⁴

As is the case with the other writers, much of the material for Aguilera Malta's novels is based on first-hand information. He has been an adventurer and a traveler since childhood. He would accompany his father on trips along primitive sections of the Ecuadorian coast and through uncharted coves and inlets of the offshore islands. He became acquainted with and fascinated by the geography and the cholos who populate the region.¹⁵ In later years his travels carried him to Europe, North America, México and other parts of Latin America. He has earned his living at occupations ranging from writing and reporting to teaching and government work. He participated in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side. Even today, in his sixties, his life moves very rapidly.

Of the six writers, perhaps the most adaptable to a variety of situations is Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco. He was born in Guayaquil on October 12, 1908. The origins of his family are aristocratic, but the erosion of its economic status over the years has put it into the middle class. Pareja has successfully undertaken different kinds of occupations throughout his life.

He had the least formal education of the group but has gone the farthest academically. Owing to the death of his father when he was eleven, and the subsequent financial strain on his family, he was able to complete

only primary school. In spite of those early setbacks he "... without the help of a teacher ... went through the high school curriculum and enrolled in the university faculty of law and social sciences."¹⁶ It has been said of Pareja that "La suya es el **tipoclásico** de la formación cultural autodidáctica."¹⁷ In later years he has been a professor of literature, history, and political science, in Ecuador, other parts of Latin America, and the United States.

Pareja has also held government positions, political posts, diplomatic assignments, administrative duties in education, and has successfully ventured into the business world.

In spite of his dedication to non-literary work, Pareja is the most prolific novelist of the group. He has recently published his thirteenth novel, Las Pequeñas Estaturas (1970) and is presently working on a fourteenth.¹⁸ In addition, he has published two "biografías noveladas", one on the caudillo Eloy Alfaro, and the other on the colonial painter, Miguel de Santiago; a complete history of Ecuador; a critical treatment of Thomas Mann; and many essays on art, painting, and politics. His novels have been translated to German, French, and Polish. One of them, Las Tres Ratas, was made into a film in Argentina.

Pareja's works are essentially urban, and show the

author's acquaintance with all social classes within that setting. Having worked for a living since he was thirteen, Pareja experienced life with its most elemental hardships and rewards. De la Cuadra points out "... que él había sido --un tanto-- niño fracasado. Que su infancia no fue completamente un alegre sueño. Que la puericia se le gastó en una apresurada gestión de hombre obligadamente laborioso ..."¹⁹

Pareja Diezcanseco's work has carried him throughout Europe and the Americas. While his artistic involvement and travel experience might be compared to Aguilera Malta's, Pareja's life style is not so hectic as his old friend's. Pareja gives wholehearted concentration to two principal things: his employment and literary art. Essentially, his days are taken up in work necessary to support his family, and off-hours are devoted to study and creation of literature. He has been aloof to direct socio-political involvement for many years. His sympathies tend mainly toward Socialism, however.

The youngest writer was not among the original members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", but has become firmly established in their literary family. Adalberto Ortiz was born in the coastal city of Esmeraldas on February 9, 1914, where he received his primary education. Later, he went to Quito where he studied at the Colegio Normal "Juan Montalvo",

from which he graduated as a profesor normalista in 1937. The other members of the group were already publishing novels while Ortiz was still in school. When he started teaching in Esmeraldas and in Guayaquil he began publishing. While in the latter city he became associated with the other writers.

Adalberto Ortiz is of a middle-class background like most of his companions, with one essential difference. He is from a mulatto family, and is the only writer whose work concentrates on the Blacks from the coastal province of Esmeraldas. He began his literary career with poetry and short stories, and continued working with both those genres as well as the novel. Ortiz is considered an important figure in Spanish American literature.²⁰ His fame is due not only to his merit as an artist, but also to that part of his work that deals with Blacks. He has been swept along with the contemporary vogue of "black studies".

Ortiz divides his creativity between literature and graphic art. His paintings have been exhibited in Ecuador's art museums, but outside his own country, he is most known through his literature.

Only two novels can be accredited to Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo (1943) and El Espejo y la Ventana (1967).²¹ Both

won immediate acclaim in Ecuador, and have been re-edited. However, he owes most of his literary recognition to Juyungo. It has been edited three times in Spanish and has been translated into nearly every important European language. It relates to Ortiz' own experiences in the hinterlands of his native Esmeraldas during his youth, insofar as the depiction of native types and atmosphere is concerned. Angel F. Rojas recognizes that "Estaban haciendo falta los relatos que se refieren al hombre y al paisaje de una zona litoral poco conocida literariamente: ... Esmeraldas, ardiente y húmeda, escasamente poblada y rica en reviviscencias negras ..."²²

Like most of his literary colleagues, Ortiz has travelled throughout Europe and the Americas. He has occupied diplomatic posts and has been invited by public and private organizations for literary discussions. Although he worked for a time as a journalist, much of his life has been involved in education, in both teaching and administrative capacities. While Ortiz has never been known as a political activist, his sympathies are decidedly socialistic.

Another writer adding impetus to the prose fiction from coastal Ecuador is Angel F. Rojas. Although Rojas is not from Guayaquil, but from Loja²³, he has spent nearly his entire adult life in the port city. While he is a

novelist in his own right (Banca, 1940; El Exodo de Yangana, 1949), his novels do not pertain to the coastal region. His contribution to the coastal fiction was more indirect. As Aguilera Malta has stated about "Rojitas" (as he is still called by his friends), "era nuestro crítico."²⁴

The writers would meet often and discuss literature from abroad and their own work until late at night.²⁵ Those discussion sessions tended to become quite heated, and the writers and their friends often criticized each other and themselves mercilessly. This atmosphere produced novels of similar substance. The novelists felt it their duty to bring the entire microcosm of coastal Ecuador into the eyes of the world. As affirmed by Aguilera Malta, "Queríamos proyectar el Ecuador al mundo."²⁶

It would be incorrect to assume that the coastal writers attempted to write about their country basing themselves solely on the meager literary precedents from nineteenth and early twentieth century Ecuador. They were influenced by previous and contemporary literary and intellectual movements from Europe, North America, the Soviet Union, and other parts of Spanish America.²⁷ The writers' idealism and messianic trait of envisioning their novels as guidelines to a brighter future are essentially Romantic notions from the past century. When they carefully describe Ecuador's coastal people with

attention to customs and traditions, they follow the footsteps of nineteenth century costumbristas and early twentieth century Regionalists. When these people are shown living in the most hideous social conditions, often with emphasis on psycho-sexual abnormalities, the influence of fin du siècle Naturalism is in evidence. When Marxist and Socialist solutions are suggested for these conditions, the authors show acquaintance with socio-economic idealists of the past century and idealization of the Russian Revolution.²⁰ When their subjects are presented as part of the "great human drama", they are following the pace set by the nineteenth century school of Realism.

However, the novel from Ecuador's coast does not de facto manifest itself as a follower of anything. Neither can it be considered a hodge-podge of earlier literary and intellectual elements. It is an artistic blending of ideas that went before it in order to adapt them to the interpretation of Ecuadorian life in narrative form. The writer's spirit of discussion and polemic served to define and solidify major artistic and social goals.

The novelists recognized from the beginning that they did not possess a great deal of experience with literary art. They attempted to learn what they could from foreign

artists and create fresh what did not already exist for them. After he had already been recognized as a novelist of merit, Demetrio Aguilera Malta made the following declaration:

"... estamos aprendiendo a escribir. ... estamos aprendiendo la técnica de nuestro oficio. ... empezamos a sentir la responsabilidad de una realización más permanente. Empieza a darnos miedo el llegar a constituir una esperanza guillotizada. Que el relato ecuatoriano sólo quede en obras de angustioso mensaje, de denuncia y de protesta, pero sin ninguna creación definitiva y maestra. Felizmente nos damos cuenta de ello y queremos superarnos."²⁹

Essentially, the future was a great deal more important than the past. The authors respected the past for what it could teach them, but they looked to the future with regard to artistic development and to literature's playing a role in social development.³⁰ They were interested as much in the interpretation of history as in influencing it.

While they were still adolescents, the First World War jolted their faith in Europe as the keeper of Western Civilization. When they were reaching manhood, the United States' economic depression destroyed their image of the North American country as the young giant of interminable wealth. Finally, the social and political rumblings throughout the world that were the preface to the next great war convinced them that intellectual and spiritual leadership from abroad was at best a questionable

proposition.³¹ Not content only to imitate foreign patterns of artistic approach and theme, the young writers wanted to forge their own art with subject matter that was native to them. Although they enjoyed relatively little notice within their own nation, and received greatest recognition from critics of literature³², they wanted to show their countrymen that Quito was not their only source of cultural expression. They wanted to show the world that their tropical homeland was worthy of its attention. It was an example of a society in need of correction and a place of beauty populated by worthy examples of humanity. They wanted to write novels that were not just social documents, but works of art.

NOTES
CHAPTER 1.

1. Albert S. Franklin, "Ecuador's Novelists at Work," Inter-American Quarterly, II., No. 4., p. 30.

2. Part of a speech made to the "Sociedad de Escritores y Artistas Independientes" in eulogy for José de la Cuadra, on February 27, 1941.

3. Demetrio Aguilera Malta, "José de la Cuadra: un intento de evocación," Letras del Ecuador, No. 101 (Marzo de 1955), p. 34.

4. Aguilera Malta, "José de la Cuadra," p. 30.

5. Anon., "Los Monos Enloquecidos," Letras del Ecuador, No. 69 (Julio de 1951), p. 6.

This article explains how Los Monos Enloquecidos was begun by José de la Cuadra in 1931. He had sent the first part to Spain for publication, when the Spanish Civil War interrupted further progress. The work then became misplaced until Joaquín Gallegos Lara found it in 1947, and announced that he intended to finish it. Then Gallegos Lara died, and the manuscript was again lost. In 1948 Gallegos Lara's mother found it, and the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana published the unfinished novel in 1951. Although incomplete, the novel is valid for this study.

6. Gallegos Lara was recognized as the most politically oriented member of the group. After his death, Gil Gilbert filled that position.

7. José de la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," in Obras Completas (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 811.

8. De la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," p. 812.

9. Alejandro Carrión, "A Joaquín Gallegos Lara," Letras del Ecuador, Nos. 28-29 (Nov.-Dic. de 1947), p. 12.

10. De la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," pp. 811-12.

11. Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, "Carta a Joaquín," Letras del Ecuador, No. 109 (Julio-Dic. de 1957), p. 36.

12. De la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," p. 808.

13. Benjamín Carrión, "La Vuelta de Demetrio," Letras del Ecuador, No. 85 (Julio-Agosto de 1953), p. 1.

Also, de la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," pp. 804-05.

14. Only Don Goyo, La Isla Virgen, and Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes shall be considered in this study. Canal Zone does not pertain to Ecuador, and the historical novels correspond neither in subject matter nor in chronology to the discussion.

15. De la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," pp. 799-800.

16. Lilo Linke, "The People's Chronicler," Américas, Vol. 8, No. 11 (Nov. 1956), p. 8.

17. Quién es Quién en Venezuela, Panamá, Ecuador, Colombia (Bogotá: Oliverio Perry y Cia., 1952), p. 475.

18. Pareja's first three novels, La Casa de los Locos (1929), La Señorita Ecuador (1930), and Río Arriba (1931) have been long out of print and only appeared in limited editions. The only importance the author gives them is that they served to let him practice writing novels. They shall not be considered. Works pertaining to this discussion are El Muelle (1933), La Beldaca (1935), Baldomera (1938), Don Balón de Baba (1939), Hombres Sin Tiempo (1941), and Las Tres Ratas (1944). La Advertencia (1956), El Aire y los Recuerdos (1958), Los Poderes Omnímodos (1964) and Las Pequeñas Estaturas (1970), will be considered in the final chapter of this study.

19. De la Cuadra, "12 Siluetas," p. 817.

20. Günter W. Lorenz, Dialog mit Lateinamerika (Tübingen: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1970), p. 463.

Lorenz declares that: "Heute gilt Ortiz allgemein als der neben dem Cubaner Guillén bedeutendste Repräsentant der 'Negritud' in Hispanoamerika."

21. Juyungo is the novel to be considered in the major part of this discussion. El Espejo y la Ventana, however, will be considered in the final chapter.

22. Angel F. Rojas, La Novela Ecuatoriana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1948), p. 213.

23. Loja is an Andean city near the Peruvian border.

It is noted for the purity of the Spanish spoken by its inhabitants.

24. Personal interview of July 16, 1970, in Guayaquil.

25. Lilo Linke, "The People's Chronicler," p. 8.

26. Personal interview of July 17, 1970, in Guayaquil.

27. Kessel Schwartz, "Some Aspects of the Contemporary Novel of Ecuador," Hispania, XXXVIII., pp. 294-95.

Schwartz notes that: "The young novelists admired Manuel González Prada as an anti-catholic defender of the Indian, saw a reflection of Ecuadorian exploitation in José Eustasio Rivera's work, and were impressed by Alcides Arguedas and Mariano Azuela for their treatment of the Indian and revolt. José Vasconcelos stimulated the new novelists when he visited Ecuador in 1929." Other important influences cited by Schwartz include the writings defending the Indian by José Carlos Mariátegui, as well as the work of the North Americans Upton Sinclair and Frank Norris and the Frenchmen Emile Zola and Henri Barbusse.

In addition to the writers cited by Schwartz, the writers themselves most often mention the North Americans Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, and John Dos Passos and the Europeans Romain Rolland, Erich Maria Remarque, and Thomas Mann as having influenced them.

One should point out, however, that none of these influences were so active that the writers attempted to imitate them directly in technique or theme, but did borrow from them insofar as they could apply their approach to the material from coastal Ecuador. The combined sources all added up to one main theme for the writers: the affirmation of using literature as an effective vehicle for treating social phenomena.

28. Kessel Schwartz, "Russian Literature in Contemporary Ecuadorian Fiction," Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly, III., p. 141.

Schwartz notes here that Marxist and socialist ideals from the last century were influential on the young Ecuadorian writers and affirms that in their work: "Sooner or later, social revolution, union of the workers of the world, or Russian Communism are offered as the visions of a new future." However, Schwartz also observes that: "The social novel of the Soviet Union, involving communist propaganda and the struggle of the proletariat, did not influence them during their formative period or early

writings. Three Russian novelists of a much earlier literary period influenced the Ecuadorians: Dostoevski, Gorki, and Andreyev."

The writers were influenced by the socio-political ideals of the past century and the broad scope of society afforded in the Russian novels while they were still young enough to apply what might be termed their own "raw idealism" to their native subject matter. They were able to do this before they were old enough to see those ideals transformed into dogmatic patterns of literary approach. This may be one of the reasons why even from the beginning these writers attempted to balance art with thesis in their novels.

29. Orlando Cabrera Layva, "Entrevista a Demetrio Aguilera Malta," Letras del Ecuador, No. 33, p. 14. Reprint from "Zig-Zag," Santiago de Chile.

30. Jean-Paul Sartre, What is Literature? (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 153. Translated by Bernard Frechtman.

Sartre's published opinion of 1947, states that the function of the prose writer is to become involved (engagé) in his society and do what he can for its people. It is antedated by a decade and a half by the literary approach of the Ecuadorian writers of the thirties. Sartre declares that the writer "must write for a public which has the freedom of changing everything; which means, besides suppression of classes, abolition of all dictatorship, constant renewal of frameworks, and the continuous overthrowing of order once it tends to congeal." However, while the Ecuadorian writers did hope to be influential in bringing about social change, they would not have agreed with Sartre that "literature is ... the subjectivity of a society in permanent revolution." While they were unhappy with the social system in their country, they did not wish to overthrow all systems. They merely sought a better and more just system.

31. Manuel Pedro González, "Trends in Hispanic American Literature," Books Abroad, XVII. (1943), p. 17.

Writing about Spanish American literature in general, González notes that:

"The World War ... proved to be a bitter disappointment for the man of letters who for years had looked to European culture for inspiration and guidance. ... Disillusioned and bewildered, the Spanish American writers lost their faith in Europe. ... they began to realize the destiny

of the American continent and to consider it as something **apart** and different from that of Europe. ...

The economic disruption and social ferment which the war left in its wake were keenly felt all through Latin America. Centuries of misery and exploitation of the masses ... had thoroughly prepared the people of Hispanic America to welcome new ideals of social justice and **reveolution.**"

32. Emilio Uzcátegui, "Novelas y Novelistas del Ecuador," *Américas*, Vol. XVI, no. 6 (June, 1964), p. 30.

CHAPTER II.

LOS QUE SE VAN THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

In the Ecuadorian highlands the first major novel to appear during the thirties was Jorge Icaza's Huasipungo (1934). A few years earlier on the coast, however, Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Enrique Gil Gilbert, and Joaquín Gallegos Lara published Los que se van. (1930).¹ This collection of short stories initiated the style and emphasis of modern Ecuadorian prose fiction.

By 1930 the trend toward the new expression of local themes in the Spanish American novel had begun in other countries. Mariano Azuela's Los de Abajo appeared from Mexico in 1916. By 1924 Argentina's Benito Lynch published El Inglés de los Gúesos and in 1926 Ricardo Güiraldes' Don Segundo Sombra appeared. The Colombian José Eustasio Rivera's La Vorágine was published in 1924. Rómulo Gallegos' Donña Barbara came from Venezuela in 1929. Ecuador, however, had not yet joined the movement. As the first example of contemporary prose fiction from that country, Los que se van attracted international attention.² In subject matter and artistic approach it set precedents for the novels that were to come from the coast. Its authors formed the nucleus of the group that would write those novels.

While Los que se van is a milestone in Ecuadorian prose fiction, it is not unique in Spanish America for its literary approach. Luis Leal includes it in his study under the general heading of "El Cuento Social", about which he makes the following evaluation:

"Para los autores de cuentos sociales el estilo, la estructura y otros problemas relacionados a la técnica no constituyen una preocupación primordial. Su interés lo encontramos en la expresión del contenido, que es siempre sacado de la realidad. A ello debido, muchos de estos cuentos no llegan a ser buenos ejemplos del género, ya que el autor se interesa en presentar una experiencia vital, muchas veces sin haber llegado a dominar la forma. Sin embargo, algunos cuentistas de esta escuela son excelentes narradores, y entonces sus obras tienen un doble valor: el social y el estético."³

Los que se van fits into that category of "doble valor". Although literature of this period in Ecuador is most renowned for its social emphasis, in this book treatment of social phenomena is only present, not prevalent. The authors wish to tell good stories, and they attempt to tell them well.

However, were it not for the writers' names appearing under the stories' titles⁴, the reader would hardly be aware that the volume was written by three different men. There is no appreciable stylistic difference between them.⁵

All the stories center on the lower class inhabitant of the tropical coast. Attention is focused on him mainly through three channels: his relationships to his environ-

ment, as both a physical and a "spiritual" entity⁶; to his fellows, or other members of his social group; and to the whole of society. The predominant force throughout the stories is a sympathetic and intense treatment of the people in the tropical coast and the general milieu of the region. Ostensibly, the book is an attempt to capture the flavor of a virile way of life that is becoming obliterated by modern society. The point is illustrated in the following poem by Joaquín Gallegos Lara, which precedes the stories:

"Porque se va el montuvio. Los hombres ya no son los mismos. Ha cambiado el viejo corazón de la raza morena enemiga del blanco.

La victrola en el monte apaga el amorfino.
Tal un aguaje largo los arrastra el destino,
Los montuvios se van p'abajo der barranco."⁷

The authors think the montuvio is in danger of disappearing as a distinct ethnic type, and attempt to preserve him in prose. While they do not declare it in the above poem, they are similarly motivated when they write about the cholo and the Black. Consequently, the volume impresses most through its attention to telluric elements.

In order to accomplish their purpose artistically, the writers avoid long descriptive passages. They rely on short and direct statements that suggest more than describe, and carefully chosen dialogue that is simple

and also direct. Ecuador's coastal man is not a sophisticated individual. His thoughts correspond to his actions: direct, spontaneous, and often violent. The language used to describe him corresponds to his psychology.⁸

Most of the characters are masculine. They are nearly primitive, superstitious and with a highly personal relationship with their environment. Their emotions are intense and volatile. They are poor but hard-working. Finally, they are intelligent and introspective, with a strong, natural sense of justice.

The settings for the stories are rural. The reader meets the characters in the same situations in which one would meet the real people they represent, usually at work along the river, near the seashore, or in the forest; in the cantina; in their homes; or on their way to or from one of these activities or places. However, in the costumbrista sense what they do or where they do it is not important. The main issue is their portrayal as they cope with the environment, their fellows, or society at large.

The characters reflect the generations of confluence of races and cultures, and hybrid combinations of traditions that developed during the four centuries since the Spanish conquest. The part of them that is Indian expresses itself in folk-beliefs and an intimate relationship with

nature. The part that is African adds yet other beliefs and superstitions and expands the sense of harmony with Nature. Finally, the Hispanic veneer shows in religious beliefs that are adhered to with fervor more pagan than Christian.

Their relationship with animals is more one of "equals" than "master-pet". They think of themselves as parts of Nature, rather than something apart from and superior to it. When in Joaquín Gallegos Lara's "El Guaraguao" the vulture defends the body of the man who had raised him from a chick he does so as much out of friendship as gratitude. As the man lays dying and awakens to find the vulture perched on his chest he murmurs: "No... me comas... un... hijo no... muese... ar padre..."⁹, which indicates his feeling of closeness with the animal.

At times the relationship with Nature becomes intertwined with elements of superstition, as in Aguilera Malta's "El oholo del tiburón."¹⁰ An old man is obsessed by a crime he committed years before, when he murdered a rival in the water, letting people think a shark had done the killing. His obsession is so great that he himself believes the lie. However, he thinks he still must bear the guilt and punishment for the crime. Finally he disappears into the sea to be killed by a shark.¹¹ He feels his punishment must come from a source of Nature.

However, justice is usually rendered by other characters. Even when from their own socio-ethnic group, judgments are often quick, harsh, based on ignorance, and erroneous. Such is the case in Enrique Gil Gilbert's "El Malo", where the author shows how they live surrounded by superstition. Because a small boy had not been baptized while still a baby the local populace refers to him with disdain as "El Moro" or "El Malo". The stature of the boy's evil is amplified by his neighbors' imaginations and the pronouncements of the local curandera until it is believed that he is the devil's offspring or the devil himself. One day while caring for his baby brother his father's machete accidentally falls from the wall, killing the infant. The local people think the misfortune was brought about by the boy's supposed evil:

"Leopoldo llorando imploraba:
 --¡Si yo no juí! Jué er diablo.
 --¡Er diablo eres vos!
 --¡Yo soy **Leopordo!**
 --Tu taita ej er diablo, no don Juan.
 --Mentira--gritó la madre ofendida.
 Y la vieja Victoria, bruja y curandera,
 arguyó con su voz cascada:
 --¡Nuasido otro quer Leopordo, porque é er ej
 er malo. Y naiden más quer tiene que haber sido."¹³

Here is social determinism that has nothing to do with "exploiting landholders" or the "evils of capitalism". Superstition is a part of the characters' life from infancy,

and is coupled to a blind obedience of local traditions. When their volatile nature and intelligence are considered with their ignorance and superstition the reader begins to understand their complexity.

Most stories deal with the characters' relationship with their fellows or the environment. The authors are more interested in exposing the intrinsic characteristics of montuvios, cholos, and Blacks than they are in categorizing them as "exploited masses" and decrying their fate.

The characters relate to each other primarily through themes of love. While the story lines involve standard topics of unrequited love, infidelity, jealousy, lust, and revenge, the manner in which they react to these emotive catalysts, and the way the authors present their reactions is of interest.

They often use violent and dramatic means of giving vent to emotion. The most emphatic example borders on the Bizarre, in Aguilera Malta's "El cholo que se castró". A cholo with a long record of manly deeds and conquests in love meets "La Peralta", a mannish chola who is not frightened into yielding to his wishes. Instead, she proposes they fight with machetes. If he beats her, she promises to let him make love to her. The cholo wins the battle, but finds himself impotent. Unable to understand the psychological cause of his impotency,

he commits a final violent act;

"Un cholo en la playa. Y un machete en la mano del cholo...

De pronto hay un relámpago. Hilos rojos tejen enredaderas de angustia en el inmenso vientre de la orilla...

El cholo corre con su trofeo inútil en la mano...

...
Hasta que vacila y cae...

...
La Peralta ha encontrado el cadáver mutilado ...
Y no comprende--ni podrá comprender nunca--la tragedia del pobre cholo que se castró."¹⁴

Accustomed to dealing with women who are submissive to him, "La Peralta's" fearlessness presents an obstacle he has never encountered. He does not contemplate his problem, but acts decisively.

The characters primitively violent expression of emotion does not imply lack of intelligence. "El cholo que se vengó", by Aguilera Malta, demonstrates their "native intelligence". It also shows their reaction to frustrated love is not always violent. This story consists of a man's monologue to the girl who had left him for his rival. As he explains:

"Sentí pena y coraje. Hubiera querido matarlo a ér. Pero después ví que lo mejor era vengarme; yo conocía a Andrés. Sabía que con ér sólo te esperaban er palo y la miseria. Así que ér sería mejor quien me vengaría...

...
Tei hallao cambiada ¿sabés vos? Estás fea; estás flaca; andás sucia. Ya no vales pa nada. ..."¹⁵
He has resorted to psychological, rather than physical

means of satisfying his desire for revenge. Though he may be primitive in many respects, some aspects of civilization have touched him.

One suspects the authors' motive in devoting so much of their book to love themes is to underscore their subject's basic human sensitivity. If the reader becomes acquainted with individual representatives of coastal society who can love, hate, and be hurt psychologically, he is able to identify with and understand them. In this way he tends to think of himself in coastal society more as a participant than an observer.

Cholos, montuvios, and Blacks who kill themselves or each other, motivated by jealousy, hate, vengeance, or crime, are in essence tragic characters. The instances are important for the dimensions of human sensitivity and the depth of psychology they portray. The reader knows the characters' most intimate thoughts. He understands that violent acts are a natural part of their world. When the principal character in Gallegos Lara's "Er Sí, Ella No" learns that one of his friends has been having an affair with his wife, he confronts him directly: "--Baja der caballo! Quiero peliar con vos, Jalarme al puñete, ar machete, quiero bebeste la sangre!"¹⁶ After fighting with and killing the man, he returns home, where he makes love to his unfaithful wife;

"le habló él sordamente. Estando aún enlazadas sus carnes desnudas.

Oye Chabela... Voj eres una puta. Pior quiuna perra. Pero te quiero, te quiero muchísimo. Por vos mei esgraciao. Por vos hei matao a Juan... Ar que me robaba esto...

...--la nerviosa ^{...}mano le apretaba entre las piernas ..."¹⁷

The violence and rough eroticism are beautiful, comparable to the way one wild beast might fight another to defend its territory, or take a mate by force then battle all other creatures to protect his conquest. Within their own ambiance, cholo, montuvio, or Black characters are relatively free to fulfill the needs of their spirit.

In the context of society at large,¹⁸ however, the characters lose much of their primitive and natural beauty. They become like animals in cages, alive, but impotent. They do not understand the confines, the rules and the regulations, of the more "sophisticated" world. Like the bars of the cage, society's laws encircle them, hold them back, work to break their spirit. If they leap against them, they are repelled, hurt and bloodied. If they manage to bend or break the bars and escape, their freedom is only momentary, for they are hunted down, to be confined even more severely or perhaps killed. Their natural sense of justice tells them the social system is not suited to them, that it is wrong, yet they are powerless to correct its injustices. In Gil Gilbert's "Por Guardar

el Secreto" the man who kills his patrón because he finds him making love to his mother is sentenced to prison.

However, as the author explains: "Pero el Juez no había visto lo que él vió. Vió a su madre i a don Pablo... Ella tendida sobre la cama... I él... El."¹⁹

Similarly, in the same author's "Montaña Adentro", a man pursued for killing the white man who abused his "negra" declares: "Yo hei matao ... ;Pero estoi contento! ;No! No soi asesino... Hei matao por que a él le llegó la hora. ;Nada más!... ;Yo soi un desgraciao!"²⁰ The characters suffer whenever they leave their sub-culture, even if to correct injustice.

When correction of injustice does not lead to bloodshed, the poor cholo, montuvio, or Black still fares badly against the whole of society. In Aguilera Malta's "El Cholo que Odió la Plata", an old cholo commits a serious crime by setting fire to the possessions of a local wealthy man. Although by society's standards his act was criminal, it was based on his intuitive sense of justice. The wealthy man had been his friend since boyhood, but by accumulating wealth through the years he had become "desgraciado"²¹. What society viewed as arson the old cholo saw as an attempt to save his friend from further decay, by making him poor again. As the author explains, "... cuando en Guayaquil--ante un poco

de gente que le hablaba de cosas que no entendía--le pidieron que explicara balbuceó: --La plata es gracia a los hombres..."²² Since he merely followed his instincts, he has no comprehension of why his act should be questioned.

A similar example of the poor coastal inhabitant's perplexity at the rendering of justice in society at large is found in Joaquín Gallegos Lara's "Era la mamá". Here, a Black is hunted down, beaten and killed by the policía rural because of a minor altercation with the captain of the force. The dead man's family knows the police should not be exempt from punishment for the killing, but they are powerless. Their instinctive sense of justice does not fail them, but the benefit of "conventional" justice is out of their grasp.²³ The characters are not integral parts of society. They pay allegiance to its laws and suffer its injustices, but receive no benefit from it.

When confronted with an aspect of society that is mechanical, they are completely bewildered. When the cholos of Gil Gilbert's "Tren" build the railroad for the foreigners and local entrepreneurs, they are fascinated and excited by the new addition to their landscape. However, when on its first day of operation the train kills a small they are shocked and confused.²⁴ They can kill an abusive

patrón, or fight to the death against the rurales, but they have little hope against a locomotive. When modern civilization invades their sub-culture, they begin to become incorporated into society at large. Within this perspective, they are social misfits.

The authors' artistic attitude toward the coast and its inhabitants is quite different than that of earlier works, such as Martínez' A la Costa, which had essentially a costumbrista approach. Detailed descriptions of local dress, regional music, geography, plants, and animals are absent in Los que se van. The predominant emphasis is on the characters. What they wear, what they do, or where they do it is never as important as why they do it.

In some costumbrista works, a scene of a native girl washing clothes might include a description of her "native costume". However, in Los que se van the clothes are incidental to the human being, as in the following example from Gallegos Lara's "El Tabacazo":

"Distraída acabó de lavar y quiso bañarse.
Con una bata sucia por todo traje, habiéndose
desvestido sin miedo, ... entró al estero frío.
La bata se le pegó al cuerpo. Era casi
transparente. ..."²⁵

In earlier works authors sometimes interpolated the lyrics of regional songs to portray "local color". In the present work a song is important primarily for the emotions it arouses in the people who sing it, hear it, or even think

of it. The following illustration is again from Gallegos Lara's "El Tabacazo". It is late at night, and the chichería²⁶ is just closing:

"Ya se habían ido los últimos borrachos.
En la calle del pueblo que cerraba los ojos de
sombra se apagó un amorfino. Un amorfino de
un dejo hondo i largo. Un amorfino aguardentoso.
Mañana me voi pa Quito
a comprar paper sellao
para escribisle una cartita
a la hembrita que mi ha orvidao...
No eran nada las palabras. Lo que en las almas
sacudía cosas viejas era esa voz estremecida de
temblores de puro que se arrastraba con ganas
de llorar."²⁷

In previous works, a river was usually the picturesque setting along which the native types lived and from which they earned a livelihood. Here, however, a river's importance might be as a means of travel and communication. In Gil Gilbert's "Juan del diablo" it is the means by which montuvio reaches the woman he intends to murder. The river seems to harmonize with the man's frame of mind:

"... El río --en su corriente-- era una
culebra enorme que avanzaba.
Chis-chas, chis-chas...
El secreteo de la canoa violando el agua.
Lo único que hace bulla en la noche. I el
salto de algún pescado. O el rayado veloz de
un tiburón pequeño."²⁸

While in costumbrista works authors often described trees, plants, and animals for their uniqueness to the locale, in Los que se van a forest might be a setting for a love scene, or a fight. In Gallegos Lara's "Er sí, ella

no" the author inserts only a minimal description of the setting before the beginning of a fight: "La tarde había cerrado. Las masas negras de la huerta envolvían todos lados. La vuelta de la manga solitaria era propicia."²⁹ Sometimes the flora and fauna have special folkloric significance. In the same author's "La salvaje" a cholo believes a beautiful woman lives in the mangrove swamp. His obsession drives him mad. He plunges into the swamp, where the very mangles become his lover:

"Se notó echado de espaldas. Apoyados los riñones en una raíz de higuerón.

Ese vientre en movimiento.

I la sensación chupante i ruda del centro de esos muslos que lo envolvían con avideces de culebra. I vino el mareo de amor.

Pero entre esas caricias cada instante más multiplicadas i feroces que en el extremo vibrátil de su ser le dolfan i las gozaba, ¿qué sentía?

¡Ah! ¿Porqué?

Los brazos amantes le apretaban el cuello. Se ahogaba."³⁰

The authors never portray the coastal man as "quaint" or "picturesque". They are not interested simply in observing him. Through their portraits of the more dramatic aspects of his existence, they live his life with him. They tell his stories as he himself might tell them. In every case they attempt to portray him from the perspective of his peers.

In order to create the illusion that the characters are telling their own stories, the authors use colloquial

language and accentuate action. In both dialogue and description, they use the same vocabulary and syntax that one would hear being used by the real people the characters represent. There is a feeling of rhythm and movement in the narrative. The reader becomes pulled into the stories, much as would be the case if he were watching a play.

In the final scene of Enrique Gil Gilbert's "La blanca de los ojos color de luna", for example, the author portrays an intense drama taking place within the mind of a cholo infatuated with a rich white girl. Capable of articulating neither his love for her nor his frustration over the hopelessness of that love, in desperation the cholo seizes a knife and tears out his eyes. His final statement is a simple "Ya vido..., me saqué los ojos pa no verla más."³¹ A long soliloquy-like statement would be inappropriate. The emphasis is on action. The sense of action is heightened by the avoidance of lengthy description, the employment of a minimum of adjectives, and the break in generally accepted norms of structure: "Sobre la cara una baba. Una baba sanguinolenta que le salía de los ojos. Un líquido viscoso brotando a torrentes. De adonde habían estado los ojos."³² In its brevity and liberties with structure, this descriptive passage is similar to what

one might expect in dialogue. It is as though one of the character's friends were telling the story.

Dialogue is rarely used for "small talk". In most instances, every word is charged with emotion. The conveyance of human drama between the characters is accomplished as much by their words as their actions. In Gil Gilbert's "Juan del diablo" a man insults his girlfriend's mother for dousing him with sewage. The result is a confrontation between him and the girl's brother:

"La ducha de orines iba a caer otra vez,
sobre él.
--Arza, la gran flauta... Vieja bruta paría
a brincos.
Teodoro, hermano de Eudosia --valiente y
machetero-- se imaginó insultado. ...
--Oíte... ¿A quién insurtás vos?
--A tu mamá i a vos también.
Ya estaba abajo. Casi junto a él.
Sus ojos blancos resaltaban tal que garzas
en la poza de la cara.
--¿Querés jalarte ar jierro?
--A naiden l'hei tenío miedo...
--Entonce... Guarda allá...
El poncho casi no envolvió al brazo. La noche
oyó cantar, gemir, llorar, gritar a los machetes."33

These characters waste little time in debate. Their sentences are as quick and intense as their machete blows.

In matters of love as well as "war", the sentences contain very few words. Every word has explosive impact. Witness the following illustration from Gallegos Lara's "Al subir el aguaje":

--Te quiero, Zoila, te quiero...
 --¿Vos? Vos no eres hombre pami... Yo me
 río e vos...
 La voz de Cuchucho tomó vibraciones duras i
 dolorosas:
 --Te quiero i nuai más...
 --I yo me río e vos... ¿Nuentiendes?"³⁴

The cholo's direct, simple declaration of his love, and the woman's equally simple and direct rejection of it, are in keeping with the nature of the people the characters represent. While the characters may be inarticulate they are not insensitive. Only a thin layer of words covers their emotions.

In Demetrio Aguilera Malta's "El cholo de la Atacosa" dialogue is used to show how the unhappy relationship between a cholo and his unfaithful lover drives him to suicide:

" --So... perra... Sé que te revorcás con todo er mundo. Sé que no valés pa que te quiera naide. ¡Más que perra! Quédate con tus carnes que queman. Me largo pa no vorver más...

--¿I qué? ¿Cres vos que me hacés fiero? Si así es mejor. Si así debiéramo ser toditas las mujeres... Lárgate pues... Nunca me ha hecho farta naide."³⁵

The cholo expresses in an uncomplicated way displeasure over his lover's infidelity, and his longing for her. When the chola makes light of his threat to leave her, the author explains: "Se dijera que el viento lo pateaba. ... I como estaba al agua tan cerca... Que saltó de la borde i se tiró al mar... Tar que canción..."³⁶

The stories are told consistently with vocabulary and syntax used by poor cholos and montuvios.

The artistic technique in Los que se van impresses for its sense of natural easiness. The authors never abuse the simile or the metaphor. They use expressions that might be within the capacity of the coastal man, such as the "carnes que queman" or the "viento que pateaa" of the above examples. A woman pleased with her boyfriend's lovemaking says: "Paece que me baieras como a un molinillo."³⁷ After a man rips out his eyes the author speaks of: "... la sangre saliendo i desbordándose como una catarata."³⁸ The blade of the machete that killed a man "... se bañó desnuda en el río de la noche roja de la sangre."³⁹ With the coming of darkness "El día se estrangulaba en la maraña verdinegra de los mangles."⁴⁰ While it is unlikely one would hear cholos or montuvios using metaphors like these, the expressions are in keeping with the character, or the spirit, of the tropical coast and its inhabitants. The vocabulary refers to native material. In any case, similes and metaphors are used sparingly and congruously.

The authors of Los que se van are more interested in telling the world about the human beings who populate their native region than in denunciation of the social system. They do not campaign expressly for political or

social ideology. The reader knows the social situation in coastal Ecuador is unpleasant for the poor, but he knows it through suggestion rather than proclamation. The authors **employ** a low-key form of "denuncia y protesta". Rather than great verbal murals of the suffering "hombre-masa", they make small but powerful sketches from the lives of individual people. One sympathizes with a Juan, or a Guayamabe, rather than a formless and faceless social class.

Los que se van must be considered a landmark for the narrative from coastal Ecuador. The socio-ethnic types will be the basis for the characters in the novels that will be written later by these authors and their contemporaries as the "Grupo de Guayaquil". The artistic technique will be the point of departure for more ambitious works. As is the case in this book, the writers will never ignore art for thesis. Moreover, a "team-effort" approach to their material will continue as long as the writers function as a group, although the novelists' individual artistic techniques will vary. As they did later when they became the "Grupo de Guayaquil", the authors of Los que se van considered their work a unified effort with a single purpose:

"Este libro no es un haz de egoísmos. Tiene tres autores; no tiene tres partes. Es una sola cosa.

Pretende que unida sea la obra como fue unido el ensueño. que la creó. Ha nacido de la marcha fraterna de nuestros tres espíritus. Nada más."⁴¹

NOTES
CHAPTER II.

1. Other than those in Los que se van, no other short stories shall be discussed, as the main concern is with the novel. Los que se van justifies discussion owing to its position as the trendsetter for the narrative from Ecuador's coast.

2. Benjamín Carrión, El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), pp. 85-87. Carrión states that when he first came into contact with Los que se van he was in Paris. Literary discussions centered on authors and works from other parts of Latin America. After reading this collection of short stories, however, he declares that:

"Por fin, me dije, entusiasmado. Por fin podré también yo ... hablar de la nueva literatura de mi Ecuador ... hablar de esta renacida esperanza sobre el mensaje espiritual, hablar de la vocación de la cultura de mi pequeña tierra.

Also:

Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, "De Literatura Ecuatoriana Contemporánea," Revista Nacional de Cultura, XVIII., CXVI., p. 66.

Pareja says of Los que se van that "La crítica continental se ocupó de él. Luis Alberto Sánchez le puso atención y de allí habló de la literatura feñsta. Benjamín Carrión se puso a mover campanas de júbilo, porque, por fin, se encontraba en nuestra literatura un paiseje, un ámbito certero, hombre y geografía juntos. ... Resultaba increíble ... que autores tan jóvenes pudiesen con técnica tan difícil y apretada como la del cuento. ...

... después del cansancio de una literatura de idealizaciones horras ... una presentación del dolor humano hecho con tanta reciedumbre, conmovió a los mejores espíritus. ...

Se trataba ... de la primera presencia del dolor humano y de una geografía que nos rozaba las uñas todos los días; de un batallar entre el carácter y la naturaleza, entre lo primario y los sentimientos de rechazo a terribles condiciones de vida."

3. Luis Leal, Historia del Cuento Hispanoamericano (México: Ediciones de Andrea, 1966), p. 99.

4. Each writer has eight stories in Los que se van. Enrique Gil Gilbert wrote: "El malo", "Por guardar el secreto", "La blanca de los ojos color de luna", "¡Lo que son las cosas!", "Juan der Diablo", "Montaña adentro", "El tren", and "¡Mardecido 'Llanto'!". Joaquín Gallegos Lara contributed "El guaraguao", "Er sí, ello no", "¡Era la mamá!", "Cuando parió la zamba", "El tabacazo", "Los madereros", "Al subir el aguaje", and "La salvaje". Demetrio Aguilera Malta added: "El cholo que odió la plata", "El cholo de la Atacosa", "El cholo del cuerito a venao", "El cholo del tibrón", "El cholo que se vengó", "El cholo que se fue pa Guayaquil", "El cholo de las pata e mulas", and "El cholo que se castro".

5. There is a slight tendency on the part of Aguilera Malta to rely on dialogue in his stories more than do his colleagues. However, the manner in which dialogue is used, with the orthography, vocabulary, and structure approximating the speech of the coastal people, is the same for all the writers. One has the impression that the three might have edited each other's stories to insure their stylistic similarity.

Even the themes of the stories are similar. Again, it is Aguilera Malta who shows a minor deviation, in that his stories deal exclusively with the cholo. The other two authors divide their attention fairly equally between the socio-ethnic types.

6. The "spiritual" environment refers to the religious elements, folk-beliefs, superstitions, etc. that surround the coastal man.

7. Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Los que se van (Guayaquil: Editorial "Claridad", 1970), p. 9.

8. Giuseppe Bellini, La Narrativa de Miguel Angel Asturias (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1969), pp. 11-12.

Bellini quotes Asturias from the unedited text of a series of lectures he gave at Italian universities in 1963. Asturias' attitude toward the correlation between the language and the subject matter in the Spanish American novel supports the approach used by the authors of Los que se van, and subsequently by the "Grupo de Guayaquil".

Asturias says: "Cada novela nuestra es ... una hazaña verbal. ... Palabras. ... Pero, ¿usarlas cómo? ¿De acuerdo con qué leyes? ¿Con qué reglas? Generalmente no obedecen a ninguna. Han sido puestas como la pulsación de mundos que se están formando. ... En la aventura de nuestro lenguaje lo primero que debe rastrearse es la

onomatopeya. ;Cuántos ecos compuestos o descompuestos de nuestro paisaje, de nuestra naturaleza, hay en vocablos, en nuestras frases."

9. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 24.

10. "Tibrón" is a mispronunciation of "tiburón."

11. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 74.

12. When the child is referred to as "El Malo" or "El Moro", the implication is that he is pagan, or "moorish", because he has not been baptized into Christianity. By extension, he is therefore evil.

13. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 18.

14. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 176.

15. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 112.

16. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 34.

17. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 37.

18. Demetrio Aguilera Malta's "El cholo que odió la plata", Joaquín Gallegos Lara's "Era la mamá", and Gil Gilbert's "Por guardar el secreto", "Montaña adentro", and "El tren" are the only stories whose main theme is the coastal man's relationship with the whole of society.

19. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 49.

20. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 133.

21. In Ecuador, the term "Desgraciado" is often used to mean "to have committed a crime". Similarly, "desgraciarse" means "to commit a crime".

22. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 30.

23. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 69.

There is a note of the macabre in this story. The police come unknowingly to the dead man's house to spend the night, where the captain makes love to the victim's sister. In the morning, after the police have left, the family discovers the body in their pigpen, partially devoured by their hog:

"Fue un grito corto el de Petita:

--¡Ay mamá! Si es Ramulfo; mi niño...

La vieja no dijo nada. Su cara negra --arrugada como el tronco leñoso de un níspero-- se hizo ceniza, ceniza.

A Petita le dolían los besos del rural --los besos de la noche oscura-- como si hubieran sido bofetadas..."

The poor blacks here are completely helpless against the injustices done to them.

24. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 150.

25. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 103.

26. "Chicha" is a popular fermented beverage, usually made from maize, that is often consumed by the poor in the Andean countries. A "chichería" is a type of local tavern that specializes in selling "chicha".

27. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 101.

28. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 48.

29. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 35.

30. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 182.

31. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 62.

32. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 62.

33. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, pp. 94-95.

34. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 142.

35. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 43.

36. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 43.

37. Aguilera Malta, Los que se van, p. 54.

38. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 62.

39. Gallegos Lara, Los que se van, p. 35.

40. Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, p. 58.

41. Aguilera Malta, Gallegos Lara, and Gil Gilbert, Los que se van, Preface, p. 7.

CHAPTER III

THE NOVELISTIC TREATMENT OF SOCIETY

Los que se van could be evaluated both stylistically and thematically as if it were written by one author instead of three. In the thirteen novels that treat coastal Ecuadorian society and were written by the "Grupo de Guayaquil" during the thirties and the forties, individual artistic styles have sufficient variance to warrant separate consideration. Nonetheless, the six authors show enough similarity in their interpretation of coastal society that one may evaluate that phase of their work by concentrating on the patterns and themes generally present throughout the novels.

While the novelists appreciate and conscientiously develop the aesthetic aspects of their literary art, they also feel that their work should have social importance.¹ They use their novels to point out both positive and negative aspects of society.² They follow three main channels. First, they present the human elements. They picture in detail the socio-ethnic types that form the lower classes, pay little attention to the middle class, scrutinize the upper class, and occasionally introduce the foreigner. Their concern with these social components is to show how they inter-relate and especially to champion

the lower class. The second channel is the portrayal of life and the environment in both rural and urban settings.³ They deal with the daily lives of the people in the physical and the "spiritual" environment that surrounds them. On the one hand they show the coastal man in his relationship with the physical environment and how much of that relationship is determined by or interacts with the social structure. On the other hand they show the elements of religion, superstition, and folk-beliefs that are also part of the coastal man's environment. They arouse the reader's sympathy for the characters by showing them living in difficult situations. At the same time interest in them is heightened by depiction of exotic aspects of their relationship with the environment. The authors' third channel is the use of historical references to prove or affirm their ideas regarding the nature and composition of society.

The Components of Society

The authors view the society as made up of the confluence of races and cultures. Probably reflecting Vasconcelos' influence, they see the amalgamation of races in the coastal man as something worthy of pride. As Joaquín Gallegos Lara expresses through one of his lower class characters: "... El era pobre y era americano, con el indio en los ojos y el mulato en los labios. ... ¡Qué orgullo ... haber nacido en Guayaquil! ;Pero qué fuerza saber que nuestro destino es

nuestro mundo ... !" ⁴ The majority of the characters are shown as products of racial fusion, even when they represent the upper levels of coastal society. In José de la Cuadra's Los Sanguimas the patriarchal latifundista montuvio, Nicasio Sangurima, is the offspring of a zamba and a white foreigner, and in his Los Monos Enloquecidos the powerful Hernández family of Guayaquil has in its background African, Indian and European components. ⁵ Class differences are more important than racial distinctions. Adalberto Ortiz' Juyungo is the only novel that makes race an issue. Even there the author stresses the predominance of class over racial differences when a secondary character tells the protagonist: "--Ten siempre presente estas palabras, amigo mío: más que la raza, la clase." ⁶ However, when the authors treat the various social classes, they emphasize distinctions between them.

The Lower Class:

A superficial description of characters who represent the lower classes would picture them as "worker heroes". They labor long and hard in the shops, the fields, the forests, and along the waterways. They struggle against the climate, the geography, and the social system. Although they never succeed in permanently removing or conquering these obstructions, they never stop trying. It would appear that they are not very different from lower class characters in other socially oriented

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novels from almost anywhere, such as the laborers in the California wheat fields of Frank Norris' The Octopus (1901), or the Chicago factory workers of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (1906).

However, these similarities are true only so far as they concern the characters' functional relationship with their environment and the rest of society. The manner in which they perform this function, the way that they live their own lives, gives them dimensions of singularity and authenticity. They value personal dignity above physical well-being. Whether they function as workers in the industries of Guayaquil, as fishermen or sailors, or as toilers in the fields and forests, what is at stake is their worth as individual human beings in combat with the vicissitudes of life. Although physical necessities often are important, these relatively concrete exigencies are not as important as the abstract ones. The lower class characters in the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" novels are unique because of the attention given to them that concentrates on their spirit. Because they are portrayed as complete human beings, they are genuine.

As was the case in Los que se van, the lower ranges of society are represented by the cholo, montuvio, and Black.⁷ The characteristics attributed to them are much the same, except they are silhouetted against a larger

backdrop. The environment is pictured in greater depth and against a broader panorama, sometimes including elements from outside the native region. Struggles against social injustice are put in global as well as national and local perspective.

The socio-ethnic types share several traits. They are presented as the true representatives of their environment, often as its personification. They have boldness and aggressiveness that may lead them to accept an adventuresome challenge regardless of the possible consequences. Their innate sense of justice is so strong it may drive them to direct action. In addition, the montuvio is independent and hard-working, the cholo and the Black are introspective, and the Black is somewhat at odds with himself over his relationship with his fellow countrymen, because of his color.

The first trait is demonstrated to some extent in all the novels. The urban cholos in Pareja Diezcanseco's and Gallegos Lara's novels, the rural ones in those of Aguilera Malta, the montuvios in de la Cuadra's and Gil Gilbert's work, and the Blacks in Ortiz' novel represent the ethnic elements other than European, or white, that form the majority of the coastal population. Moreover, they are the manpower that produces the goods, loads and unloads the ships, plants and harvests the crops, cuts the timber, catches the fish, and in general performs tasks necessary to the life of the area.

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Most importantly, there is intimacy between the characters and their work. Through their work, they are in physical contact with the environment; with the water, the forests, the land, and the raw materials in the factories. Sometimes the contact becomes spiritual as well as physical. Then lower class characters not only represent the environment, but personify it.

The most emphatic example is in Aguilera Malta's Don Goyo.⁸ The patriarch of a tribe of cholos, Don Goyo Quimí, has conversations with the mangle trees that grow in the swampy coastal lowlands as though he were one of them. When he dies he submerges himself in water where he becomes entangled with the trees in total and final synthesis with the environment;

"Estaba sumergido en el agua, totalmente desnudo, prendido de las ramas vigorosas del mangle caído. Tenía los ojos abiertos y la boca iluminada por una extraña risa, que imponía. Los músculos se habían esponjado. El cuerpo daba una impresión rotunda de fuerza y lozanía. Prieto, rugoso, formidable, parecía confundirse con la carne del colosal habitante de las islas."⁹

Don Goyo not only communicates with the flora of the coastal islands, the mangles, but he is the mangle, the symbol of his region. He is also an arch-type of his race. The cholos earn their livelihood by cutting and selling the timber, but in a spiritual sense they are part of the trees. In effect, when they cut and sell the mangles, they sacrifice themselves.

The symbolic fusion of man and the environment can be collective as well as individual. In Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan the montuvios labor in the rice fields, "De sus manos torcidas, duras como suelas, enrojecidas y lascadas de tanto sobar las espigas, comienza a brotar sangre."¹⁰ They mix their blood with the crop and the earth. They love the land in spite of the pain it may cause them. They suffer with it when there is a drought. They are happy with it when the crop is abundant. Like their predecessors in Los que se van, they are not separate from their natural environment, but an intrinsic part of it.

In Ortiz' Juyungo the black protagonist personifies the region around Esmeraldas, in spite of his psychological conflicts about his relationship with the white world¹¹, and his feelings of alienation from the local Indians.¹² As he struggles for a living in the tropical forest and comes into contact with the plants and animals, he is as much another native creature as he would be if he were a cholo or a montuvio.

Even in novels whose action takes place in the city the writers use characters from the lower classes, specifically the urban cholo, to personify the environment. In Pareja Diezcanseco's novels examples such as the dockworker of El Muelle, Juan Hidrovo, or Baldomera, who sells prepared food from a cart in the novel of the same name, represent

the city. Gallegos Lara's panaderos have a similar function in his work. They represent the majority of the city's population. What happens to them happens to the city.

There is harmony between the characters, the environment, and their work. Although they must at times combat the environment to survive, their battle is similar to that of wild creatures for which struggle is one of life's most natural characteristics. Work is the most constant manifestation of this struggle. Although they may be unhappy with the social system that controls and limits the benefits they receive from their labor, they never complain about having to work, or about the nature of the work.

The second characteristic common to the cholo, montuvio, and Black is boldness and aggressiveness in the face of life's challenges and conflicts. This trait is depicted as part of their everyday existence, from day to day confrontation with the environment to the occasional dramatic and potentially dangerous situation. It is more characteristic of the lower classes in the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" work than of those in novels from other parts of Ecuador. The Indians and mestizos in the novels from the Ecuadorian highlands are typically pictured as more passive and phlegmatic than their tropical counterparts. Their life consists of attempting to satisfy only basic physical and psychological needs, such as hunger and animal-like comfort in their mate's proximity.

While the highland mestizos, like the protagonist of Enrique Terán's El Cojo Navarrete (1940), are not cowardly, they do not seem to seek out challenges, as do the coastal socio-ethnic types. The Indians from the sierra only face danger when there is no alternative, as in the work of Jorge Icaza.¹³ In contrast, lower class characters in the coastal novels have many psychological as well as physical needs. These psychological needs usually relate to their concept of themselves as men, to their personal dignity. Just the comfort of his woman nearby is not enough for the coastal man. She must mean something to his self-pride. The cholos, montuvios, and Blacks often take an aggressive approach to satisfy their needs. A man for whom a certain woman has special meaning may first take her by force then defend her with his life, like the character in Don Goyo who is in love with one of the protagonist's daughters. Although making love to her may also satisfy a physical need, he conceives of her as something that belongs to him, that is part of him. The basic motivation for his action is the satisfaction of his psychological needs. Moreover, coastal characters seem ready to place themselves in the path of potential danger, whether it involves a confrontation with wild animals, other people, or social injustice. They remind one more of the Mexican revolutionaries in Mariano Azuela's Los de Abajo or the

Venezuelan plainsmen in Rómulo Gallegos' Doña Bárbara than the lower class characters in the highland novels.¹⁴

Individual examples of this aggressive approach to life are found in many of Pareja Diezcanseco's characters, like the protagonist of La Beldaca, who struggles to gain independence for himself. He strives to have a boat, and his own mater. His desire is demonstrated in the following segment:

"A Jesús Parrales le gusta su mar y su playa, su pesca y su chola ... Pero ... le ha nacido otro amor: el amor adoración por la balandra. ... Cuando pasea por la playa y está solo, se queda largos ratos inmóvil mirando las balandras ... Los domingos que va de pesca en su balsilla, reposa un tanto su anhelo. Y, sin embargo, entristecido, piensa: 'si fuera balandra...'"¹⁵

When he finally succeeds in getting a balandra, he satisfies his psychological need for self-dignity more than the physical need of improvement in living standard the boat will help him get.

Similarly, the black protagonist of Ortiz' novel fights to satisfy his needs in a virile and self-assertive way. At one point he has a fight with a white man who had insulted him, and another time he wins a fight with another Black who is known for his toughness. In other instances he avenges the death of his infant son and enters a Peruvian army camp naked and armed only with a machete.¹⁶ In every case, his personal dignity motivates his action.

This bold aggressiveness also can be collective.

Gallegos Lara's Las Cruces Sobre el Agua shows the aggressive spirit of the masses of urban cholos when they strike to demand better wages and working conditions:

"... Las huelgas habían comenzado reclamando mejores salarios y menos horas de trabajo. ...

Alfredo creía que lo urgente era combatir el hambre ya. Adivinaba que la fuerza del pueblo podía y tenía que aspirar a más."¹⁷

Although hunger is a physical need, it is only the final catalyst leading to the workers' strike. The first and most basic cause for dissatisfaction is the threat to their pride. When actions of international economics and employers lead to a worsening of working conditions or loss of work, their dignity is wounded before they become hungry. They do not merely accept what life offers them, but strive to wrest from it what they believe is rightfully theirs.

This boldness attributed to the socio-ethnic types is often displayed in dramatic scenes, as when the tough old mayordomo of Aguilera Malta's La Isla Virgen has a fight with a tigre:

"El tigre salta. Le cae al Mayordomo. Se confunden por un momento los cuerpos de los contendedores, agitándose. El tigre ya no brama. Se escucha su jadeo rabioso. Se le adivina haciendo desesperados esfuerzos por despedazar ese hombre de acero. ... La lucha es a muerte. Y el tigre y el hombre lo saben.

Se oye, de pronto, un bramido feroz, seguido de una risa demoníaca."¹⁸

Since the battle is fought out of other people's sight,

it is clear that the man is not motivated by a desire to impress onlookers. To him, confrontation with danger is part of being a man. He shows no hesitation or reluctance, but actually enjoys the challenge. Meeting and overcoming obstacles is necessary to his psychological well-being.

The readiness to undertake a dangerous task is an everyday matter for these characters. While the confrontation itself may not merit attention, the manner in which a challenge is confronted often does. The fact that the mayordomo battles a tigre is not so impressive as the bold style with which he does it. The young protagonist in Callegos Lara's novel conducts himself bravely in battle. When other soldiers express their admiration of him, they do so more because of his youth than his bravery:

"A los combates entró como sin hacer nada.
Nada conseguía hacerlo ni fruncir el ceño.
... Peleando, los negros lo veían ir cara a
cara hacia los fogonazos, entre los zumbidos
silbantes de las dum-dum de los pupos. El
capitán le palmeaba el hombro:
--Eres valiente, zambo, pa ser muchacho! ...
--¿Yo valiente? Qué va!
--Te hemos visto.
--Dice el dicho que no mata la bala sino el
destino."19

This individual soldier's fierce and almost fatalistic courage is not unique to him. It is characteristic of the entire troop. Boldness in the face of danger is as typical of lower class socio-ethnic types en masse as individually. The authors present scenes in which the people

collectively challenge formidable powers, which may range from violent natural phenomena to an armed force.²⁰ In scenes depicting a fire in Pareja Diezcanseco's La Beldaca, or an earthquake in Ortiz' Juyungo, the people endure suffering and privation. When they go against the rifles and machine guns of the military in Gallegos Lara's Las cruces sobre el agua and in Pareja Diezcanseco's Baldomera, many of them are killed or wounded. They are now cowed by natural disasters. Without bewailing their fate, they salvage what they can and go on living. Although they are not suicidal and do retreat, the superior firepower of the military succeeds in intimidating them only temporarily. Their revolt is suppressed, but they are not conquered; their spirit is not broken.

The writers never imply lower class characters are fearless. Cholos, montuvios, and Blacks in these novels are people with ordinary human strengths and weaknesses. Their readiness to confront aggressively the conflicts, challenges, and potentially dangerous obstacles is the principal means of maintaining a favorable concept of themselves, or of preserving their basic human dignity. If they lose homes and possessions through natural disaster, friends or relatives are killed during civil insurrection, work is backbreaking, or jobs are in jeopardy, they accept courageously the tragedies and move aggressively to meet

challenges. Consistently, they place personal dignity before physical well-being.

The third characteristic that the authors depict as common to socio-ethnic types also reflects the essential dignity attributed to them. Their strong and instinctive sense of justice often drives them to direct action. They know whether they are being treated fairly by other individuals or by the whole of society, and they are not likely to accept injustice passively. Moreover, they show this trait with respect to global as well as local situations.

Nonetheless, like the characters in Los que se van, those in the novels' feeling for justice is rooted in the values of their sub-culture. As is the case with their aggressiveness and boldness, their sense of justice is related to their attitude toward themselves, to their self-pride and dignity. They are not concerned as much with what others think of them as they are with what they think of themselves. Their honor code is personal. When an injustice occurs that affects their sphere, they react quickly and often violently.

The characters include friends and family in their self-concept. When the protagonist in Pareja Diezcanseco's Baldomera joins the fighting that is a result of a worker's strike, it is because her family is suffering economic privation. When the same historical event appears in Gallegos Lara's Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, the characters participating

in the insurrection are motivated primarily by the desire to correct what they consider injustice done to them personally, or to members of their family or to their friends.²¹ They do not think of themselves as part of a "downtrodden mass", but as individual human beings to whom suffering a cut in pay or a worsening of working conditions is equal to a loss of dignity. Although it would appear their protest and fighting are actions of a unified group, they really take to the streets as indignant individuals.

The writers suggest this sense of justice as evident from childhood, as in Gallegos Lara's novel when some boys are playing at war games:

--¿Aleman o francés?
 --Siempre francés, carajo! ...
 -- ... vos y Cortés, ¿por que están por los franceses que pierden siempre?
 --Hay que defender lo que es justo, aunque uno se joda!"²²

The willingness here expressed by children at play to defend what is right is followed through in many novels by real-life actions of adults. In Ortiz' Juyungo a foreigner and an accomplice set fire to some dwellings on an island inhabited by Blacks in order to frighten them into leaving, so the island's resources may be exploited. The protagonist's infant son dies in the holocaust. It is learned that two days later "han encontrado hecho picadillo a mister Hans y a Tolentino Matamba"²³. In contrast to the indian characters in the highland novels who suffer seemingly

interminable abuse before taking action, this coastal character reacts unhesitatingly and violently. For the boy pretending he is a French soldier and for the Black from Esmeraldas, justice is a personal thing, a question of honor. It must be protected and defended.

Their forerunners in Los que se van reacted swiftly and violently to defend their honor in matters of love. These characters do the same in matters of broader social implication. Also like them, they are able to accomplish very little against the power structure of the whole of society. Gallegos Lara's and Pareja Diezcanseco's urban cholos fight and even die, but nothing changes for them in the social structure. Ortiz' Black kills oppressive individuals, but the social system they represent is unaltered. Gil Gilbert's and de la Cuadra's montuvios and Aguilera Malta's rural cholos occasionally strike out against an abusive patrón or businessman, but there is no change in society. Although lower class characters never succeed in bringing about social justice, they never lose sight of what is just, and continue to defend it actively. They are never beaten in spirit. They emerge with their honor intact.

In addition to the three characteristics depicted as common to socio-ethnic types, those writers dealing with the montuvio emphasize two more traits. He is industrious and independent of other parts of society.

For montuvio characters, work is not merely a means for physical survival. It is a source of pride. They approach it wholeheartedly. Even montuvios latifundistas, such as the Sangurimas in de la Cuadra's novel of the same name, or some of the characters in Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan, are not typical of upper class representatives. They accumulate property with the same personal involvement that lower class montuvios show when they work the land. They have no qualms about getting dirty and give no indication that to them work is demeaning. Captain Sandoval in Gil Gilbert's novel is praised with: "... Vd. es montubio en verdad. Lo he visto trabajar en lo que ha dado la mano. ... es de los hombres que sabe amarrarse los pantalones."²⁴ Although this character might be socially and economically in the upper classes, he is spiritually a montuvio. In the same novel, the workers in the rice fields are delighted when their labors are rewarded with a good crop, and they look forward to using their earnings to buy the few material items that might make life more comfortable for themselves and their families, as the following conversation illustrates:

--Ha de ser buena la cosecha.
 --Tendremos harta plata.
 --Haremos fiesta del bautizo.
 --Le compraremos pañales de hilo.
 --Y bata grande y gorro rojo.
 --Y chupón para que no lllore."²⁵

This montuvio couple is not satisfied with earning merely enough to survive. They want some simple luxuries for the child they are expecting. They do not go to the fields like automatons and hope that the crop will rise. They work hard, demanding the land's cooperation.

The montuvio's sense of independence is shown by the characters desire to make a living from the land, preferring neither aid nor interference from other people. Essentially a self-reliant, almost anarchistic person, he lives happily when left to his own resources. It does not concern him that the land he works might belong to a terrateniente, unless a demand is made on him that might effect his personal modus vivendi. He is not interested in the whole of society, with its laws and systems that tend to compromise him. If he is a simple laborer, he resents that his labors should benefit anyone outside his own sphere. De la Cuadra's Nicasio Sangurima may be considered an archetype of his race. As the patriarch of a tribe of montuvios he heads a vast latifundio. He explains that when the legality of his holdings was challenged by the government:

"A cada concejal le aflojé un rollo de billetes ... Hicieron una sesión en que me reconocieron como dueño y todo."²⁶

Although this character's wealth would indicate a higher social position than most of his fellows, his aggressive independence is characteristic of all montuvios. Similarly,

montuvios in the lower segments of society allow landholders to receive much of the benefit from their labors, because it is a way of "buying them off", so that they may live otherwise with enough independence to satisfy their pride.

The authors dealing with the cholo and the Black present them as having a tendency toward introspection, a trait that is not so evident in the montuvio. These characters are sensitive people who examine critically what goes on around them. They do not accept what happens to them as faits accomplis. They think about their experiences to determine what they mean and their attitude toward them. The urban cholos in Pareja Diezcanseco's Don Balón de Baba are apprehensive of the protagonist's inflammatory words designed to unite them under his leadership. They let him talk for a while, then they challenge his assumed authority:

--Sí, compañeros, sí. Yo os lo aseguro.
 ¡Yo, el líder! ... ¡El intelectual en acción!
 ¡El cerebro que organiza y manda! ¡Seguidme
 a mí! ...

Los trabajadores comenzaron a protestar. ...

--¡Abajo los intelectuales!
 Fue la voz inicial. La protesta se levantó
 unánime y las exclamaciones subieron de punto.
 --¡Abajo!
 --¡Traidor!
 --¡Mentiroso!
 --¡Farsante!
 --¡Traidor a la clase obrera!
 --¡Mueran los intelectuales!"²⁷

Although the protagonist's words sound inspirational, the cholos think about their meaning and dismiss them as inappropriate to their situation. Similarly, Gallegos Lara's cholos are aware of the world economic crisis and how it affects their day-to-day living. However, they do not accept its effect without question, but contemplate it and determine a course of action: "Por quinta vez se discutía el asunto ... en asamblea popular. ... la multitud era un cielo tempestuoso ... "28. In a final example, Ortiz' black protagonist is in constant turmoil over his relationship with white people. He debates this problem over and over, never quite sure of his attitude, as when he participates in a battle in which he fights alongside both whites and Blacks:

"... había sacado de la refriega ... una duda Aquel chico blanco, el haber estado combatiendo junto o cerca de otros, ... blancos y mulatos; el júbilo colectivo de la victoria, eran cosas que hacían tambalear su odio de raza."29

This character does not simply love or hate white people, but constantly reexamines his attitude on the basis of his experience. Even if the characters' contemplations lead to individual or collective action, they will have considered a matter extensively beforehand. While they are pictured as volatile in the expression of their emotions, they are also depicted as sensitive human beings.

The authors emphasize the role of lower class characters in opposition to the rest of society. When compared with the machine-like hombre-masa that is often present in socially conscious novels, these characters are vibrant people with strong individual characteristics. Nonetheless, by accentuating their good features the novelists demonstrate bias against other parts of society.

The Middle Class:

Bias is further demonstrated by the paucity of characters from the middle class. The writers tend to interpret coastal Ecuadorian society as though it were composed entirely of a bottom and a top extreme. When they do appear, middle class characters are people who in economic condition are not a great deal superior to the lower classes, but in education and intellect approach the upper classes. However, there is almost no suggestion that becoming a small businessman or a teacher, for example, is a particularly worthy goal. Nor is there any attempt to deal with the middle class characters as living in the status-seeking anguish that is often the case in North American literature.³⁰ The only time a character's membership in the middle class is alluded to as a desirable station is in Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan, when the heir to a rice-growing dynasty realizes that true security is ultimately not what he inherits, but what he earns for himself:

"--Hildebrando Eusebio Sandoval: ¡tragasapos! ... ¿Qué puedes con tu sola riqueza de cholo? ¿Qué puedes con la plata cosechada indefinidamente por tu padre ... ? ... necesitas de ese título aliñado de premios y de situaciones de buen, de estupendo estudiante. De joven talentoso. De muchacho de porvenir. Uncido a la trenza profesional de tus profesores."³¹

Other than this isolated example, middle class characters appear primarily as superficially treated "background" types, like storekeepers or other small businessmen, or as members of professions, who serve as instruments for exposing the ills of other segments of society. The rural schoolteacher in Ortiz' Juyungo is incidental to the plot of the novel, but through her the author points out inadequacies in the educational system. In Pareja Diezcanseco's Hombres Sin Tiempo the protagonist is a schoolteacher. Since he is also a prisoner, he functions mainly as a tool for the author to examine the stories behind the lives of other prisoners in order to bring to light Ecuadorian social problems. Middle class characters are never pictured with distinguishing characteristics. Nonetheless, it would be unfair to single out the "Grupo de Guayaquil" as negligent in the treatment of the middle class. Uriel Ospina believes that on the whole this part of Spanish American society is unworthy of novelistic attention:

" ... La burguesía latinoamericana no ha sido ... para despertar el interés ... Es que no hay nada que ver en ella intelectualmente ...

Es la ausencia de todo, de frialdad, de calor, de vida. No son buenos ni malos, odiosos o justificables. No son, simplemente. ...

... en consecuencia ... por este aspecto la novela hispanoamericana sufre de anemia aguda. ... el burqués latinoamericano ... es apenas un mediocre personaje literario cuyo interés no atrae la atención del novelista."³²

The Upper Class:

Characters representing the upper extreme of society are abundant. In contrast to lower class characters, they are not presented as unique to the region. They are much the same as upper class characters in contemporary socially oriented novels throughout Spanish America. While in the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" work there is a tendency to avoid stereotyping them through their development as individuals,³³ the relationship with lower class characters is essentially the same as in such prototypical examples as Alcides Arguedas' Kaza de Bronce (1919) and Giro Alegría's El Mundo es Ancho y Ajeno (1941). In these and in novels from both highland and coastal Ecuador the authors show little communication or understanding between characters representing the two social extremes, although they do show contact. This contact, however, is consistently that of dominator and dominated. Those at the top have the means to insure their security, usually at the expense of those at the bottom. This treatment of the upper class characters in Spanish American novels with social message is common enough to be considered typical.

Even when an upper class character from coastal Ecuador happens to be a socio-ethnic type, like de la Cuadra's Nicasio Sangurima, he owes his uniqueness to his race.

The ruling classes may be divided into five principal categories: the "forces of order", including both the military and the police; the landholders; the merchants (not the small storekeepers, but those in relatively "big" businesses); the government; and the clergy.

The "forces of order" are presented as a tough and brutal lot, who enjoy the power of their positions and often exercise it in ways that are abusive to lower class characters. They are either members of the power structure or are directly subservient to people who are. The power structure is supported by the military and the police. In turn, the manpower that supplies these institutions comes from the lower classes. Common soldiers and policemen become a part of the system that is oppressive to those most like them. They lose the ennobling traits of their original sub-culture. In Pareja Diezcanseco's Baldomera the rural police, in pursuit of thieves, invade a small store. After the shooting stops the author points out that:

"... el Jefe ... se quedó con Agustina, a quien había tumbado en el suelo. Le subió las faldas hasta arriba. Le tenía puesto los brazos en el pecho sosteniendo los de ella. Y allí, en presencia de todos, la violó."³⁴

The police officer here, like the coronel in de la

Cuadra's Los Sangurimas, uses the power of his position to commit outrageous acts on lower class characters. Sometimes the acts result in death, as when the officers command soliders and policemen to fire into crowds, in Gallegos Lara's Las Cruces Sobre el Agua or Pareja Diezcanseco's Baldomera. In every instance the members of the "forces of order" are supported by cholo, montuvio, and Black soldiers and policemen and are paid by the power structure. Pareja Diezcanseco underscores the importance of money in Las Tres Ratas. One of his feminine protagonists vengefully had stolen some jewels from a character whose usury had brought ruin to her family. Upon being brought to jail she declares: "La ley... La ley para don Horacio y para mí la policía. ¿Por qué? Porque don Horacio es un cínico y tiene bastante plata."³⁵ The law benefits only upper class characters, and the law is enforced by the police and the military.

Landholders represent another group that wields power against the lower class. Their most obvious show of strength is in the extent of their property, as in this example from de la Cuadra's Los Sangurimas:

"La hacienda de los Sangurimas era uno de los más grandes latifundios del agro montuvio. Ni su propietario conocía su verdadera extensión.

--¿Por qué no la ha hecho medir, ño Nicasio? ...

--¡Y pa qué! Yo en eso, amigo, soy como el samborondeño 'como bollo-maduro' ... Lo que se mide, se muere o se acaba. Es presagio pa terminarse."³⁶

Other than mention of a few essential possessions, the authors never describe a lower class character's holdings. Small property owners are not noticeable. Clearly, the intent is to emphasize class differences. The characters who are landholders exploit and abuse those who are workers by giving them difficult tasks at pay so low they must go to the patrón for loans. Once in debt, they are virtual slave laborers. Witness the following illustration from Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan, where a migrant indian laborer from the highlands wishes to leave his job:

--¿Cuánto dinero tienes en efectivo?
 --¿Qué he de tener? Si eso mismo es que vengo a ver. Mi alcance...
 --Entonces, mi querido amigo, no se puede ir...
 --¿Qué es, pues, patrón?
 --Que no te puedes ir, hijo. Que me debes plata y tienes que descontármela."³⁷

A poor worker can not leave until his debt is paid. If he should die before fulfilling his obligation, the debt is passed on to his children. In Ortiz' Juyungo there is a typical example:

"Recordaba que cuando murió su padre, concierto de la hacienda ... , fue obligado a hacerse cargo de una supuesta deuda del viejo.
 Tuvo que trabajar mucho, como peón, en los desmontes ... "³⁸

Lower class characters do not have the security of a permanent residence, for those who are landholders have

the power to uproot and relocate them wherever and whenever they wish. In Ortiz' Juyungo, a latifundista sells an entire island, regardless of the fact that for generations it has been the home of many people:

--Trato hecho. Pero hay el inconveniente de la gente que vive allí.

-- ... Eso no significa nada; le digo, nada absolutamente. Me basta con mandarlos a notificar de palabra, y salen. ...

--¿Y si no quieren salir?

--Peor para ellos, los sacaré a la fuerza. ... Y, lo que es más, la ley me favorece."³⁹

However, there is an occasional hint that some landholders, especially youthful ones, possess social conscience. One example is found in the protagonist of de la Cuadra's Los Monos Enloquecidos:

"Gustavo Hernández se mofaba de los prejuicios de los suyos. ... Juraba que le habría gustado los mismo ser hijo de montuvios ... o de cholos ...

...
Añadía, generalmente:

--Verdad es que en el Ecuador vivimos, en muchos respetos, en plena Edad Media. En lo social, pongo por caso..."⁴⁰

This case is an exception. As a group, characters who are landholders do not share these social opinions.

Merchants are another group of characters who exercise control over the working classes. They pay little for what they buy from characters in the lower classes, often far below fair market value. In Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan a poor montuvio sells his rice to the only available buyer:

-- ... Te lo compro todo. Con la plata a la mano... Por todo te doy cien sucres...
 --No, blanco, allí hay como diez quintales...
 --Bueno, eso es cosa tuya; si quieres, allí tienes...
 Sacaba diez billetes de a diez. ... Adquirió el arroz..."⁴¹

In Aguilera Malta's Don Goyo a merchant buys wood from some cholos at half its fair value, and in Pareja Diezcanseco's La Beldaca a businessman buys some gold coins from a cholo at less than half their worth.⁴² Merchants are the only market outlet for lower class characters' goods. They also loan money, at interest rates so high there is small possibility of liquidation. In the following illustration from Pareja Diezcanseco's Las Tres Ratat the terms of a loan are described:

"Se estipuló el préstamo a seis meses de plazo, con una posible renovación a seis meses más, siempre que se abonase el cincuenta por ciento de la deuda, más los intereses. Don Horacio ... pidió el diez por ciento mensual, pero accedió a rebajar hasta el ocho ..." ⁴³

Unquestionably, an annual interest rate of ninety-six percent is exorbitant. Like other groups in the upper class, merchants are able to exploit freely characters in the lower class.

Characters who work in government are also presented as oppressive to the lower classes. No level or agency of government is represented by characters who appear in a favorable light. Prison wardens use their institutions for

repression rather than rehabilitation. They allow political imprisonments and assassinations, as in the following illustration from Pareja Diezcanseco's Hombres Sin Tiempo:

"... frios, helados, ... fusilaron en su propia celda a un coronel retirado. ... Luego ... disimulaban ... una fuga para justificar con ella el asesinato."⁴⁴

High officials are controlled by influential minorities. In the same author's Las Tres Ratas a governor declares: "Somos esclavos de la situación política. ... Y todos los diputados y personas influyentes quieren ser complacidos en el acto."⁴⁵ On the whole, characters in government are as corrupt as would be this character from another of Pareja's novels, who muses over what it would be like if he became the jefe político of his town:

"... Yo de Jefe Político, ¿quién me ronca? Con la plata y el prestigio que tengo, seré el dueño de todo. Vendo primero que nadie mi cacao y mi café ... No pago pasaje en las lanchas ni las cuentas de la cantina ... Y así por el estilo."⁴⁶

Like those in the "forces of order", characters in government serve only themselves and the obligarchies. Lower class characters receive no benefit from the government, but they must support it.

The only other national group of characters the authors picture at the upper extreme of society is the clergy. Like other representatives of the ruling classes, they are not presented in a favorable light. A nun working

in a hospital is perversely delighted when patients suffer or bleed from her injections.⁴⁷ A priest threatens that a child will endure "eternal damnation" unless he is paid very well to baptise it.⁴⁸ Another is suggested to be more than a "spiritual" father to some members of his parish:

"... el padre Terencio tenía casa propia ... habitada por una muchacha muy hermosa ... y por un demonio de chico.

Estos muchachos figuraban como sobrinos ... ; lo cual resultaba extraordinario, pues ninguno de los hermanos del cura los reconocía como hijos. En ocasiones se decía que eran ahijados del clérigo.

Cuando éste visitaba la hacienda ... lo recibían con grandes zalemas.

Frecuentemente lo trataban de papá."⁴⁹

Characters who are clergymen serve primarily their own interests and those of other upper class groups. They have little time for people in the lower class, unless it is to exploit them.

In most cases, upper class characters have unattractive attributes. While there are exceptions, like the olympian Captain Sandoval of Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan or the patriarch of the Sangurima family in de la Cuadra's novel, they generally represent social elements that are abusive and repressive to people at the bottom. While those in the working classes are ennobled with characteristics that are pleasing aesthetically, they have neither social nor political power. Upper class characters control most of the land, money, and work.

Dissimilarities between characters who represent extremes of coastal society are further underscored by the authors' showing very little understanding or communication between them. They have no common interests. When Gallegos Lara treats a popular revolt he states: "Nunca se había lanzado tanta gente ... a las calles. ... era todo Guayaquil, menos los ricos."⁵⁰ There is never an instance when the two classes are united in joint effort. Mutual mistrust and a tendency to maintain both physical and ideological distance is demonstrated repeatedly. The protagonist in Pareja Diezcanseco's Don Balón de Baba is a character whose messianic drive caused him to renounce his upper class identity and harangue for social justice. When a worker offers him his hand, however, his reaction is instinctive. Because the hand is "algo sucia", he takes it "no muy de su agrado."⁵¹ The distance between this well-meaning character and the lower class is more than physical, as was seen (note 27) when he addressed a trade union meeting.⁵² There is no real communication between him and the people he idealistically wishes to champion.

For the most part, however, upper class characters do not attempt to communicate with or understand those in the lower classes. The only time contact is not repulsive is when it is sexual. Even then the authors sometimes take a cynical view, as when the factory owner in Pareja

Diezcanseco's Baldomera begins his seduction of a chola by telling her, "No te alarmes, chica. Son impulsos demócratas."⁵³

Although the authors' intent is to dramatize injustices in society through its literary depiction, their interpretation is biased against those at the top. Characters who are cholos, montuvios, and Blacks seem so uniformly good that they must be considered idealizations of reality.

The Foreigners:

The writers are concerned most with native members of society. At their worst, characters who are gringos are pictured as allies of the native upper class and oppressors of the lower class, like the highway engineers who in Pareja Diezcanseco's La Beldaca force a young chola to become drunk then abuse her sexually, until: "Ya hastiados, los gringos se marchan en el automóvil, dejando botada en la tierra a Juanita que ha quedado inconsciente."⁵⁴

Nonetheless, most foreigners are pictured as "asocial". They involve themselves in local society only to the extent necessary to earn a living. Sometimes they are objective observers, like the German storekeeper in Gallegos Lara's Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, who advises the young protagonist to take his ailing father to a hospital:

"Toda noche, tu padre: cerveza, cerveza!.
en mi tierra igual: trabajador no sabe vivir
sino emborracha!

Alfredo no temía sus bigotazos ni su calva:
--Mi padre no es borracho, es que está enfermo.

--Si el panadera está bubónico ... dí a tu
mamá ella no sea bruta ... Mándenlo pronto a
curar al hospital bubónico....

--¿Al lazareto? ¿Para que lo maten?

--Ve, tú, Baldeón: ... Piensa con la cabeza,
no con el trasero. En casa, el hombre muere ...
En el hospital ... también, ... Pero hay medicinas,
inyección, fiebrometro... ... muere, pero no tan
seguro..."⁵⁵

Other foreigners are the principal element in a humorous situation, like the Italian who the protagonist of Pareja Diezcanseco's Don Balón de Baba thinks is an agent of Mussolini and challenges to a duel.⁵⁶ Some foreigners, through marriage, become assimilated into Ecuadorian society.⁵⁷ The foreigner is not presented as either a positive or negative element in coastal Ecuador.

Life and the Environment

The novelists' second main channel toward the interpretation of society is the depiction of coastal life as it relates to both the physical and the "spiritual" environment.

In novels with urban settings the city is the physical environment. It is a struggle merely to survive for

characters in the lower classes. Work is scarce, and there is little or no job security. Most of the them live a "hand to mouth" existence. They are like animals in an area with little food. For them, the city is a jungle through which they must prowl, constantly seeking any possible means to satisfy basic needs and always in danger of being attacked by predators from the upper classes. Although they are tough and aggressive, they do not have the power of their attackers. Sometimes animalistic behavior is genuine, as during the chaotic period following civil disorder in Gallegos Lara's novel:

"Al anochecer ... estallaba la lucha por la basura recién volcada Los chanchos ... peleaban a mordiscos con los perros. Un anciano de cara de santo ... roía un hueso, buscando con torva ojeada de bestia, quien se lo disputaba. ...

--Barajo, que haya esto en Guayaquil y que la gente duerma tan fresca en el centro!

Ratas de dientes de espina de pescado, tiraban, arrancándose a trozos, el cadáver de un gato de angora. Los muchachos rebuscaban en pandilla: separarse hubiera significado ser víctima de los perros y chanchos feroces, o de los mendigos adultos, no menos bestializados."⁵⁸

Only the rich are spared suffering and degradation. Even during disasters that affect all people, such as fires and epidemics, they alone have the means to make things easier for themselves.⁵⁹

Life in the country is no less difficult than life in the city. However, here the struggle is principally one of domesticating the land; of coaxing the crops from the earth and of ekeing out a living from the forest and the waterways. Like their urban counterparts, poor rural characters have little power against either characters from the upper classes or the physical environment. The rich characters own most of the land and decide who will work and how much he will earn. Nature controls the success or failure of the crop. There is always the threat of natural catastrophe:

"La langosta es un gusano negro, chiquito, baboso. Aparece de pronto. Subido en las hojas. Comiéndose las matas. El rato menos pensado uno va a su desmonte y ve negrear las hojas verdes. Las matas tronchadas. Dobladas contra el suelo. Y al acercarse, las manchas son gusanos negros que se hinchan y se adelgazan, se estiran y se encogen. ...
¡La langosta!"⁶⁰

Sickness and disease are also problems in the countryside. Although rich as well as poor characters are susceptible to tropical illnesses, the rich ones are better equipped to combat them. While the cholo protagonist of Pareja Diezcanseco's La Beldaca has only the primitive curandero when his son gets dysentery, the landholder in de la Cuadra's Los Monos Enloquecidos can afford capable medical aid when his daughter contracts malaria.⁶¹

However, there are elements in the depiction of rural life that transcend social differences between the characters. The relationship between man and nature very personal, a one-to-one communication. In Aguilera Malta's La Isla Virgen the cholo foreman enters into combat with a tigre, and the landholder believes he is fighting a duel with the island itself.⁶² In de la Cuadra's Los Monos Enloquecidos not only do man and nature battle, but it is suggested that nature possesses the essentially human desire for vengeance:

"Se vengaba la jungla de la presencia de los hombres que habían ido a turbar su austera soledad hierática y su calma perenne.

Disponía de infinitas armas que utilizar contra la mezquindad humana, y desplegaba calladamente el tremendo aparato de su fuerza para salir triunfadora en la sordida lucha empeñada. Tenía sus fiebres y sus alimañas, y tenía, también, sus leyendas y su misterio."⁶³

The declaration that vengeance would be taken not only by means of illness and beasts, but also through legends and mystery indicates a "spiritual" dimension to the relationship between man and the environment.⁶⁴ Endurance of harsh social conditions and intimate contact with nature are manifestations of the rural characters' relationship with only the physical environment. Their constant awareness of and adherence to traditional folk beliefs and superstitions are manifestations of their relationship with the "spiritual" environment.

Some of the folk beliefs are portrayed in conven-

tional forms, such as an owl appearing as an evil omen⁶⁵, or the sign of the cross to frighten away evil.⁶⁶ Others are conventional in their origin, but show local modification, as in the following illustration from de la Cuadra's Los Monos Enloquecidos:

--Vamos a acostarnos. Es casi media noche.
En tono burlesco, glosaba:
--La hora mala...
De estar cerca, el peón que había narrado la historia refutaba a su patrón:
--Dispense, blanco; pero más pior es de madrugada. Las cuatro de la mañana es l' hora más pesada..."⁶⁷

Of most interest are beliefs that spring only from the Ecuadorian coast, such as the cholos' conviction in Aguilera Malta's Don Goyo that the mangles make love to the islands:

-- ... loj mangle se tiran a las islaej.
--;No mienta, don Leitón!
--No miento. Ejto ej verdá. Lo hey vijto muchas noches. .. Primero parece que loj manglej se ponieran a bailar. Dende lejoj se les puede aguaitar meneando las ramazones. ... A las islas les entra un temblequeo que hace brincar las aguas.

--De repente, empezabán los mangles a claverse íntegros, como un millón de sexos..."⁶⁸

Also of local origin are legends that form another part of the characters' "spiritual" environment. The following example from de la Cuadra's Los Sangurimas concerns the sound made by the Mameyes river:

"Los montuvios relatan una leyenda muy pintoresca acerca de esa canción del agua.

En tal leyenda figura una princesa india, enamorada de un blanco, probablemente de un conquistador español. A lo que se entiende, la princesa se entregó a su amante, el cual la abandonó. La pobre india llora todavía ausencias del dueño."⁶⁹

The relationship between the characters and the "spiritual" environment is an exotic element. Moreover, characters who represent the lower classes are deeply and obviously involved in both the "spiritual" and the physical environment. Characters who represent the upper classes are generally drab by comparison. Clearly, the authors' intent is to make the poor cholo, montuvio, and Black characters the most interesting. Again, there is an evident bias against the upper levels of society.

The Role of History

The third principal channel followed by the authors in their interpretation of society is the very course of history. The action in most of the novels takes place during periods ranging from the latter decades of the nineteenth century through the time contemporary with the writers. Although reference to historical events is a common literary technique for indicating chronology in novels, in the work of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" events and dates are in themselves unimportant, in the sense of recording or cataloguing them. The role of the historical event in the formation of the social structure, or its

implication to that structure, is important. The novelists select key events in history to substantiate their contentions about society.

Sometimes references to world events serve to give greater perspective to local history. The following segment from Gallegos Lara's Las Cruces Sobre el Agua sets the tone for an impending popular revolt in Guayaquil:

"... Comenzaba una era en que todos los pueblos se unían para la gran liberación. La guerra había iniciado el derrumbe. Europa entera ardía al concluir ese año 21, desde Rusia hasta España. Las chispas caían en América que tenía el 1º de Mayo de Chicago en su tradición, y donde las huelgas de Brasil y la Semana Sangrienta de Buenos Aires, eran las primeras rachas."⁷⁰

Nonetheless, the characters in the novels are affected primarily by events of national importance. The writers place considerable emphasis on showing them as products of those events. José de la Cuadra alludes to the Spanish Conquest and its role in the formation of the Ecuadorian man in Los Monos Enloquecidos:

"... la conquista ... Nunca fue plena ni completa, ni absoluta, ni total ... Hubo entonces, como sigue habiendo, selvas inexploradas... Y ahí se refugiaba el alma indígena, reacia y tenaz ... El león ibero no consiguió desflorar irremediabilmente a la doncella América... De esta falta de compenetración íntima, pluscuamperfecta, el divorcio ... se planteó, como consecuencia ... no llegándose a un entendimiento cordial que hubiera dado como fruto ... una extraordinaria fusión de razas, con vistas al establecimiento definitivo de una nueva."⁷¹

In de la Cuadra's estimation, incomplete mestizaje

is at least partly responsible for disparities in the social structure. However, the authors' depiction of the cholos and montuvios in a generally favorable light suggests that the best human elements in coastal society are the products of fusion rather than isolation of races. Ortiz suggests in Juyungo that even Blacks share the process of mestizaje, when his protagonist is flattered by being called a "negro montuvio".⁷²

One of the most common historical references is to Eloy Alfaro and his Liberal revolution of 1895. This caudillo was already a legendary figure while the authors were young men. Many of the ideals of his campaign⁷³ were the historical antecedents for their own socialistic goals. Ending the Church's influence on the government, education for all the people, more equal distribution of wealth and property, and similar revolutionary aims were still **very** attractive to the writers in the "Grupo de Guayaquil". They generally picture Alfaro in a nostalgic and heroic aura, as in the following example from Pareja Diezcanseco's La Beldaca:

"... Alfaro da la vuelta por el cerro del Carmen. Desciende con todo el ímpetu de su caudillismo, con toda su fuerza combativa que se hace incontenible. ... Se pelea con furia, con salvajismo. Don Eloy, al frente, ... contempla impasible el ataque. Antes de entrar en acción ha tomado sobre el caballo una taza de café puro. Fuma cigarro. Sus órdenes son precisas, justas, decisivas."⁷⁴

The major theme of the historial process is violence.⁷⁵ The authors suggest that when the social situation has become intolerable, the working class Blacks, montuvios, and cholos have been capable of taking direct and violent action in an attempt to correct it. When their action is large they forge history for themselves. Joaquín Gallegos Lara builds his novel around a popular revolt that actually did take place. He points out the self-genocidal violence of Ecuadorian history when he has one of his characters implore during the fighting: "--Ecuadorianos, no tiremos contra ecuatorianos!"⁷⁶ Part of Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco's Baldomera takes place during this same historical event. He **shows** an underlying strength in the working classes once they are moved to violent action, although he also shows considerable loss of life from within their ranks.⁷⁷

There are some references to historical events where Ecuadorians are not killing Ecuadorians, such as segments from Ortiz' Juyungo⁷⁸ that deal with the war with Perú.⁷⁹ In this case, Ecuadorians and Peruvians are killing each other. The writers suggest that violence is either directly the result of class conflicts, or that members of the lower classes suffer most from the violence, regardless of its origin.

The novelists' conclusion is that coastal Ecuadorian society is not and has never been fair to its poor members.

The manner in which they deal with its various components suggests that poor socio-ethnic types are the most interesting, possess the strongest basic human qualities, and best represent the region. They further suggest that social injustice endured by representatives of the bottom of society is reaching the point of intolerability. Their portrayal in the historical perspective indicates that they have been becoming steadily more willing to sacrifice the anarchistic part of their nature for the sake of the common good, from the time of Alfaro up to the present.

Finally, the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" treatment of society is uncommon in the socially oriented novel. It relies more on emphasizing positive elements in people at the bottom than it does negative ones in those at the top. Essentially, it is an optimistic approach. In spite of the suffering endured and even the blood shed by the characters who represent the majority of the population, they emerge as vibrant human beings.

NOTES
CHAPTER III.

1. Sidney Finkelstein, Existencialismo y Alienación en la Literatura Americana (Mexico: Ed. Grijalbo, 1967), pp. 163-64.

Although Finkelstein's study is directed specifically at North American literature, the following statement could just as well be tailored to the Guayaquil writers:

"El arte, por su misma naturaleza, es una actividad social, ... porque su lenguaje y demás medios de expresión son una herencia creada socialmente, y porque el artista, lo mismo que el hombre de ciencia ... es siempre motivado por alguna forma de conciencia social. Los problemas básicos que trata en su arte son aquellos suscitados ante él por la sociedad, y su obra, una vez acabada, pasa a ser una posesión social. ... Los grandes artistas han sido siempre grandes educadores del pueblo, en el sentido de abrir sus ojos, desarrollar sus percepciones, alterar sus respuestas al mundo que les rodea de modo que éste les parezca ser un lugar más humano para vivir en él."

2. Jean Franco, The Modern Culture of Latin America (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967), p. 1.

Franco's opening lines deal with the messianic role of writers in Latin American society:

"An intense social concern has been the characteristic of Latin-American art for the last hundred and fifty years. Literature--and even painting and music--have played a social role, with the artist acting as guide, teacher and conscience of his country. ...

In countries ... where social and political problems are both huge and inescapable, the artist's sense of responsibility towards society needs no justification. Thus any evaluation of Latin-American movements must also be concerned with the social and political preoccupations out of which they sprang."

There is no question that the coastal novelists follow this trend.

3. Gilberto González y Contreras, "Aclaraciones a la Novela Social Americana," Letras del Ecuador, No. 8 (Nov. de 1945), p. 13.

In the opinion of González y Contreras the novels produced by the Guayaquil group during this period exemplify what he calls "el culto telúrico" in the Spanish American novel, about which he says the following:

"Es la hora en que empieza ... el culto apasionado de las cosas en desequilibrio, el culto telúrico a las cosas teúricas y a los hombres que sangran."

Telúrica y más telúrica es la perspectiva. La misma oposición de valores entre el hombre y el medio, entre humanidad y sociedad, entre latifundismo y agrarismo, entre burguesía y proletariado, es conducida, por medio enérgico, y bajo la preocupación por la realidad presente y el destino humano, al anchuroso campo de la novela ..."

4. Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua (Guayaquil: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1946), p. 135.

5. José de la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, in Obras Completas (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), pp. 453-54.
Also Los Monos Enloquecidos, in Obras Completas, p. 623-24.

6. Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo (Guayaquil: Librería Cervantes, 1968), p. 88.

7. While the Indian appears sporadically in these novels, he is not presented as an intrinsic part of coastal society. Some of the indians are migrant laborers from the highlands, and others are members of the semi-nomadic and primitive coastal tribes, such as the Cayapas and the Colorados. These tribes are most noticed by Ortiz in Juyungo, but mainly from a costumbrista point of view, as when he describes their burial customs (p. 27). Even these coastal indians can not be considered an integral part of society, for they live outside the normal social pattern. They are essentially independent from the whole of society.

8. Luis Alberto Sánchez, Proceso y Contenido de la Novela Hispano-Americana (Madrid: Ed. Gredos, 1953), pp. 321-22.

Commenting on Don Goyo, Sánchez declares that: "Aguilera Malta ... penetra hacha en mano entre los manglares del Guayas y el Daule, y exhibe cuadros tan duros, tan descarnados, en que el ser humano y la naturaleza se compenetrán de tal manera, que separarlos sería destruir la obra en sí."

9. Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo (Madrid: Cenit, 1933), p. 200.

10. Enrique Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan (Guayaquil: Librería Cervantes, 1968), p. 83.

11. Nelson Estupiñán Bass, "El Hombre Negro del Ecuador", Letras del Ecuador, No. 121 (Marzo-Abril de 1961), p. 11.

This author treats the special relationship of the Ecuadorian Black with his coastal fellows as follows:

"En Esmeraldas, el hombre de color ... pasó de foráneo a autóctono, a dueño y señor de todas las comarcas, hasta tal punto que, mientras la población indígena sobreviviente ... va ... camino de su extinción, la densidad negra es cada vez más alta.

... el hombre de color fue infiltrándose en la ecuatorianidad, y produjo un nuevo tipo humano, el moreno, que, teniendo de negro y no propiamente de blanco, sino de mestizo, es ellos, y, simultáneamente, es otro."

In Ortiz' novel the protagonist reflects Estupiñán Bass' final statement. He is ever sure of his relationship with people of other races. His feelings range from hatred (of the whites in the ruling classes) to love (for his white wife) to curiosity (toward the local indians).

12. Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 7.

Ortiz declares in the opening lines of his novel that in Esmeraldas "Hasta los cayapas precibieron: 'donde entierra juyungo no entierra cayapa'".

13. Jorge Icaza, Huasipungo, in Obras Escogidas (México: Aguilar, 1961), p. 155.

Throughout his novel Icaza depicts the highland indians as a wretched lot who rebel to defend their little huts and plots of ground only after long enduring abuse. The following illustration shows an early morning sunrise scene that is distant from resembling such clichés as a "new awakening" or a "rebirth of life":

"En la misma forma perezosa y triste que se estiró el amanecer sobre los cerros se movilizaron los mingueros, se arrastró un vaho blancuzco de voluptuosas formas a ras de la tierra empapada, se inició el parloteo de los muchachos, los chismes quejosos de las cholas, las maldiciones y los carajos del machismo impotente de los hombres, el tiritar de los palúdicos, la tos de los tuberculosos, el llanto de los niños tiernos por la teta de la madre."

14. Although the subject matter is quite different between Los de Abajo, Doña Bárbara, and the novels from coastal Ecuador, the lower class characters in all of them show similar attitudes toward facing danger. Azuela's mestizo and indian revolutionaries confront the dangers of battle with such spirit that they often seem to enjoy it. Gallegos' mestizo

plainsmen make great sport of dangerous pastimes like the taming of wild horses.

15. Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca (Santiago de Chile: Ercille, 1935), p. 80.

16. Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 69; 92; 284.

17. Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 202.

18. Demetrio Aguilera Malta, La Isla Virgen (Guayaquil: Vera y Cia., 1942), p. 112.

19. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 54.

20. Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, pp. 139-48.

Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 33.

Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera, pp. 103-09; 216-17.

Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, pp. 199-254.

21. Pareja Diezcanseco, Historia del Ecuador (Quito: Ed. Colón, 1962), pp. 348-49.

Pareja Diezcanseco notes that more than one thousand lives were lost. Many of the bodies were simply thrown into the river. Friends and relatives of the missing later floated wooden crosses in the water to mark the graves. The incident was precipitated by a general strike for higher wages and better working conditions. Gallegos Lara and Pareja Diezcanseco both dramatize the incident in, respectively, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua and Baldomera.

22. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 41.

23. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 241.

24. Enrique Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 116.

25. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 58.

26. José de la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 475.

27. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba (Buenos Aires: Club del Libro, 1939), p. 297.

28. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 202.

29. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 555.

30. Probably the most classic example would be Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt.

31. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 175.

32. Uriel Ospina, Problemas y Perspectivas de la Novela Americana (Bogotá: Ed. Tercer Mundo, 1964), p. 172.

33. This aspect of the novelists' work will be considered in the next chapter, as part of the evaluation of the individual author's artistic techniques.

34. Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera (Santiago de Chile, Ercilla, 1938), p. 63.

35. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Tres Ratas (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1944), pp. 48-49.

36. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 466.

37. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, pp. 257-58.

38. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 98.

39. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 214.

40. De la Cuadra, Los Monos Enloquecidos, p. 626.

41. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 218.

42. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, pp. 190-91.
Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, pp. 182-83.

43. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Tres Ratas, p. 38.

44. Pareja Diezcanseco, Hombres Sin Tiempo (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1941), p. 57.

45. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Tres Ratas, p. 157.

46. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 252.

47. Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera, p. 120.

48. Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, pp. 47-48.

49. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 482.

50. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 206.

51. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 176.
52. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 297.
53. Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera, p. 230.
54. Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, p. 213.
55. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 30.
56. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 63.
57. In de la Cuadra's Los Monos Enloquecidos the protagonist marries the offspring of an Italian mother and a North American father. Their daughter is of course one hundred percent Ecuadorian.
58. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 193.
59. Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, p. 144.
In this reference the author describes one of the great fires for which Guayaquil is infamous. Although the fire spares neither the rich nor the poor, survival is somewhat less difficult for the rich.
60. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 73.
61. De la Cuadra, Los Monos Enloquecidos, p. 672.
Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, p. 177.
62. Aguilera Malta, La Isla Virgen, p. 66.
63. De la Cuadra, Los Monos Enloquecidos, p. 671.
64. The relationship between the inhabitant of coastal Ecuador and both his physical and his "spiritual" environment was explored in Chapter II., in the discussion of Los que se van.
65. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 211.
66. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 267.
67. De la Cuadra, Los Monos Enloquecidos, p. 677.
68. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, p. 103.
69. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 468.

70. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 183.
71. De la Cuadra, Los Monos Enloquecidos, p. 681.
72. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 49.
23. 73. Pareja Diezcanseco, Historia del Ecuador, pp. 313-23.
74. Pareja Diezcanseco, La Beldaca, pp. 114-15.

75. Ariel Dorfman, Imaginación y Violencia en América (Santiago de Chile: Ed. Universitaria, 1970), pp. 9-10.

Dorfman would consider the theme of violence in these novels part of a general trend in the Americas:

"... a partir del naturalismo el problema de la violencia pasa a ser el eje de nuestra narrativa, ya que al descubrir la esencia social de América ... se descubrió ... que nuestra realidad era ... esencialmente violenta. Las novelas ... se dedicaron a documentar la violencia ..., a fotografiar sus dimensiones sociales, a denunciar ... las condiciones brutales e inhumanas en que se debatían los pobladores de estas tierras."

He also discusses an historical process of violence, and its manifestation in the novel (p. 11):

"América es fruto de una violencia prolongada, de un saqueo continuo, de la guerra civil y fratricida en toda su geografía. ... Cuando encontramos al personaje por primera vez ... ya hay un mundo concreto rodeándolo, lleno de sombras y puños y rifles ..."

He further notes that (p. 17):

"Los personajes, al darse cuenta de que son víctimas, se rebelan contra la sociedad que ha creado su situación, usando la violencia como una forma de liberación colectiva. ... El hombre siente que, al hacerse histórica, su violencia cobra sentido; por ser vertical, dirigida contra 'los de arriba', como respuesta a la opresión, se piensa que se podrá controlar este tipo de agresividad."

76. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 210.
77. Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera, pp. 106-07.
78. Ortiz, Juyungo, pp. 269-87.

79. Pareja Diezcanseco, Historia del Ecuador, pp. 366-71.

The author points out that Perú invaded Ecuador on July 5, 1941, with a force of 20,000 against 3,000 defenders, and won a relatively easy victory. As a result of the decision of the Pan American Chancellor's Conference in Rio de Janeiro on January 29, 1942, Ecuador was obligated to cede some 200,000 square kilometers to Perú. Ecuador still disputes that decision.

CHAPTER IV.
THE WRITERS AS ARTISTS

The writers in the "Grupo de Guayaquil" have earned critical attention based on their interpretation of coastal Ecuador's society. However, the artistic process with which they present their material largely has been either ignored or dismissed as having little value.¹ That judgment was inaccurate owing to the general nature of some studies, and seems to have been based on novels from the highlands rather than the coast.²

One critic has said of the novel that: "Sólo existe una buena escuela: la de los escritores que encuentran la forma apropiada para su material y para su propósito como artistas."³ While the Guayaquil writers recognized social problems in coastal Ecuador may have been similar in other places, they felt the area and its people were not to be duplicated elsewhere. Consequently, they tailored their technique to match the material. Collectively and individually, they demonstrate originality in novelistic artistry. As a group they concentrate on the characters' interaction with each other and the environment, in order to portray the human drama, psychology, and telluric elements that make them unique. They often achieve a robust lyricism in the portrayal of this interaction. As separate artists each finds a process with which he meets artistic goals. While

one writer may be more experimental with technique than another, none imitates either his companions or writers from elsewhere.

During the thirties and forties critics tended to denounce the writers' realistic description of Ecuadorian life as sordid, and the use of language that faithfully represented the speech of common people as carelessness with grammar and syntax. It is unlikely that they would do so today. The works of the critically acclaimed novelists Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel García Márquez often contain descriptions of life and use of language similar in its graphic resemblance to reality⁴ to those used by the "Grupo de Guayaquil". Critics like Anderson Imbert and Torres Ríosco failed to point out that the writers from coastal Ecuador were concerned with revolution as much in novelistic art as society. They were in the vanguard of a literary revolution that has only recently taken hold in the Spanish American novel.⁵ Their work is legitimately precursive to contemporary artistic trends.⁶

José de la Cuadra

It is obvious that José de la Cuadra was fascinated by the people, animals, plants, and geography of his native

region. He is the member of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" most interested in artistic interpretation of the coastal atmosphere. Demonstration and denunciation of social ills are only secondary concerns.

Although this study's purpose is to deal specifically with the novel, it would seem unfair to de la Cuadra not to mention that most of his narrative is dedicated to the short story. It is necessary to read both his novels and short stories to appreciate fully his talent. Through them the Ecuadorian coast is represented in a thorough and stirring panorama. He concentrates on everyday people and events, with intensity that projects the feeling of "being there". There are tales about people; country schoolteachers, sailors in love, old maids, men who train fighting roosters, savagely primitive montuvios latifundistas. Others are about places; a small hotel in Guayaquil, or a small town chichería. Some concentrate on flora or fauna. Regardless of the topic, the dramatic interaction between the elements of coastal Ecuador is transcendent. De la Cuadra's aim is not to portray his native region as an observer, but as a participant in its most vibrant moments.

One of de la Cuadra's better known short stories should serve to exemplify his work with that genre.

"Guásinton" is the story of an enormous alligator, or caimán, "a quien alguno ... bautizó con el nombre amontuviado del **general**

norteamericano"⁷ (Washington). He is thought of more as another person than a beast. His image imposes itself over the whole region. A "señor feudal de las aguas montuvias"⁸, he is spoken about with awe, respect, and fear. People discuss his deeds in the chichería. Travelers who pass through the area hear of him. Farmers pay him tribute with cattle. Like a great warrior, his body shows the marks of battles:

"... como uno de esos legendarios piratas que, en los abordajes, perdían las manos bajo el hacha de los defensores, era bizarramente manco. ... se había quedado así en un lance heroico, y ... su garra perdida era por ello como un blasón hazañoso."⁹

In addition to physical characteristics that call to mind human attributes, ~~Guásinton~~ has definite personality traits. The author explains that:

"... Guásinton volvía a sus plácidos modos de siempre. Tornaba a gustar de la melancólica música montuvia; ... parece ser que ... hasta encontraba en ello un especial encanto.

Dizque en las noches, cuando los pescadores tocaban sus guitarras, ... seguía a las canoas; y si alguno daba un traspies y venía al agua, Guásinton se alejaba a todo nado, sin duda para evitarse la tentación de comérselo."¹⁰

When this animal meets his death, it is more violent confrontation on a field of honor than hunting down a wild beast. The men who kill Guásinton are in effect rebellious vassals, who unite to overthrow a tyrannical overlord. They fear and respect him to the end. He represents courage

and boldness that can be overcome only with collective effort. He is the spiritual essence en grande of what they are en pequeño: strong, independent, and anarchistic. Through his story, the Ecuadorian coast is a place where people and natural elements are different in physical form more than vital substance.¹¹

Rural settings predominate throughout de la Cuadra's narrative. The world of the montuvio most interests him. He portrays it as he sees it; vigorous, combative, and passionate. In spite of its violence, it is beautiful. His artistic representation of that world reaches its peak in his novels.

José de la Cuadra's novels are a series of brief and intense scenes that relate to a central theme. The technique could almost as well be considered dramatic as narrative, so keen is the impact of what is portrayed.¹² Reading de la Cuadra after an author from an earlier period, such as Luis A. Martínez, is like leaving a philosophical discourse about war to enter the battlefield. Everything that seemed distant and abstract becomes near and real. The author fills his pages with compact tableaux. Each strikes a mark in the construction of the novel. Most portray human drama. Dialogue is relied upon heavily to accomplish this purpose. The characters speak as would the people they represent.¹³ De la Cuadra has them use few and carefully selected

words, that relay precise and vivid description.

For example, in the first pages of Los Sangurimas de la Cuadra captures in a single paragraph the violent tradition of a montuvio family. Here the protagonist tells what happened after his father, a gringo, seduced his mother:

"--... Mi tío Sangurima se calentó. Buscó al gringo y lo mató. Mi mamá no dijo esta boca es mía. Nací yo. Cuando nací, mi mamá me atendió como pudo. Pero, en cuanto se alzó de la cama, fué a ver a mi tío. Lo topó solor. Se acomodó bien. Le tiró un machetazo por la espalda y le abrió la cabeza como coco. Nada más."¹⁴

This character accepts violence as his birthright. His casual "Nada más" indicates occurrences like fratricide are not unusual. The author has him tell the tale in the language of the montuvio: short sentences, nearly free of descriptive similes, metaphors, and adjectives. The emphasis is on action.

As similar tableaux appear, it becomes clear that de la Cuadra is creating a symbol of the montuvio. The Sangurima family is that symbol. The matapalo tree is used to represent the family and its history. Nicasio and his antecedents are "el tronco añoso", his sons are "las ramas robustas", the family feud is called "torbellino en las hojas", and the disintegration of the family is termed "palo abajo". The patriarch and his sons are the upper level of montuvio society, and his cousins, nieces, nephews, grandchildren,

and other relatives from the rest. There are savage and bizarre acts in the history of this family: killings, rapes, incest.¹⁵ The Sangurima family is the essence, the primitive origin, of coastal Ecuadorian society. The author explains that after a bitter family feud:

"... los periódicos ... trataron la cuestión en extenso.

Se historiaba a las gentes Sangurimas. Se daba ... la lista de sus actos de horror. Se mostraba su genealogía encharcada de sangre, como la de una dinastía de salvajes señores.

... eran tratados como una familia de locos, de vesánicos, de anormales temibles.

... estaban a la altura siniestra de los barones feudales ... 'En el agro montuvio --decían-- hay ... gamonales de raigambre campesina auténtica, ... explotadores ... del montuvio proletario ... Aristocracia rural paisana, que pesa más todavía que la ... importada, a la cual gana en barbarie.'"¹⁶

While the principal characters are symbolic for their roles in the upper levels of society, they are not portrayed as "types", but created with individual characteristics.¹⁷ The author's principal tools are their actions and words, as in the following illustration where Father Terencio Sangurima explains the manner in which he teaches the gospel to his fellow montuvios:

"--Yo les digo, más o menos: 'Iba Nuestro Señor con esa cruz grandota que le habían cargado los verdugos, cuando en eso sale el judío malamansado de Malco y le suelta una bofetada... ¿Saben lo que hizo el santo varón? En vez de haberle rajado el alma, que era lo que provocaba, como él era tan buen corazón

apenas se contentó con decirle al judío: 'Anda a golpear a tu madre.' Así.'"18

This village priest has no duplicate in any other novel. His brother Eufrasio, a coronel, is also unique. Although he engages in what might be termed "typical" activities of leading the montonera or pillaging the countryside, he claims: "--Yo estoy con los de abajo Todo el que está mandando es enemigo del pueblo honrado."19 Although he is a caudillo, he is first a montuvio. His spirit of independence borders on anarchy, putting him against all authority.

Ultimately, it is authority that triumphs over the Sangurimas. A family feud develops when Nicasio's favorite grandsons rape and murder one of their cousins, because her father would not consent to a marriage between them and her sisters. The police and half the family defeat Nicasio, the coronel, and the other half protecting the boys. It is the symbolic loss of montuvio independence to the authority of conventional society. De la Cuadra portrays the impact of this loss in the following scene between Nicasio and Father Terencio:

"Se deshizo en llanto don Nicasio. Era la primera vez que ... alguien lo veía llorar. Acaso no habría llorado nunca, ...
 --¡Papás! ¡Papás! ¡Acomódese, papás!
 Era un llanto tremendo. Se mordía el hombre las manos hechas puño. Se desgarraba las ropas.

--¡Papás! ¡Hay que tener valor! ¡Hay que ser macho, papás!

Reaccionó don Nicasio.

--Yo soy más macho que vos, mujerona; más macho que todos, ¡carajo!... Pero es que me duele, pues..."²⁰

Nicasio's dramatic actions and strong, direct language do more to relay the destruction of his ego than could a lengthy commentary from the author. De la Cuadra is a master at portraying the psychology of his characters with a minimum of words. He never depicts the details of their day to day lives in the costumbrista sense. While there are scenes in which people tell each other stories about heroic exploits, ghosts, mysteries, experiences at work, episodes from local history, and other aspects of montuvio existence, these are aimed at depicting what goes on in the minds of the characters; matters a montuvio thinks about that are important to him.

It can not be claimed de la Cuadra teaches a great deal about the particulars of montuvio life. He does not even deal with the "standard" types of class conflict generally found in the work of the "Grupo de Guayaquil". Instead, he takes an incident that represents one of the more dramatic elements of montuvio existence, or a thought that conveys forceful or violent aspects of his psychology, and explodes it with such energy that understanding the characters and action is brought about through impression and suggestion more than description. Repeatedly, he pummels

one with those powerful tableaux, chipping away at him until he is no longer simply a reader, but a participant in the action, much as could occur in a drama. By sharing the most memorable incidents of his life and his most intimate thoughts, it is impossible not to become something of a montuvio, perhaps another member of the Sangurima family. One may not be able to describe the local geography, or typical dress of the people, but he does have an idea of what it is to be a montuvio.

It is lamentable that de la Cuadra did not live to complete Los Monos Enloquecidos.²¹ It follows essentially the same stylistic pattern of clipped tableaux of Los Sangurimas, but it promised to be a more ambitious work. The author seemed intent on depicting more than coastal Ecuador, although that is the main scenario. He was attempting a greater perspective in this story of an adventurer who has a fantastic scheme to use trained and almost human monkeys to aid him in a quest for treasure where there are "taboos" against the presence of human beings.

Los Monos Enloquecidos is a more "conventional" novel stylistically when compared with Los Sangurimas. The tableaux are less staccato, dialogue is not as prominent, and there is some description of customs and environment. Nonetheless, social issues are not conspicuous. The protagonist is a member of the upper class, but he functions as a man in

restless search of adventure, not an exploiter of the lower classes. Socio-ethnic types appear, but their struggle is primarily against the physical environment. Social matters are presented indirectly, through the characters' talking about present or past occurrences, as in the following illustration where a worker tells the protagonist's daughter about the hacienda's prison

"--Vea, blanquita; aquí jué donde sus papás encerraban a los presos. Ahí estaba la barra y er cepo; ahí, las argollas; de ese gancho der techo, cargaban al varón que latiguiaban a narga pelada, blanquita..., ¡qué horror! Izque se morían de tanto que maltirizaban, mismamente como a Nuestro Señor Jesús Cristo... digo yo...

Alicia abría unos ojos enormes, entre de asombro y de incomprensión.

--; Cuéntame! ; Cuéntame tú a mí!

Y eran historias absurdas, acaloradas, con humedad de sueño, con olor de fábula; pero, se adivinaba que, en el fondo, alentaba un poco de dolorosa verdad."²²

The worker tells the story in his way, using his own accent and images. The horror he expresses at the memory of his ancestors' suffering is also his own. The girl's surprised reaction adds to the drama of both the story and the storytelling scene. The author's presence is subtle; a slight amplification of the subject, a hint of interpretation of the dialogue, never a harangue for social justice. He does not have his characters make speeches about social abuse, but relays awareness of the

situation. In similar scenes he exposes more contemporary social phenomena.

Social commentary per se is not the main goal in de la Cuadra's novels. It is incidental to creation of the contradictory world of the coastal man, with its violence and bloodshed, fantasies and mysteries, and even romance and tenderness. The fatal clashes between members of the Sangurima family, the cultured protagonist's solicitation of aid from a Witch Doctor and from semi-human monkeys in Los Monos Enloquecidos, and the same character's love for his daughter or Nicasio Sangurima's affection for his grandsons are examples of the components of that world.

As de la Cuadra himself has written: "Sin afán propagandista, la simple exposición de la verdad campesina entraña la denuncia y llama a la protesta."²³ However, his statement is too modest. His technique is simple in form, not function. More than any of his colleagues, José de la Cuadra succeeds in relaying the psychology of the people who live along the Ecuadorian coast, both as individuals and members of specific groups. If the reader feels the social situation is in need of correction, he does so because he has experienced and become a part of the world of the montuvio.

Joaquín Gallegos Lara

Joaquín Gallegos Lara's main goal in Las Cruces Sobre el Agua is to portray the urban proletariat, the cholo of Guayaquil, in his life's struggles. Some of these battles would be expected in socially oriented novels, as with disease, poor working conditions, degrading living situations, and lack of employment. Others include the more abstract kind, which may be translated into the fight to satisfy universal human needs: recognition as a person, companionship, peace of mind, security, and love. By delineating carefully the lives of individual people, this author succeeds in presenting an ardently human picture of the working class inhabitants of the city. He examines their everyday pains and pleasures. He sees them both as distinct human beings and a collective body. Sometimes he shows children at play in the streets, lovers strolling along the river, or people chatting in the park. Other times he shows workers massed at a strike meeting, or the population swarming into the streets in protest. He balances portrayal of the urban cholo as a whole with artistic development of unique representatives of him. More than any of his colleagues, Gallegos Lara is the novelist of Guayaquil.

Gallegos Lara begins many episodes with a "panning" of the scene. He pauses to focus on details that lend visual,

audible, or olfactory stimulation. Then he focuses on the characters, to capture their speech and their actions. He may fade out one scene and switch to another, then return to the first, to show simultaneous action. During descriptions that involve masses of characters, he highlights individuals within the group, to make the scene less impersonal.

As a result of this technique the view is limited to what is visible through the author's verbal camera. Since Gallegos Lara is attempting to portray society in a way that will arouse sympathy for the characters who represent its lower extremes, they are the principal subjects of his lens.

He concentrates on material that gives a warmly human view of the city. In the following illustration one of the protagonists is walking along the river with his sweetheart. The author's "camera" strays away from the pair and pans the street scene:

"Las cholas vendedoras, vestidas de blanco percal, en el aura lunar y a los aletazos de sus faroles, semejaban tinajas. La brisa del río disolvía aromas de mujer, el olor a flores y almíbar de las chirimoyas, vaho de marea.

--Las más dulces, caserita, las más dulces!

--Estas son verdaderas de Puná!

--A tres por dos las sin pepas.

... Las familias iban adelante. En grupos, conversaban y escupían las menudas semillas. Zarpaba una balandra en la luz de la ría: las velas audaces y el casco se perfilaban en manchón agudo."²⁴

The dress of the cholas, people hawking their goods, families strolling and talking, the boats in the river, and sensuality attributed to odors stimulate the senses. Gallegos Lara focuses on small details that are usually taken for granted. They are the sights, sounds, and smells basic to the world of the people the characters represent. Without them, there would be only a general picture of life in Guayaquil. With them, it is possible to experience vicariously its texture. It is an artistic technique that is subjective, one that does much to "humanize" what might be otherwise an objective description of the setting for social conflict. As one critic has observed: "... es algo más que una ardida y plástica visión de la ciudad porteña; es la vida del pueblo, del pueblo auténtico" ²⁵ By making it possible in effect to participate in that life, Gallegos Lara makes one compassionate to the characters who live it.

The author applies similar technique to the description of troops preparing to march against the populace:

"Del empedrado del patio subía un vaho húmedo, a basura y orines de caballo. Guitarreaba miriadas de moscas en la boñiga de los rincones. ... la tropa se precipitaba a formar. ...

--Pero no habrá orden de fuego ¿verdad, general?

...
No era matar lo que podía desagradarle. ...
Matar inermes era lo que rechazaba. ...

...

Desde chico, ... soñaba en la guerra. El clarín, los gatillazos de los cierres de los rifles, la bandera, todo ... le encrespaba la sangre ... contra el remordimiento de ametrallar civiles. ..."²⁶

Again, there is appeal to the senses and attention to individual human components of the whole. Even soldiers, who often represent a malignant element in thesis novels, are people separate and unique from each other, with their own thoughts and conflicts.

Dialogue is an important tool for Gallegos Lara in the construction of characters. The words and sentences they utter are faithful representations of what is heard on the streets of Guayaquil. Their vocabulary and syntax are in keeping with their education and social class. However, dialogue is not used as the principal means for portraying their psychology, but as a way of "setting the stage" for the author's descriptive interpretation of their thoughts. For example, here is a scene in which one of the protagonists, while still a boy, talks with an older woman with whom is infatuated:

--¿Cómo te llamas?

--Afredo Baldeón-- contestó sin alzar los ojos.

Ella indicó, vagamente, como si hablara sola:

--Somos vecinos, yo vivo allá.

Alfredo se encogió; la voz de la blanca le daba calor. Aparentando mirar hacia donde señalaba ... pudo verla. En sus ojos se quebraba la mañana cegadora. Sus cabellos le semejaron suave y peinada estopa de coco. ...

A partir de ese día, nunca faltó a atisbarla, pero sin dejarse ver. Nadie se percató de su raro acecho Cuando no lograba avizorarla, algo le entristecía los juegos toda la jornada. ... Alfredo se acordaba de la blanca a todas horas. Se dormía pensándola. ..."²⁷

Gallegos Lara's portrayal of psychology is essentially the depiction of thoughts through actions. Because the boy is unable to look at the woman directly, it is clear he feels awkward; because he spies on her and thinks of her while falling asleep, one knows he is preoccupied. This technique is in keeping with the psychology of a young boy, who does not understand fully what he feels and acts more out of instinct than plan.

When dealing with more mature characters, the author relies as much on words as actions to portray thoughts, although he may add more detail to description. In the following example one of the protagonists learns his father has lost the family business:

"--Vea, viejo, esta ocasión quiero trabajar a su lado en La Cosmopolita. Todo Baldeón es panadero: la sangre chuta!

Las cejas grises de Juan se reunieron dolorsas.

--Ya no hay Cosmopolita. Ahora se llama La Flor del Guayas. Me la quitó el viejo Rivera! Estaba atrasado en los pagos...

Alfredo no contestó: en el pecho le hervían las maldiciones. Era una perrada abusar así con un hombre como su padre. ¿Cómo ... pudo imaginarse que un desgraciado, podrido en plata, haga nada bueno? El que no daba la patada a la entrada, la daba a la salida!"²⁸

Words and gestures precede and complement the author's descriptive interpretation of thoughts. In this way Gallegos Lara reinforces the ideas and opinions he wishes to project, lending them plausibility. The characters think and act as might the real people they represent. He avoids lumping them together as the "hombre-masa", but deals with each one as a separate creation.

One can only speculate why Gallegos Lara created two protagonists for Las Cruces Sobre el Agua. He may have done so because of a desire to express his own personality through them. Alfredo Baldeón, the zambo breadseller, is from near the bottom of Guayaquil society. He represents a class with which the author could only sympathize. Alfonso Cortés, from a slightly higher social level and an intellectual artist, has facets in his personality that might parallel the author's own. Baldeón's thoughts and actions are direct and uncomplicated, as would be appropriate for his position in society. His goals are mainly the fulfillment of physical needs for food and shelter and basic emotional ones of loving and being loved. Cortés is a more complex character. His interest in music and culture puts him on a higher plane. His goals include fulfillment of needs similar to Baldeón's, but admit the aesthetic ones of being a creator and interpreter of music. Although both protagonists represent positive elements from their part of society, neither can be considered a

stereotype. They are distinct, but complementary, individuals. Both are portrayed from their early childhood through adulthood, with sufficient details of their personal conflicts and triumphs to make them unique. However, Baldeón is the more memorable. He represents the majority of the population. Cristóbal Garcés Larrea has remarked that he is: "un personaje inolvidable, ... dotado de una vitalidad tan asombrosa que perdurará, porque tiene sangre y alma de una realidad."²⁹

After reading Las Cruces Sobre el Agua one has the feeling he has just seen a movie. He has known characters who are individuals, but whose lives follow and are shaped by events leading to a violent milestone in modern Ecuadorian history. Since everything he has seen has been sympathetic to the lower levels of society, he has undergone a lesson in the Ecuadorian social process.

Nonetheless, even in this novel written by perhaps the most socio-politically oriented member of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", artistic conscience tends to "tone down" social commentary. Gallegos Lara may present a scene that relays an example of social injustice, but he tends to avoid interpreting it in moral terms. He lets the action speak for itself.³⁰ When he does interject his own thoughts and ideas, it is from an analytical rather than declaratory perspective, as in the following example. The scene is a workers' strike meeting:

"... tanto en sus rostros de impreciso barro humano, contraídos por el esfuerzo que ponían en la tarea desacostumbrada de pensar, como en los demás apiñados llenando el salón, descubría borrados el miedo y la apatía de los ojos. Eran los mismos hombres a quienes el exceso de trabajo embrutecía, cuyo horizonte terminaba incendiado en un vaso de aguardiente, pero con el chispazo de otra llama en la mirada."³¹

The author idealizes the working class, but he does not hide their imperfections. His technique is to give one an understanding of the social situation, and **arouse** his compassion for the human beings the characters represent. Gallegos Lara's selective, cinematographic approach concentrates on the lower levels of society, but includes both pleasant and unpleasant aspects of the characters' lives. They may be alienated from other parts of society, but they are not alienated from each other.³² They may suffer economic privation; but they enjoy intangible pleasures. Las Cruces Sobre el Agua survives **both** for its artistic value **and** its social considerations.

Enrique Gil Gilbert

Enrique Gil Gilbert reaches for grandeur when he writes about the areas of the Ecuadorian coast where rice is grown, and the people who live there. In Nuestro Pan (1941), he strives to tell the story of the montuvio and the land from the perspective of one who witnesses and relates an epic battle. The struggle is both between man and nature and men. The prize is rice. Rice is the basic sustenance for life. It must be won from the land through hard effort. Once in the hands of men, it becomes treasure. Some men fight others to possess it, thus acquiring wealth. Other men are satisfied with enough to maintain a respectable level of existence. The contest is an heroic one. There is nobility in man and nature as they combat each other in the production and possession of rice. Gil Gilbert's work brings to mind comparison with films. Rice as the means for human survival was dramatized in Bitter Rice, the classic Italian film of the post-war period. However, the cinema version of Pearl Buck's The Good Earth was more in keeping with the epic quality in Nuestro Pan. The Chinese peasants in that film love the earth, and spill their sweat, blood, and lives into it, as do the montuvios in the Ecuadorian novel. Time has little relevance. The struggle to survive is eternal. These rural characters in China and Ecuador suffer and combat nature's

hostile elements and sometimes receive its benefits. They are superstitious, and faithfully adhere to local traditions. They live under the authority of a social system biased against them. However, Gil Gilbert tells a story about people who have no exact duplicates elsewhere. He does it with an artistic technique unique to him.

Reading Gil Gilbert's novel is like visiting a gallery of impressionistic paintings. In one scene montuvios are laboring in the fields. They may be bent over the soil, working with tools, or returning from work, walking and chatting in small groups. Perhaps they would be frozen with anxiety, watching a horde of locusts approach the crop. In another scene, tough, military men are crashing through the forest. It may be a valiant firefight against a superior force, a leader shouting a command, or a dying soldier receiving the coup de grâce. Other scenes picture the countryside, and still others depict violent confrontations between individuals. In every case a mental portrait remains, permanent and vivid.

The author creates these verbal paintings with broad strokes. Relatively few words are used, and most are selected to convey an action and often rhythm. Characters are portrayed primarily on the basis of their words and deeds. Even scenes that deal with elements in nature usually considered inanimate hum with sound and throb with movement.

Interaction between man and nature is relayed through images that suggest dialogue and motion. Descriptions of the physical environment are brought about through evocation of natural sounds and odors. There is little interdependence from one scene to another. The scenes add up to an intense representation of life, but each seems larger than life.

When Gil Gilbert creates a character, he leaves a visual image of him. He does not need a large "canvas", for he wastes very little space when he paints his pictures.³³ Certain elements impress more than others. Witness the following description of Captain Sandoval leading the remnants of his defeated Liberal force through the jungle:

"... Caminar. Desgajados los vestidos. Rotos los pies. Seca la garganta. Con polvo en las hendiduras de la piel. Ya los machetes amellados. Teniendo que cortar los bejucos con las manos. Y las manos rasgadas. ... Días. Días. Días. Hay hojas erizadas de espina filosísima, bellas, blancas y verdes, que al pasar aserruchan. El Capitán Sandoval iba adelante, con la frente razguñada por las espinas, con la cara raspada y desollada por las hojas. Hojas como de acero, que despellejan al rozar. El Capitán Sandoval es como bejuco. Alto, delgado, nervudo y ojos de gavilán. Camina firme, como si estuviera siempre marchando y jamás se cansa. Manda con frases cortas. Su voz es gritona.

--¡Epa! ¡Carajo! ¡Aquí hay que hacer lo que digo! El que quiere hacerlo, se queda, el que no, que cargue con su aparejo. Ya lo saben.

Y a marchar. Con los pies chorreando sangre. ...

...

Se guiaba oliendo el camino y no viéndolo.
 Abriéndose paso con las manos. Oyendo sin
 atender el grito de las catarnicas. ... El
 Capitán Sandoval parecía ser como el viento.
 Iba. Iba. Iba. Quizá no se cansara, Caminaba
 más rápido."34

This picture is not likely to be forgotten easily. The background of the tropical jungle and the exhausted troops are secondary only to the imposing figure of the captain. The feeling of wearisome struggle is relayed through the repetition of key words (Días. Días. Días.; Iba. Iba. Iba.). Although the individual sentences relay action, there is constancy in their total, an impression of timelessness, much as one might receive from a painting.

In other instances the author wishes to give insights into the psychology of the characters. To accomplish this purpose, he relies on a combination of quick and realistic dialogues and short descriptive sentences that emphasize movement. Even secondary characters display deeper psychological penetration than would be apparent from the brevity of the description. In the following scene a laboring montuvio learns his wife is pregnant:

--No, Pedro, no me estropees. ¿Que no te he dicho?

Se acercó a él, abandonándose sobre su pecho de piedra.

--Este... ya... creo... éste... estoy... Vas a tener un hijo...

Bajo la lluvia abierta sobre la tierra en

espera, Pedro Sánchez abrió su boca grande y gruesa en una risa que llenaba toda la cara. Tomó las manos de su mujer. Acarició el vientre de ella. La trajo hacia sí, deseoso, no de sentirla, sino de hacerla sentir su cuerpo lleno de vetas musculosas, para decirle:

--¡Que sea macho, mismamente, como el tayta!
¡Ahí! ¡Donde pongo el ojo pongo la bala!"³⁵

In a few sentences the reader learns much about how montuvios think and matters important to them. The man thinks fathering a child is significant to his manhood. The child is a simple affirmation of it. The woman wishes to give the man pleasure, and feel protected. The child will give him pleasure, and her pregnancy will make him more protective. The author does not give lengthy interpretive descriptions, but makes it possible to participate in the couple's pleasure as would another montuvio. These people's thoughts are directed toward basic concerns. In that light, they may be considered representative of most montuvios. Nonetheless, the **way the man reacts, with** his boastful exclamation, and the woman's hesitancy to tell her husband about her pregnancy, are not characteristic necessarily of all members of their socio-ethnic group. Even these secondary characters are dealt with as unique human beings. By selecting individuals, regardless of their social positions, Gil Gilbert avoids stereotyping his characters.³⁶ By concentrating on their words and actions, he adds drama to his verbal painting.

This sense of drama is extended to descriptions of paisaje. In the absence of people, Gil Gilbert replaces dialogue with visual and olfactory evocations that complement and balance the feeling of movement, as in this river scene:

"El río tiene color de hombre y de mate. Camina con fantasmas de voces entre sus aguas. Navegan por él barcos y canoas que no se ven y que dejan la estela y nada más. La luna anda sobre aristas espejeantes y escurridizas. Una hoja de plátano está guindada sobre la corriente ondulándose como una sábana celeste. El viento anda a gatas bajo las ramazones, removiendo quedamente las ramas frágiles. Nadie podría decir quién va silbando por el río. A veces un lagarto enorme, enverdecido por la luna, navega con su cabeza al aire, tranquilo, parsimonioso, olvidado de su fiereza. Abre estrías en el dorso de las aguas. El río va... En la madrugada estará de regreso desde los cacaotales, trayendo olor de chocolate y también de naranjas y de ciruelas. Desde aquí lleva olor de raíz desnuda, de tierra brava, de lagarto. Hasta de tiburón y tintorera."³⁷

Gil Gilbert refers to colors and odors found naturally in the setting portrayed. There is an earthy aura about his description. The movements in the river are caused by plants and animals native to the environment. Their motion is described with comparison to other natural movements. He relays perception of an ebbing and flowing of natural elements in a way so unaffected it must be described as poetic.³⁸

In some scenes the author depicts identification

between man and nature, as though they were equals:

"Desde el desmonte comenzaban a oírse gritos. Veía a la gente avanzar despacio. Los brazos se alargaban y encogían rápido. Los golpes de los que decapitaban se oían sordos. El susurro de los que sobaban era como una hamaca sin argolla, de sogas puras, rozando contra el gancho de fierro. Venía el murmullo de las gentes. El murmullo de las plantas de arroz, restregándose unas en otras, hablando con el viento, peleando con los hombres, agonizando tronchadas."³⁹

The author conveys relationship between man and nature as between two people, through action and dialogue. Verbs like "decapitaban," "peleando," and "agonizando," relay struggle. However, the dialogue is not of words, but sounds. The murmuring of harvesters blends with wind through the rice plants to form a natural symphony. Waving arms are complemented by swaying plants. It seems more like a ballet than a scene of labor. There is smoothness and harmony, in Gil Gilbert's depiction of man and nature's interrelationship⁴⁰, even as they engage in combat. He interprets their interdependence as not only physical, but aesthetic.

After the reader wanders through the gallery of verbal paintings that is Nuestro Pan, he realizes the sum is not so great as the parts. On the surface there is the history of a rice-growing dynasty's rise, flourishing, and decadence. There is also the underlying story of the montuvios who work in the rice fields, with the social message that rewards are not commensurate with their labors. However, none of these

stories is as impressive as scenes depicting the olympian Captain Sandoval, laboring montuvios, the countryside, or human drama. Because of its fragmentary construction, there is no single, overpowering message in this novel. There is no great, imposing symbol. Many fragments are masterful interpretations of elements from coastal Ecuador, but the total collection does not comprise the interpretation of the region. In spite of its obvious importance, even the rice does not have an overbearing significance compared with human or other natural elements.

Gil Gilbert's triumph as an artist is the painting of unforgettable pictures. Collectively, they are a rich and emotive gallery that portrays life's cycle in coastal Ecuador.

Demetrio Aguilera Malta

Demetrio Aguilera Malta's primary aim is to recreate the world of the rural cholo. This world is the strangest and most exotic in the work of the "Grupo de Guayaquil". Its physical location is among the mangrove swamps of Ecuador's coastal lowlands and islands. The people who live there, as interpreted by this author, have telluric roots so strong they must be considered more than elements that live in harmony with other parts of nature. Their beliefs, traditions, and way of life are so intertwined with the natural environment they combine with it to form a single entity. Aguilera Malta is the member of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" whose characters are most memorable for their symbolic value. Don Goyo, from the novel of the same name (1933), and Guayamabe and Néstor, from La Isla Virgen (1942), are remembered after the details of plot are forgotten. The author's strength in characterization is his ability to combine human with natural elements, making his characters representative of not only the people, but the region.

Don Goyo and Guayamabe have virtually the same function in their respective novels. While they are individuals in relation to other characters, they both show the intimate relationship with the environment that makes the cholo the true representative of coastal Ecuador

in the novels in which he appears. Guayamabe's strongest connection is with the fauna,⁴¹ while Don Goyo's is with the flora, as in the following illustration:

"--¡No podemos cortar más mangle!

--¡Los manglej son como nosotros mejmoj!

... Los pobres mangles veían, oían, hablaban y sentían. Cada hachazo los hacía palidecer de dolor como a cualquier hombre. Se quejaban. Protestaban. ..."⁴²

Even Néstor, a character from the upper class, becomes intimately linked with the environment:

"... El barniz de las ciudades se me ha evaporado. Me siento primitivo y salvaje, casi como un tigre. ... A ratos me parece que hubiera nacido en estos sitios. Me grita el ancestro en una forma vegetal y extraña! No será que antes tenía raíces adventicias, como las de los mangles? No será que alguna fuerza anti-humana se separó de las ramas y los troncos?"⁴³

Aguilera Malta blends these telluric qualities with social significance. Don Goyo is the personification of the natural environment, and he is the anarchistic cholo fighting against the invasion of "civilized" white men, whose materialism he knows will virtually enslave his people to corruptive modern society. Guayamabe, the mayordomo, is a link between the cholo's primitive society and the white man's civilization. He is also a cholo and his telluric ties are nearly as strong as Don Goyo's. At the same time, however, he is obedient to his white employer. Néstor represents white civilization that is finally over-

come by the natural and primitive forces of a coastal island. He is also the upper class exploiter of the working cholos. His defeat signifies the triumph of social justice.

Aguilera Malta divides his novels into small sections. Each section is like a scene in a drama.⁴⁴ However, his scenes are not so independent of each other as those in de la Cuadra's work, for example. While each has dramatic impact, it is dependent upon the next for the complete creation of a character, or to tell one of the secondary stories.

The author constructs a character like he might in a play. A person might be seen first as part of a scene involving other characters, in which he is not predominant. Then other scenes focus on him specifically, to tell about his past life, his influence on other people, and other people who influence him. Other scenes might deal with him as he interacts with the physical and spiritual environment. Each scene is a thread, interwoven with others to form the fabric of the novel. Don Goyo is typical of Aguilera Malta's technique in the construction of his characters. When he first appears, he only passes by:

"De pronto, oyeron el chapotear de una canoa. Algo se agitó en la sombra. Se oyó un canaletazo. Al rato otro. Después, una voz ronca, pesada, vigorosa:

--¡Güenas noches de Dios!
--¡Güenas, don Goyo!

Pesadamente. Lentamente. Casi al lado de ellos, pasó. El golpe del canaleta--tardo, pero firme--se hizo más confuso. La noche--tal que enorme boa de ébano--lo atornilló en su vientre.

Hubo silencio."⁴⁵

The background is of shadow, sound, and mystery. Although Don Goyo only passes through, he seems to fill it. As he appears in other scenes, he becomes the dominant figure. Finally, he remains as the symbol of the cholo. Symbols are transcendent and eternal. Don Goyo is not an exception:

"Don Goyo Quimí ... tendría unos ciento cuarenta o ciento cincuenta años, como él mismo decía. Sus hijos y sus nietos parecían hermanos suyos. Su piel, arrugada y curtida, semejaba a la de una fruta seca. Medio encorvado, andaba con lentitud y dificultad. Pero en el agua era otra cosa. Parecía un pez. Manejaba la canoa como cualquiera de sus bisnietos. Lanzaba el arpón y la fija. Tiraba la atarraya. Tendía las redes. Se burlaba de los tiburones y los cantanudos. 'Son mis amigos', decía siempre."⁴⁶

Don Goyo is more than the patriarch of a tribe of cholos. He is primitive coastal Ecuador in human form. His stature grows with every scene in which he appears. He does not actually die, but becomes part of the surroundings. In contrast to novels that portray civilized man overcome by nature, as in the final pages of José Eustasio Rivera's La Vorágine, Don Goyo is not devoured by the forest, but blends into it. The destiny he fulfills is a continuation of life, in a more

primeval state. His entrance into the mangrove swamp is not a journey into the unknown, but a homecoming:

"Su paso era saludado con reverencias. Un cuchicheo de admiración y de afecto hervía de los rincones más ocultos, en los recovecos del fango. Y parecía que una enorme multitud de mangles empezaban a seguir a los que llevaban en sus ramas al viejo cholo.

Don Goyo era feliz."⁴⁷

Not only the people, but the trees, fishes, animals, and other parts of nature are actors in Aguilera Malta's drama. There is dialogue between them. The stage on which they perform is the Ecuadorian coast. The final scene in which Don Goyo appears is a curtain call, where he takes his final bow. He is a godlike figure, who seems to be just beginning his existence.

"--¡Ve!...

Allá, en el centro del río, estaba don Goyo. Parecía abofetear la negrura de la noche. Se deslizaba sobre el agua como sobre tierra firme. Tenía un aspecto de fortaleza que nunca se le viera. Iba rodeado de tiburones y catanudos, que parecían rodearlo sumisamente, hilvanando alfombras de espuma a su paso. Estaba completamente desnudo. Reía con una extraña risa triunfal.

Los quedó mirando breves instantes. Levantó la mano derecha. Les hizo un breve signo de adiós. Y empezó a nadar. Iba pausadamente. Con una majestad que imponía. Tras él--en cardumen--los cuerpos oscuros de los monstruos marinos.

Cusumbo tartamudeó:

--¿Taremoj soñando?

--Tarvé..."⁴⁸

Don Goyo is the most impressive character in Aguilera Malta's novels of this period. Not even Guayamabo of La Isla Virgen interacts so thoroughly with other characters and

elements in nature. Although none of the author's other characters achieve the stature of the patriarchal cholo, they are constructed with essentially the same formula.

As is characteristic of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" writers, this author uses dialogue to relay the psychology of his characters and to portray drama between them. However, Acuilera Malta surrounds his dialogues with short descriptive passages whose vocabulary and syntax are similar to the dialogue. Witness the following "lover's quarrel" scene:

"Se tiró cuan largo era sobre la canoa. Dejó que la corriente los arrastrara. Una rabia extraña empezaba a dominarlo. La Gertru entonces habló;

--¿Te habís dormío, Cusumbo?

--No.

--¿Y quéj lo que te pasa?

--¡Nada!

--¿Y por qué vaj tan callo?

--¡No lo hey notao!

La Gertru se levantó. Se acercó a él. Lo miró fijamente. Largamente. Y le escupió encima sus palabras:

--Lo que pasa ej lo que tcy dicho siempre:

Ujtede no deben probar, porque dejpuó...

Cusumbo se incorporó.

--No, ¿sabej boj? No ej eso. Lo que pasa ej que a laj mujere hay que tratarlaj a palo. Como si fueran mulaj. Sólo así tan contentaj. ...

--Eso ej farso...

--¡Pue ser!

Se levantó. Si dirigió a la popa. Y otra vez bogó. Bogó con furia. ..."⁴⁹

In both description and dialogue vocabulary and syntax imitate the speech of the coastal cholo. The imprecision in

the characters' expression,⁵⁰ the paucity of adjectives and adverbs in the description, and the breaking of normal sentence structure suggest action and urgency. The woman's apprehension that the man will want her in only a physical way and his frustration over her lack of cooperation are expressed with verbs that relay motion, and dialogue that goes directly to the point. In this way Aguilera Malta succeeds in portraying the cholo's brooding, introspective psychology and capacity for strong emotion. By use of colloquial language he removes himself somewhat from the stance of "omniscient author". He becomes almost another actor in the drama.

While he is concerned mainly with the creation of characters, Aguilera Malta does not ignore the background to the action. He gives careful attention to the effects of sound and lighting, as in the following illustration from La Isla Virgen, where some cholos are laboring in the forest:

"De rato en rato, dan un machetazo. El sol les cae a plomo. Trabajan sobre la loma encendida. Sudan a mares. Tienen que agarrarse sobre los brusqueros intrincados para no resbalar y caer cerro abajo. Hay momentos en que parece que la tierra humeara. Un silencio terrible cae sobre sus espaldas. No corre el menor soplo de viento. No se ve la menor señal de vida en la montaña. Todo está quieto, tibio, taciturno."⁵¹

One hears only the hacking of machetes. He sees the sun glistening on the workers backs. He could be watching a play, except the sights and sounds are suggested only indirectly by verbal description.

However, Aguilera Malta's attention to background is no more than complementary to depiction of human elements in his work. Neither sound and lighting effects nor paisaje are important in themselves. He applies his narrative devices with equal effectiveness to the building of secondary characters. Here a cholo worker is experiencing feelings toward a woman that are new to him:

"Cada vez le gusta más la Mágina. Cada vez, le gusta más.

Y es raro. Le parece que le empieza a gustar de otra manera. No solamente para acostarse con ella. También, para verla, para tenerla cerca, para que le haga el arroz con verde y las lisas asadas, para que le cargue el agua, para que le dé muchos hijos, para que le espulgue la cabeza en los domingos de tarde. Y claro!, también para que le cuelgue el tolo y le tienda el cuerito o el petate."⁵²

This character is treated as an individual. It is possible to see what in life is important to him. Aguilera Malta never treats his characters as a collective and anonymous mass. Whenever the scene focuses on even a secondary one, there is some indication he is a unique person.

Don Goyo and La Isla Virgen form a complete cycle. The first novel concentrates on presenting the cholo in a pure and unspoiled situation where he lives peace-

fully and harmoniously with nature, independent from outside influence. Then he becomes engulfed by modern society. He is deceived, exploited, and corrupted. His idyl begins to crumble. In the second novel he is no longer independent from the whole of society, but lives in a sub-culture, where he performs social functions ranging from small businessman to professional thief. Finally, he becomes disillusioned with his new role. Néstor's loss of his woman to a cholo bandit and his disappearance into the island's jungle symbolizes the cholo's rebellion against the whole of society and his return to anarchistic self-sufficiency. The author suggests a re-definition of coastal society, with a fresh emphasis on the telluric background of the population.

However, one is only passively aware of the social message as he becomes submerged into this strange world where people and trees talk to each other. He knows the cholo as more than the representative of the lower class, he knows him as a cholo. He knows how he lives, and the work he does to maintain himself. Most importantly, he knows what is essential to him, and how he thinks and feels. By understanding his collective psychology, and through acquaintance with individual representatives of him, it is not necessary to be harangued with revolutionary clichés and rhetoric to become sympathetic to his social problems.

Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco

In the novels he wrote during the thirties and forties, Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco's major interest is the portrayal of life among the working class in Guayaquil. The settings are primarily urban, a distinction that he shares with Gallegos Lara. Benjamín Carrión comments that:

"Pareja encuentra sus gentes en el asfalto de la ciudad caliente. Tirados en los portales del Malecón porteño, esperanzando un poco de pan, y, acaso, enrabiaados ya de justicia y de odio. Gentes que caminan sus pasos de siempre, que trabajan, que comen mal y aman."⁵³

Pareja Diezcanseco attempts to create characters who are symbols in Ecuadorian society. The cholo couple in El Muelle (1933) are hardworking people whose labors are scarcely rewarded and who must suffer ill-treatment from both domestic and foreign employers. Jesús Parrales of La Beldaca (1935) is an enterprising cholo whose efforts to be the master of his own boat are rendered futile by an unprincipled money-lender. The three sisters of Las Tres Ratas (1944) show society is so unscrupulous that when people slip from its upper levels it is almost impossible for them to return. One of the most memorable characters is the protagonist of Don Balón de Baba (1939). He symbolizes the idealistic and misguided intellectual whose hopes to lead the poor in the achievement of social

justice are dashed tragically. This character is a home-grown version of Cervantes' Don Quijote. Even his friend, Inocente Cruz, serves as his Sancho Panza. However, rather than noble ladies and gentlemen, Don Balón wishes to champion the poor:

"--¡Cuánto dolor! ¡Cuánta miseria! Yo veo a la gente morir de hambre. Y he visto a padres que no tienen con qué enterrar a los hijos que murieron por falta de alimentos. Los niños, ojerosos, raquíticos, pidiendo una limosna, parados frente a las vitrinas de los juguetes, llorando, llorando... ¡Qué horror! ... ¡Ah! Inocente, Inocente, ¡qué crueles son los capitalistas! Y todavía creen que haciendo caridades se remedia todo! ¡Farsantes! Me muero ... de pena, no puedo más ya..."⁵⁴

Don Balón is a more serious creation than might appear ostensibly. The parallels with Cervantes' character only seem light-hearted. While Don Quijote pursued ideals that were important to him in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, regardless of the pain and hardships it cost him, Don Balón pursues his **ideals in the twentieth century**, also at the expense of personal sacrifice. Don Balón's ideals are contemporary, having to do with social justice, but he wishes to achieve them under a set of guidelines that are understood only by him, that have the stamp of his large ego. Like the Cervantine personage, the Ecuadorian one is paranoic. He believes there are evildoers everywhere who would thwart his noble goals:

"... Trabajan tanto mis nervios, que ya no puedo más, no puedo más. ¡Inocente! ¡Tengo tantos enemigos! ¡Tantos! Todos me persiguen. Todos me acosan. ¡Ayúdame, Inocente, ayúdame! Mira, en veces mi cerebro está a punto de estallar. ¡Pienso tanto! ¡Tengo tantas teorías! Es tan grave el asunto, tan grave, Inocente, que me hundo en un misterio insondable. ¡Y es mi destino descifrarlo! ¡Quiero tanto a la humanidad! Tú no sabes, tú no me entiendes. ¡Cuánto sufro!"⁵⁵

This character's suffering originates as much from people he wishes to help as those he imagines are his enemies. In the end he is rejected pitilessly by the very workers he wishes to lead.⁵⁶ Without declaring it openly, Pareja Diezcanseco suggests through Don Balón that intellectuals who would guide the poor to a better life are deceiving themselves. They will never communicate with the poor on their own level. Possibly, they have substituted the pursuit of material wealth for another kind of greed: the rapacity to be idolized, glorified, and powerful. This quixotic personality is a symbol of the egocentric intellectual who would reform society.

Nonetheless, most of this writer's outstanding characters are poor socio-ethnic types. Salient among these is Baldomera, the imposing urban zamba from the novel of the same name (1938). She can be remembered even by her physical stature:

"... si Baldomera se levanta, hay que ver. Parece tener más de un metro ochenta de estatura....

El traje ... no dibuja ninguna forma. Porque Baldomera ... Es cuadrada. Sencillamente cuadrada. Sobre la barriga, casi le cuelgan los pechos. Los pechos ... son largos y, al mismo tiempo, gordos: dos masas de carne embutida. ... Por la espalda, le pende el pelo en desorden, pelo negro, negrísimo, que hace más fuerte su cara ... chata que mantiene constantemente una expresión de furia. Los ojos son pequeñitos; casi no tienen pestañas. ... Viéndola un poco de lejos, y en sombras, se apostaría que no tiene barba. Pero, no. Es inconfundible: sus pelos. ... ¡Pero qué pelos! Largos, duros, gruesos. Y cuando Baldomera está con rabia, su gesto revelador y característico es tirarse algunos y luego sobarse la barba nerviosamente con la palma de la mano para calmarse la picazón."⁵⁷

Baldomera embodies the vigor and pugnacity of her class. She works hard, fights for her personal dignity and her family, and participates actively in a workers' strike. Although other interesting and well-constructed characters appear around her, she looms over all of them. Whether she is selling food from a cart, making love, or brawling in a bar, she is the novel's one overpowering element.

In two of his novels Pareja Diezcanseco concentrates on inanimate objects for the creation of symbols. The dock in El Muelle means work and life itself for the cholos in Guayaquil, and the sloop in La Beldaca represents the maritime cholo's most cherished ambitions. Nonetheless, most important in this author's work are the people. He gives such careful attention to the psychological makeup of individual characters they lose significance as social

representatives. He builds each separately, with a unique psychology. Other than the fact that both are poor, there is little similarity between Jesús Parrales and Baldomera. One knows Don Balón so intimately he thinks of him as another human being more than a symbol. Even characters who represent the upper classes are treated as individuals, like the businessman from El Muelle, Angel Mariño.⁵⁸ The author carries him from childhood through middle age, pointing out his individual quirks. In the following illustration he is described as a boy on his father's hacienda:

"... el niño Angel se aburría en la hacienda y odiaba el cacao y el sol. Entreteníase, eso sí, riéndose de los peones, y palmoteaba con entusiasmo cuando su padre derriba a alguno de un puñetazo o hacía flagelar a otro o meter a la barra al fulano que habíase descuidado en la vigilancia de los tendales de cacao o resultaba cómplice del hurto de un quintal de la preciosa pepa."⁵⁹

Because the author builds his upper class characters as thoroughly as those from society's lower levels, he maintains an artistic balance that lends credibility to his portrayal of Ecuadorian social reality. As each of Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco's novels appears in order of publication, there are progressively fewer similarities with those written by other members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil". His approach is the most cerebral. He constantly re-examines both content and style, always seeking subject

matter of more lasting importance, and improvement in his technique for treating it. While every member of the group has admitted to the need to correct artistic deficiencies, Pareja Diezcanseco works at it the hardest.

In his first three novels, El Muelle, La Beldaca, and Baldomera, his style can be compared to Gallegos Lara's, because he also has a camera-like way of panning a scene, pausing to focus on details. However, Pareja is most interested in appealing to visual impressions. He pays little attention to audible or olfactory stimulation, as in the following scene:

"Las ocho de la noche. En el cielo no se ve nada. Ni siquiera una estrella de parpadeo debil. Y el negro tan prieto sólo es roto, de vez en vez, por alguna nube blanquecina que flota como globo. Más que blanca, la nube es gris. Parece de alas enormes. O toma forma de sábanas sucias, de cuyas puntas tirasen y tirasen hasta arrancárlas. Entonces, entre jirones, vuelve a asomar el negro. Perro, en el cerro de la izquierda ... algo está brillando. El reflejo de los tanques del agua potable, merced a un poste de luz, cae sobre un trozo de la cúspide. Y se ve un círculo plateado, como agua de noche lunada. Todo el que acierta a caminar por esos lugares, instintivamente alza las miradas al reflejo. Como si imantara."⁶⁰

While Pareja Diezcanseco's technique shares brevity of phrases with other members of the group, his use of adjectives that reinforce colors and similes that lend grandeur puts his style on a more contemplative plane. His descriptions seem like reflections on where he has been, rather than products of an effort to relay a palpable sense of "being

there right now".

While the author often describes the urban environment with appreciation for its aesthetic beauty, it interests ~~him~~ ^{him} primarily because here people most interact. There is still beauty in his description from this perspective. Witness the following example from Las Tres Ratas (1944):

"Guayaquil, en las horas tempranas, tiene la apariencia de un juguete. Casitas de todos colores, mal pintadas por la mano torpe de un niño, pequeños tranvías, poca gente por las esquinas, el brillo de un asfalto nuevito, y aquel negro de alta cabeza que retorna a su albergue empujando la carreta vacía de tortillas calientes.

Ha comenzado el chisme en la cocina. La candela y el cuento abrasan las mejillas. Y por un zaguán entreabierto, la joven sirvienta de la casa grande platica, muy coqueta, con el panadero. Adosado a un estante, un chiquillo periodiquero aprende lecciones de amor. ..."⁶¹

The emphasis is on human presence. The colors of the houses are not important for themselves, but because they were put on by a child's hand. The black vendor is as intrinsic to the scenery as the newly paved street. Pareja Diezcanezo seems fascinated by the manner in which masses of humanity are able to congregate in one area and remain individuals, that each can think about and pursue goals important only to him. A simple flirtation, as in the above example is important to only the people involved. In El Muelle: "... comienzan a escucharse las campanas que llaman a misa. ... van saliendo viejitas ... que caminan despacio y mueven los labios secos,..."⁶² He notices beauty in

everyday things.

In the author's earlier novels much of the interaction between characters is to show how those representing the lower classes are abused by those from the upper classes, like the businessman who uses the poor chola in El Muelle to satisfy his sexual appetites, or the priest in La Beldaca who refuses to baptize a child until he is guaranteed payment.⁶³ However, beginning in Don Balón de Baba, and continuing in Hombres Sin Tiempo and Las Tres Ratas there is a steady shift in emphasis away from use of characters to demonstrate social ills toward creation of complex characters, and examination of psychology. Consequently, Pareja Diezcanseco's technique is less characterized by dialogue and action than his colleagues', especially in these later novels. Using the third person, he interprets the characters' psychology, as in the following illustration from Las Tres Ratas:

"Eugenia no lloraba ya. Mordíase los labios y ajustaba las manos sudorosas. ... Pesábale extraordinariamente la cabeza. Miraba a todos lados como esperando un golpe. Se contempló en el espejo, desencajada ... Trató de pensar algo concreto: no pudo. ... Cerró los ojos, vió manos rojas amenazantes que se tendían hacia su garganta... Temblorosa, los abrió ... y los fijó en el espejo. ... ¡Qué hielo en la piel! ¡Y cuánto ardor en los ojos! Deseó gritar ... Si pudiera pensar, si pudiera concretar alguna cosa... Densas nubes pasaron por sus miradas bobas. De repente, las fijó en la repisa... Un frasco estaba allí. Decía 'láudano' y más abajo 'veneno'. Se levantó ... de

un solo golpe. Lo tomó con ambas manos, trocó los labios en una mueca y tragó lo que restaba del contenido."⁶⁴

Between El Muelle and Las Tres Ratas there is an evolution in Pareja Diezcanseco's style. The characteristics of the later novels are also those of the earlier ones, but the emphasis changes. He becomes progressively less dependent on dialogue and action as he builds his characters, or tells a story. Even in the earlier novels, the characters' words and actions serve primarily to complement or reinforce the authors' description. The following is a scene from El Muelle:

--¿Todavía no hay qué comer?

--Ya mismito está.

--¿Y qué has hecho, pues, en toda la mañana?

--Es que buscando empleo se me pasó el tiempo.

--Pero has debido regresar más temprano. ...

Es una vaina. ¡Ya para nada sirve tener mujer!

--Ya mismito está listo, Juan. Estoy virando la carne.

Esto venía ocurriendo a diario y la tristeza de María del Socorro se iba endureciendo. Ya lloraba menos, pero sentía una gran decepción. Nunca su Juan se portó de ese modo. Empezó a sentir rabia contra él y contra todo. Sintió celos. Seguramente se trataba de otra mujer..."⁶⁵

The author uses dialogue here to introduce descriptive interpretation of the character's thoughts. Sometimes he uses it to climax description. It can also be a way of heightening the action, or increasing its pace. The language and vocabulary are always appropriate to the people using them, whether it is the cholo's simple, direct, and colloquial speech or

the bombastic rhetoric of the intellectual and quixotic Don Balón de Baba.⁶⁶

As one studies these six novels, he realizes the author must have undergone a change in both artistic and personal attitude between the publication of the first (1933) and the last (1944). By the time he wrote Don Balón de Baba heavy attention to the psychology of the main character showed clearly that artistic consideration took precedence over social preoccupation.⁶⁷ In Hombres Sin Tiempo the exposition of social problems was incidental to examination of the protagonist's mind. In Las Tres Ratas the most important consideration was an absorbing story about three sisters.⁶⁸ The author seemed to have found more satisfaction in the development of his artistic ability than the use of his work as a vehicle to campaign openly for social change. After Las Tres Ratas he temporarily stopped writing novels. When he began again his allegiance was first to art. However, while he never ignored art for thesis as a young writer, in his maturity he did not ignore thesis for art.⁶⁹

Adalberto Ortiz

One wonders when reading Adalberto Ortiz' Juyungo whether he is studying a poet writing a novel or a novelist who writes poetry.⁷⁰ There is a pervading lyricism throughout the work. Since his novel is aimed essentially at depicting the harsher realities of life for the Ecuadorian Black, he does not attempt to make every page a prose poem. However, he has the capacity to add poetic and rhythmic dimensions to the Black as he perceives him. He portrays beauty in his existence in the tropical forests, where he has a relationship with the environment that is similar but not identical to that of the rural cholo and montuvio. For Ortiz, the Black remains separate from other socio-ethnic types. He interprets him as proud and independent, which reminds one of a twentieth century version of the "noble savage". His protagonist is the Ecuadorian Black's novelistic symbol. As he attempts to portray his telluric roots,⁷¹ the author uses poetic paragraphs to introduce the chapters that deal with the protagonist's life. He calls these introductory paragraphs "Oído y Ojo de la Selva". In them he describes the physical and emotional setting for the coming chapter. The following example is typical:

"El crepúsculo va estrechando, estrechando.
La noche oprime, y lo hace santiguar. Entre las

ondas caracolearon redondos cinco pejes-cagua sin sangre. ... Entre la sombra de los mangles, chapoteó un caimán durante el aguaje grande, y brillando, agitándose, salieron los peces, sorprendidos trozos de luna blanca. La india no quiso juyungo porque los muertos vuelven con hambre. Y juyungo es el malo, juyungo es el mono, juyungo es el diablo, juyungo es el negro. Pero no eran melones sino talambos venenosos los que caían de vez en cuando sobre las charcas tibias ... Y el montuvio congo, adelante, con el poder de su macumba."⁷²

Application of well chosen similes and metaphors, and attention to movements and colors in nature, show the author's appreciation for the aesthetic beauty of the environment. The repetitive allusions to the indian girl's bias against the "juyungo" contrast with the nearly heroic image of the "montuvio congo", which suggests the Black is not an integral part of the Ecuadorian coast. In the chapter itself, Ortiz treats on a more prosaic level the effect of these elements on the protagonist's life. In this case he tells how he leaves home and lives among the Cayapa indians,⁷³ where he is tolerated but not accepted into the community. The following example is a conversation between the protagonist and the Cayapa chief:

--Tú, compadre chiquito, gustándome. Tú, sabiendo números, ¿no? Yo, necesitándote, aquí. Esta invitación le regocijó, y salió corriendo ... al cementerio ... adonde ... los indios ... Sobre los túmulos ... depositaban ... comestibles. ... --¿Por qué dejan esa comida allí, cuñado Francisco? --Parientes saliendo de la tumba, con hambre, de noche ...

--¿Y si yo me llego a morí, me pondrán también mi comida?

El hombre quedóse pensativo antes de responder, pero luego dijo con cierta soberbia primitiva ...

--No.⁷⁴ Donde entierra cayapa, no entierra Juyungo."

In spite of the Cayapa Indians' reservations toward him, in Juyungo the Black is as much a natural and intrinsic part of the environment of Esmeraldas as are the native flora and fauna. He may be a relative latecomer, but he has adapted totally to the Ecuadorian tropics. As the author describes the physical environment, he stresses the Black is an omnipresent element. Witness the following description of a river,

"El río viene de arriba, el río va para abajo; viajero de oro, de plata, de barro, de vidrio; crespo como un zambo, liso como un cholo; callado, manso, triste; bullanguero, encabritado, hambriento allá; siempre diferente, sin cansancio, pleno de alma. Es una prolongada risa de negro en el rostro oscuro de la manigua."⁷⁵

Ortiz could be describing the Black as well as a river. Comparisons to the zambo and cholo indicate he shares some of their characteristics. References to conflicting emotions and occasional hunger could also describe him. The final metaphor underscores lyrically the idea of fusion between man and nature.

Ortiz constructs his protagonist from boyhood through manhood. During his maturation, the author has him perform difficult tasks, to give a panorama of life in Esmeraldas.

As a child, he must aid his family's survival by gathering food that grows wild. While still a boy he joins two smugglers and travels the rivers of the region. During his youth he lives among the Cayapa indians. In his early manhood he has several love affairs. He falls in love and lives with a white woman, who bears him a child. He works as a day laborer, a woodcutter, and at other manual occupations. At one point he rebels against representatives of injustice in the social structure. He commits violent crimes and must go into hiding. Finally, he joins the Ecuadorian army and fights against foreign invaders. The stages in his life represent collectively the conflicts, struggles, and characteristics the author perceives in the negro esmeraldeño. Poverty, race, and social abuse are bared. Traits of hard work, pride, dilligence, and patriotism are made obvious. Moreover, the protagonist's experiences are silhouetted consistently against the background of the coastal tropics. The most essential elements of the Black are incarnated in the protagonist of Juyungo. In this sense, he is a symbol.

However, he is also an individual. Although he earns his living primarily by performing manual labors, he is portrayed as a sensitive and intelligent person. The author constructs his psychology carefully and thoroughly. Everything he experiences is described from the perspective

of its effect on him mentally. In the following illustration he begins to feel resentment against the white men who are exploiting him and other Blacks in a labor camp:

"El remanente de odio que para los blancos conservaba, tornaba a removerse. Sería capaz de acabar con todos los blancos del campamento. ¿Y después? Bueno, el monte siempre es grande y el lo conocía. ¿Pero no era blanca, también, la piel de su mujer? Sí, pero era su mujer. Y si Díaz, que era casi un blanco, estuviera presente, ¿lo mataría? No, eso era diferente."⁷⁶

Constantly, this character ponders and reexamines the meaning of his experiences. He never acts purely out of instinct. Even his most violent deeds are the result of careful consideration.

Similar to Pareja Diezcanseco, Ortiz uses dialogue primarily as a complement to his own descriptive interpretation of the characters' psychology or the action of the story. The dialogue is accurately colloquial.⁷⁷ Here the protagonist decides to join some smugglers on the river because his father has beaten him:

--¿Andás perdido? --averiguó el curcuncho.
 --No.
 --¿Tienes padre?
 Iba a decir sí, pero como aun le dolían los golpes brutales de Gumersindo, quien lo abandonara inconsciente en el monte, a su propia suerte ... respondió con viveza.
 --No, no tengo. Soy guácharo.
 --Malo, malo.
 Una idea lo atravesó como relámpago. Sí, eso es lo que debía hacer: no más culebras sin cabeza y rabo, ni lao. ... No más cabezota de la preñada ni bubas del viejo. No más hambruna ni palos. ...
 --¿Me quiere llevá, con usté, seño?"⁷⁸

The dialogue alone does not give the complete picture of the boy's desire to leave home. Ortiz must explain his thoughts through descriptive interpretation.

The author also treats secondary characters as individuals. The protagonist's white wife, or his educated and light-skinned mulatto friend, are people whose psychology is exposed primarily through the effect of their experiences. Even some **tertiary** characters are depicted through their thoughts. When the white man who holds title to an island whose inhabitants he wishes to expel learns two of his accomplices have been found hacked to death, he thinks: "¿Quién sería el criminal de tanta saña? ¿Qué bárbaro! No podía ser más que un negro, y de fijo, alguno de Pepepán. Pero bien dicen que no hay mal que por bien no venga."⁷⁹

The author misses the mark in creation of the great symbol of the Ecuadorian Black with Juyungo. His combination of the lyrical with the prosaic is an innovative approach to portray the relation of the characters to their telluric background. However, both the poetic introductions and descriptions of thoughts use language and syntax too refined and polished to be congruous with the unschooled people the characters represent. As Uriel Ospina has declared: "... a pesar de un cierto aire natural, no es natural. Es forzado, elaborado, de efectos perseguidos."⁸⁰ The protagonist is too contemplative to

be an accurate symbol of the esmeraldeño. In the following illustration he has learned some white businessman have burned his home. His child was burned to death and his wife has gone mad:

"Si Ascensión Lastre era una hombre de sentimientos, estaba poco dispuesto a desencadenar escenas tristas que le revelaran esta índole. Peor ahora que se había ido endureciendo al temple de la vida. El sabía, por haberlo visto u oído, que estar loco es como estar muerto. Y sus dos difuntos queridos lo llevaban a enfrentar lo irreparable, con una gran fuerza estoica. Estaba convencido de que todo el bien, sólo se lo merecen los seres vivientes. Un difunto siempre le importó poca cosa en sí. Pero aquí no era el hecho de la muerte, sino algo que quedaba pendiente, algo inherente a su condición de juyungo Ascensión Lastre."⁸¹

Although a capacity for introspection is generally characteristic of the lower class social inhabitant in the novels of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", Ortiz' protagonist mulls matters over too thoroughly. He looks at them from too many perspectives. Rather than representing the bulk of the population through his thought processes, he borders on being an intellectual.

Nonetheless, one does finish the novel with a comprehension of the Black and his native Esmeraldas. He has a panoramic view of his life; he sees the different ways he earns his livelihood, what he does for diversion, his inter-relationship with the natural environment, his beliefs and superstitions. While the protagonist is most preoccupied with examining and ~~evaluating~~ his relationship with white

people, he does the same with the Indian and other Blacks. There are scenes of social abuse, but they are no different from others in the novels of the "Grupo de Guayaquil". The social message is only secondary. Ortiz tries to give a lyrical but realistic portrayal of his native region and the people in it. He is only partially successful, for his greatest accomplishment is the penetrating but unrealistic portrayal of one Black. Like Enrique Gil Gilbert's Nuestro Pan, the sum of Juyunge does not fulfill the promise of its components.

Conclusions

As artists, the members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" are not uniformly successful. De la Cuadra and Aguilera Malta hit upon the most happy formulas for the artistic depiction of social realism, for they best succeed in creating symbols of the montuvio and cholo. Gallegos Lara, Gil Gilbert, and Ortiz have some unevenness in the assembly of their novels' components, which results in faulty finished products. Pareja Diezcanseco's work begins with novels whose potential for social symbolism becomes obscured by concentration on the construction of characters as individuals, and the telling of interesting stories. It evolves to novels that derive their strength from portrayal of psychology.

The authors share certain characteristics. Each balances artistic with social conscience. No novel can be dismissed as a social document. Their technique emphasizes the importance of the human elements,⁸² as they interact both with each other and with the environment. In the portrayal of lower class characters they stress the use of colloquial language and syntax.⁸³ They are careful to avoid stereotyping their characters, through emphasis on individual characteristics.⁸⁴

The most enduring feature of the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" work is the keen and poignant sense of beauty in the portrayal

of life in the coastal tropics. Luis Alberto Sánchez characterized the Ecuadorian novel of this period as having an "aire de trágico objetivismo, de hasta goce con el dolor"⁸⁵. He failed to recognize the lyrical qualities the coastal writers often achieved as they recreated their homeland and its people in their novels. In spite of the characters' cruelty to each other, hardships, or even brutality and bloodletting, the aesthetic beauty of their day to day coexistence, personal triumphs and tragedies, and intimacy with the surroundings, are constantly present. While the "Grupo de Guayaquil" was deeply committed to the depiction of society and its problems, it was no less committed to art.

NOTES
CHAPTER IV.

1. See Introduction, notes 6 and 7. Commentaries by Enrique Anderson Imbert and Arturo Torres Ríosco.

2. This refers to the "núcleo de la sierra" of novelists in Ecuador, whose renowned member is Jorge Icaza. The novels by Icaza and his highland contemporaries were more oriented to thesis than art.

3. Joyce Cary, "Cómo se escribe una novela", in Enrique Uribe White, La Novela en General y la Colombiana en Particular (Bogotá: Ediciones Lerner, 1969), p. 83.

4. Gabriel García Márquez, Cien Años de Soledad (Buenos Aires: Ed. Sudamericana, 1969), pp. 334-35. Here is a reference to a case of incest.

Mario Vargas Llosa, La Ciudad y los Perros (Barcelona: Ed. Seix Barral, 1968), p. 167. The reference here is to the murder of a military cadet.

The intent is only to illustrate that contemporary writers deal with aspects of reality that some readers might consider harsh. There is no implication these authors' narrative technique parallels that of the Guayaquil writers. Nonetheless, the content of social treatment, violence, and even sex that is found often in contemporary Spanish American novels is also the basic content of the Ecuadorian novels of the thirties.

5. The essence of this literary revolution is the depiction of social reality in an artistic way. In their effort to balance social thesis with artistic finesse, the Ecuadorian writers were similar to today's writers in the "boom".

6. See Introduction, Note 20. Fernando Alegría declared categorically that the Guayaquil writers of the thirties were precursive to the writers of the "boom", that they were among the first of a series of novelists whose "estética se basa en la realidad social". December 28, 1971. Seminar 41 of the meeting of the Modern Language Association in Chicago.

7. José de la Cuadra, Guásinton, in Obras Completas (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 524.

8. De la Cuadra, Guásinton, p. 528.

9. De la Cuadra, Guásinton, p. 522.
10. De la Cuadra, Guásinton, pp. 525-26.
11. Jorge Enrique Adoum, in José de la Cuadra, Obras Completas. Introduction to Guásinton, p. 518.
Adoum says: "José de la Cuadra proyecta ... su sentido de penetración y análisis hacia un ser no humano, y logra crear un personaje animal, omnipresente en el relato, que cautiva por ... sus hábitos, presentados o inventados por el autor, y de los que se vale para darnos ... el ambiente de la Costa ecuatoriana."
12. Fernando Alegria, Breve Historia de la Novela Hispanoamericana (México: Ed. de Andrea, 1965), p. 267.
Alegria calls de la Cuadra's Los Sangurimas "precursora del moderno tremendismo español". De la Cuadra began work on this novel in 1931, although it was not published until 1934.
13. Benjamín Carrión, El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 125.
Carrión declares that:
"Acaso la hisperbólica afirmación de quienes han llegado a decir que de la Cuadra es un formidable prosista, ... un estilista cabal, no se dan cuenta de que la cosa es otra: adecuación sorprendente de la expresión al tema, logrado realismo en las palabras usadas por los personajes ..., observación minuciosa y transliteración fiel del idioma hablado al idioma escrito. Sin el rebuscamiento de quien tiene en sus manos algo ajeno, y que le da las vueltas, hasta encontrarle excelencias o defectos. Con la sencillez de quien maneja lo suyo: del montuvio que habla en montuvio."
14. José de la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, in Obras Completas, p. 456.
15. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 495.
This reference is to a case of incest, where one of Nicasio Sangurima's sons, a coronel, lives with a daughter.
16. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, pp. 509-10.
17. Kessel Schwartz, "José de la Cuadra", Revista Iberoamericana, Vol. 22, p. 101.
Schwartz declares: "Los caracteres no son representantes del hombre-masa, y no se trata simplemente de tipos como el indio, el cholo, o los de 'arriba' contra los de 'abajo'."

18. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 484.

19. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 492.

20. De la Cuadra, Los Sangurimas, p. 515.

21. The significance of the title of Los Monos Enloquecidos is open to speculation. The most probable meaning is what it implies literally, since the story deals with trained monkeys. However, another possible interpretation is based on the practice of the highland people in Ecuador of calling those who live on the coast "monos". Since the novel is unfinished, it is impossible to give a categorical interpretation.

22. De la Cuadra, Los Monos Enloquecidos, in Obras Completas, p. 668.

23. De la Cuadra, "Advenimiento literario del Montuvio," in Obras Completas, p. 963.

24. Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua (Guayaquil: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1946), p. 133.

25. Jorge Guerrero, "Las Cruces Sobre el Agua", Letras del Ecuador, Nos. 17-18 (Nov. de 1946), p. 24.

26. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, pp. 207-08.

27. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 19.

28. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, pp. 176-77.

29. Cristóbal Garcés Larrea, "Las cruces sobre el agua," Letras del Ecuador, No. 15 (Agosto de 1946), p. 16.

30. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 207.

In this reference the military breaks a strike by shooting unarmed people.

31. Gallegos Lara, Las Cruces Sobre el Agua, p. 200.

32. Sidney Finkelstein, Existencialismo y Alienación en la Literatura Americana (México: Ed. Grijalbo, 1967), pp. 143-44.

Although Finkelstein bases his discussion on North American literature, the matter of class alienation is applicable to the novels of this study. He notes:

"... bajo el capitalismo llega a su colmo la alienación. ...

No es sólo el trabajador industrial quien sufre alienación. ...

También el capitalista sufre alienación. No puede vivir como un ser humano en relación con otros, salvo en el sentido más limitado. Ante todo, queda alienado respecto de sus trabajadores."

33. Donald D. Walsh, "Nuestro Pan" de Enrique Gil Gilbert," Letras del Ecuador, No. 2 (Abril de 1945), p. 10.

Walsh is impressed by "... la maestría con que Enrique Gil sabe manejar un carácter con muy pocas líneas ..."

34. Enrique Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan (Guayaquil: Ed. Cervantes, 1968), pp. 103-04.

35. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 54.

36. During a social gathering of writers and critics in Guayaquil in July, 1970, at which Gil Gilbert was present, the conversation revolved around the thirties and forties, and the spirit of discussion and polemic that was important to the Guayaquil novelists. At one point, Nuestro Pan was the topic of conversation. When the matter of characterization in the novel was discussed, Gil Gilbert said very emphatically: "¡Es que yo soy montuvio!", which indicates his identification with his characters.

37. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 29.

38. Angel F. Rojas, La Novela Ecuatoriana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1948), p. 190.

Rojas states that Gil Gilbert "... es un ... altísimo poeta cuando hace su obra en prosa. ... Tiene ... un fuerte sentimiento del paisaje. Las páginas que ... dedica al ambiente de la selva tropical o a la descripción de las tareas campesinas son antológicas. Rebosan fuerza lírica."

39. Gil Gilbert, Nuestro Pan, p. 86.

40. Benjamín Carrión, El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano, p. 99.

Carrión states: "El paisaje y el hombre están conjugados en tal forma que constituyen una totalización ambiental insuperable."

41. Aguilera Malta, La Isla Virgen (Guayaquil: Vera y Cia., 1942), p. 112. See Chapter III., Note 18. This reference is to the fight between Guayamabe and a tigre.

42. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo (Madrid: Ed. Cenit, 1933), p. 104.

43. Aguilera Malta, La Isla Virgen, p. 74.

44. Aguilera Malta is also one of Ecuador's more successful dramatists.

45. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, p. 11.

46. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, p. 86.

47. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, p. 187.

48. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, p. 204.

49. Aguilera Malta, Don Goyo, pp. 122-23.

50. In the second edition of Don Goyo (Buenos Aires: Ed. Platina, 1958) the author does not preserve the fidelity of the dialogues to the extent of recreating the mispronunciation of the cholos. He modifies the orthography, no longer writing "ujtede" for "ustedes", for example.

51. Aguilera Malta, La Isla Virgen, p. 102.

52. Aguilera Malta, La Isla Virgen, p. 36.

53. Benjamín Carrión, in Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle (México: Ed. Tezontle, 1945), p. 9.

54. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba (Buenos Aires: Club del Libro, 1939), p. 86.

55. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 102.

56. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 297.

See Chapter III., Note 27. In this reference Don Balón is rejected by the workers at a trade union meeting.

57. Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera (Santiago de Chile: Ercilla, 1938), p. 9.

58. Benjamín Carrión, in Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle, p. 19.

Carrión says that: "... Pareja ... se da cuenta de que Mariño ... no es el 'malo', en contraposición a el 'bueno' de los novelones. Por eso ... Pareja no trata con indignación dramática a este su don Angel Mariño, sino que lo fustea de ironía, no lo voltea por los cuatro costados del ridículo ..."

59. Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle, p. 132.

60. Pareja Diezcanseco, Baldomera, p. 9.

61. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Tres Ratas. (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1944), p. 44.

62. Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle, p. 116.

63. Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle, pp. 62-63.
Also La Beldaca (Santiago de Chile: Ercilla, 1935), p. 47.

64. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Tres Patas, pp. 51-52.

65. Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle, p. 50.

66. Pareja Diezcanseco, Don Balón de Baba, p. 297.

This is the same reference as note 56. Also see Chapter III., Note 27. The quotation is found on p. 91 of this study.

67. Benjamín Carrión, in Pareja Diezcanseco, El Muelle, pp. 9-10.

Even in Pareja Diezcanseco's first successful novel, during the most "militant" period of his career, Carrión noted that:

"Alfredo Pareja no cree que la militancia social, que la prédica partidaria, deben hacer del arte un instrumento de propaganda."

68. Rojas, La Novela Ecuatoriana, p. 197.

Rojas states categorically that Pareja is "... el novelista que, en el Ecuador, mejor domina el oficio. ... Tres hermanas son los personajes principales, sobresaliendo la segunda ... que consigue ser, sin duda, una de las mejores creaciones de este autor."

69. Pareja Diezcanseco's contemporary work will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this study.

70. Ortiz is one of Ecuador's leading poets. In fact, when he entered a social gathering of writers and critics in Guayaquil in July, 1970, he was greeted as "el poeta". His collections of poetry include: Tierra, Son y Tambor (México: Eds. La Gíjarra, 1944); Camino y Puerto de la Angustia (México: Ed. Isla, 1945; 2nd. ed. Guayaquil: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1953); El Vigilante Insepulto (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1957); and El Animal Herido (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1959).

71. Gilberto González y Contreras, "La angustia escondida de Adalberto Ortiz," Letras del Ecuador, No. 11 (Feb.--Marzo de 1946), p. 8.

This critic states: "... en 'Juyungo', más que los seres mismos importa el mundo en que se mueven El auténtico protagonista es la selva, la isla y el río y las fuerzas endógenas y exógenas que intervienen para la organización de su tectónica."

72. Adalberto Ortiz, Juyungo (Guayaquil: Cervantes, 1968), p. 20.

73. The cayapa indians, along with the Colorados of the region around Santo Domingo, are the only primitive tribes that survive today in Ecuador's coastal tropical rainforest.

74. Ortiz, Juyungo, pp. 25-26.

Chapter II. of Juyungo deals with this episode in the protagonist's life.

75. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 11.

76. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 105.

77. Uriel Ospina, Problemas y Perspectivas de la Novela Americana (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1964), pp. 94-95.

Uriel Ospina criticises the use of localisms in the Spanish American novel, pointing out that it limits the public that can understand and appreciate them. He cites Ortiz as one of the chief examples.

78. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 16.

79. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 251.

80. Uriel Ospina, Problemas y Perspectivas de la Novela Americana, p. 76.

81. Ortiz, Juyungo, p. 236.

82. Luis Alberto Sánchez, Proceso y Contenido de la Novela Hispano-Americana (Madrid: Gredos, 1953), pp. 320-21.

Sánchez claims that the novels of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" are among the best in Spanish America for the combination of human with natural elements.

83. Carlos Fuentes, La Nueva Novela Hispanoamericana (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969), p. 30.

Fuentes says that "... Latinoamérica se siente urgida de una profanación que dé voz a cuatro siglos de lenguaje secuestrado, marginal, desconocido. Esta resurrección del lenguaje perdido exige una diversidad de exploraciones verbales que, hoy por hoy, es uno de los signos de salud a la novela latinoamericana."

The writers from the Ecuadorian coast are active in this "resurrección del lenguaje".

84. Uriel Ospina, Problemas y Perspectivas de la Novela Americana, p. 162.

Ospina says that the latin american socio-ethnic types "son gentes de valor y de una fuerza psicológicos que aún no se han visto como ellas mercen verse en la América Latina. ... Aún no se ha sondeado con cuidado su alma."

The writers in the "Grupo de Guayaquil" may not have achieved the highest expression possible of their native socio-ethnic types, but they certainly made significant steps in that direction, especially in the work of de la Cuadra and Aguilera Malta.

85. Sánchez, Proceso y Contenido de la Novela Hispano-Americana, p. 595.

CHAPTER V.

THE LEGACY OF THE "GRUPO DE GUAYAQUIL" AND THE CONTEMPORARY NOVELS

Two principal questions remain to be dealt with in this study: What did these novelists accomplish in their drive for social reform? What did they leave as their legacy for the Ecuadorian novel?

The most the writers could hope to accomplish with respect to social conditions was to point out the problems, to "denunciar y protestar". By dramatization of unpleasant aspects in Ecuadorian society, and through creation of sympathy for characters representing those who suffered most, they hoped to awaken public indignation over a situation that may have been largely ignored by people with power to correct it. Adalberto Ortiz has affirmed that "... los gobiernos y las clases dirigentes se despertaron a la realidad que los rodeaba."¹

However, the depiction of some aspects of Ecuadorian reality by these six writers may have had a negative effect. The frequent emphasis in the novels on violence and sex, may have overstepped "el buen gusto" for a part of their public. These elements may have offended the literary tastes of some who could have otherwise been allies for social reform. With regard to this matter Edmundo Ribadeneira declared: "... la literatura no puede precisamente cambiar la sociedad.

... aún la novela más realista y más virulenta siempre será propia de un género de ficción."² In his opinion, many people at whom the writers directed their criticism did not see themselves through the novels; businessmen did not identify with Angel Mariño of Pareja Diezcanseco's El Muelle, for example. They read the novels more for diversion than enlightenment. Nonetheless, even these readers were made aware of the social situation from the perspective of those at the bottom. For the members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" making people think about problems was the first step toward solution.

While the writers did not attempt to bring about social change directly, it seems their novels did add to an accelerating movement toward reform. Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco evaluates his generation's achievements through its literature as follows:

"... artísticamente, como novela sí. Como logro social en el país, no. ... Claro que hay un progreso. Hay una serie de mejoras, ... de reformas, pero esas novelas aparte de su valor que pueden tener como novelas, tienen el de documentos también ... Un investigador de la realidad ecuatoriana, sociológica, tiene que leer estas novelas para completar su información."³

While Pareja Diezcanseco admits the novels he and his friends wrote during the thirties and forties could be used as "social documents", he refers only modestly to their "valor ... como novelas". The "Grupo de Guayaquil"

was in the forefront of a novelistic revolution in Ecuador. Perhaps the surest indicator of a successful revolution is that after the initial period of "storm and stress", its ideals become institutionalized. The institutions are then refined; the revolution becomes a process of evolution. Their ideals were social commentary on the one hand and novelistic art on the other. They achieved the first through dramatic portrayal of the components of their society and of the struggle between them. They reached the second by experimentation with and development of artistic techniques they felt depicted most effectively the human essence of the cholos, montuvios, and Blacks. When the six writers were intact as a literary group, they pursued both ideals equally. Among the surviving members of the group who still are writing novels actively, the latter ideal has come to the fore. The interpretation of society remains in evidence. However, its interpretation is reaching artically for a higher plane. The ideals of the "Grupo de Guayaquil's" revolution have become institutionalized, and those institutions are in process of refinement.

Pareja Diezcanseco criticized a younger Ecuadorian novelist for imitating the literary manner of the thirties and the forties; "... para esos años y esas edades, no estaba mal; pero también te agregaría que la literatura es mucho más que potencia y vigor, o denuncia y protesta."⁴ The

novels Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, Demetrio Aguilera Malta, and Adalberto Ortiz have written since that time may be offered as proof these last representatives of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" believe in that statement.

Most of the elements of their novels of the early years are still present. There are scenes shocking in violence or eroticism. Poor characters are exploited by rich ones. The essential components of society consist of the same people, and the physical and "spiritual" environments are of obvious importance.

However, there are shifts in emphasis. The scenario is no longer limited to the Ecuadorian coast. In some novels the action takes place in Quito, while in others it occurs in a symbolic location that could be nearly any Latin American nation. There is a more pronounced trend away from seeing society in terms of "black and white"; there is a tendency to examine the intermediate shades. The Ecuadorian historical process is no longer used as proof of social injustice. It is viewed primarily from the perspective of its effect on the characters' psychologies. Events of history are not so important as abstract understanding of how people affect their feelings toward one another and their relationships with each other while they make history, regardless of social and ethnic lines.

Finally, there is a bolder tendency toward technical experimentation. With the more complex goals of the novels, the narrative technique has become correspondingly more complex.

Demetrio Aguilera Malta

Although he has remained active artistically, since La Isla Virgen (1942) Aguilera Malta had not attempted another novelistic interpretation of the Ecuadorian coast until 1970. Then he published Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes. This new novel retains much of the "flavor" of the earlier ones. He continues to emphasize the telluric. His characters are still products of a primitive and often savage environment, struggles between man and his surroundings and between components of society remain principal themes, and play between fantasy and reality is in evidence more than ever.

However, the world he creates now is even more strange than the one in Don Goyo. As one reviewer has observed:

"... la novela ... linda con la literatura del realismo mágico. Las canoas son movidas por quelonios; los animales trabajan al lado del hombre; un Cristo quemado habla ...; una difunta copula; se pacta con el demonio; resucitan los muertos para participar en ceremonias rituales y las serpientes quieren hacer el amor. ..."5

Aguilera Malta utilizes elements of European, Indian, and Black folklore, superstitions, and beliefs. He weaves them into the fabric of the novel through the characters and the events, in a juxtaposition of fantasy and reality.

Much of the action takes place in the characters' minds. While their thoughts are colored by references to the local ambience, they are thoughts that could be found in people's minds anywhere; of power, greed, lust, love, hate, and fear.

The novel's setting is a small town called Santorontón, which reminds one of García Márquez' Macondo. People trickle in at first; a few fishermen, some laborers, a priest. Then more come, until all society is represented. Conflicts and friction appear. Interest groups develop. Soon the town is divided into two camps, the exploiters and the exploited. In addition, individuals who form these camps have personal problems and concerns. Aguilera Malta succeeds in creating the microcosm of life along the Ecuadorian coast, in the whole of Spanish America, or in the world, depending on the perspective from which the novel is considered.

Aguilera Malta's characters are no longer primarily rural socio-ethnic types. While poor cholos, montuvios, and Blacks have not disappeared, the military, the church, big business, and professionals are also represented. However, they are surrounded by an aura of unreality that is more appropriate of "pure" fiction than of social thesis. Each main character is distinct and unique from other members of any group he may symbolize.

For example, the military is represented by a coronel. This one does not belong to any particular army, but could represent military strongmen from all over Latin America. He is a combination of pride, arrogance, brutality, and sensuality. He goes after what he wants like a wild beast. He destroys any hindrance. His conduct is so animalistic he becomes transformed into a caimán. In the following illustration he rapes a young girl, after having just murdered her parents:

"... Mientras la muchacha se hundía en ... la inconsciencia, se le subió encima. La cabalgó. Después, metamorfosis del caimán. Saltando en trébol de corazas verdes. Arremolinándose contra los árboles. Tumbándolos con la cola. Destrozando el tronco con las fauces. Estriando la corteza con las garras. El caimán está loco. ¡Ay de la montaña! ¡Ay de las hojas! ¡Ay de los animales mínimos cuya aurora les estalló en las entrañas! ... ¡Ay del mundo que la panóptica del saurio halló en el agua! ... El caimán se ha vestido de lumbre sangrienta. El caimán está loco. Está loco el caimán."⁶

Similar to those found in the work of Julio Cortázar (such as in the short story Axolotl), Aguilera Malta's characters are capable of having their thoughts and wishes magically transformed into reality. However, that reality remains interior. It exists only in the characters' minds. Even when others perceive this coronel as a caimán, his physical shape is altered for them alone. They see he acts like a beast, and in their minds he becomes one. Although the world in which this occurs is the ephemeral one of thought

and imagination, what happens within that context is indeed real.

The coronel exists also in the perspective of "exterior" reality. He was an orphan, abandoned in his infancy on the village priest's doorstep. Although there is an abiding love between him and the priest, his nature is uncontrollable and unruly. After a series of personality clashes with his foster father, he leaves home, but not before setting fire to the church. His life is characterized by attempts to bolster his ego. He gathers a band of outlaws around him and becomes a cacique. He has the personal discipline, power, and inclination to impose his will on society. Sometimes he fights for a cause to help others, but often his violence is channeled to flatter his pride. Here is an example of what he does with his enemies:

"... Los enterraba vivos, ... con la diestra de fuera. Ya bajo tierra ... agitaban esa mano ... hasta sus últimos estertores agónicos. El coronel se agarraba el vientre de tanto reír. '¿Ya ves ... cómo ahora sí me saludan? ...'"?

The only challenge to the coronel's authority is his foster father, the village priest. The relationship between them is human and individual. They annoy each other, become angry and forgive. The military man has a personal and complex psychology. He debates his relationship with other characters, and is obsessed by a specific woman. The priest is a character created with equal care.

He is a man who has turned his humility, martyrdom, and messianism into something mysterious, mythical, and mystic. For him, the metamorphosis of his thoughts is a Christ who descends from the cross. The Christ is created as a separate character, but he is also the representation of the priest's psychology. When in the end the coronel is going to marry, the priest and the Christ debate whether they should respond to the adopted son's pleas and participate in his wedding:

--¡Padrino! ¡Padrino!
 Cándido miró a Cristo. Desolado. El Nazareno desprendió sus brazos de la Cruz. Hizo ademán de qué-quieres-que-te-diga. Después guiño un ojo, malicioso.
 La voz pareció crecer. Clamorosa. Desesperada.
 --¡Padrino! ¡Padrino!
 Casi en contra de su voluntad, a su vez, gritó:
 --¡Voy! ¡Voy!
 Y al Nazareno, con angustia:
 --Ahora, ¿qué hago?
 --¿Aún sigues dudándolo? Debes ir. ¡Es tu ahijado!
 Dolido, reprochó:
 --¿Mío? ¿Sólo mío? Cuando lo encontramos, ¿no me convenciste de que se quedara en la iglesia?
 ¿No gozamos juntos con sus tempranas sonrisas?
 ¿No te alegraste igual que yo con sus primeros juegos y palabras? ¿No discutimos muchas veces acerca de su porvenir? Es nuestro --tuyo y mío--.
 ¡Nuestro ahijado!
 --Bueno, ¡Nuestro! Ya déjate de discursos.
 Y ve a cambiarte de sotana."⁸

The "Cristo Quemado" becomes a mythical figure for the local people, separate from customary religious symbolism. He is almost another idol, like those of indigenous or African origin. He also represents a kind of imaginatively modern

mysticism. Through him there is a symbolic fusion of the priest's spirit with the divine.

Other main characters are similarly unique in their personalities, whether they are a businessman who masks his impotency with the accumulation of money, a girl whose trauma over having been raped causes her to imagine she castrates every man in town, or a physician whose lack of confidence around real women allows him to become involved emotionally only with those who can demand nothing of him, like the bare-back rider in a circus or a cadaver in medical school. In every case there is the mixture of fantasy with reality; the play between interior and exterior reality.

While Aguilera Malta continues to create characters who are symbols as well as individuals, his narrative technique has evolved. He retains the terse, dialogue-like phrases in his descriptions, at times to the point of abuse, and he uses dialogue extensively to underscore depiction of psychology, as in the above example. However, now he experiments with interior monologue. He uses this technique to give an intimate view of a character as an individual, which puts him on a plane in which one can empathize. A physician remembers how as a young man he escaped other people's personal demands on him by becoming a scholar:

"... los microinquisidores quisieron pulverizarte, buscaste una salida. La Medicina. La Medicina

se te figuró un hilo luminoso para escapar ... Te pegaste a los libros. Como una ventosa. Te asomaste a la Morgue fantasma fantasmal de otro planeta. Fantasma cotidiano. La peripecia⁹ de los busturis resultó tu propia peripecia."

A sensitive person's desire to escape others' demands is not limited to coastal Ecuadorians. In another example the author portray's the coronel's thoughts that pertain to his relationship with his foster father, the village priest:

"... El Padre Cándido es muy hombre. ... Lo que pasa es otra cosa. Al ser cura, se anudó lo que sabemos. Y aunque a veces quisiera desatárselo, ¡se aguanta! Ese nudo lo tiene para bien. Si no, estas islas se poblarían de Mariscales. ... ¡Claro que es muy hombre mi padrino! He visto encendérsele los ojos cuando una hembra se le acerca. ¡Se aguanta! Cierra los ojos. Aprieta las manos. Y de seguro, reza. ¡Se aguanta! ... No. No creo que mi padrino sea mi padre. Aunque lo quiero como si lo fuera. Es la única luz que tengo adentro. ¡Ah! ¡Si él me hubiera entendido! ¡Si no me hubiera botado de su casa! ..."10

The coronel's admiration for the priest's stoicism and his lamentation at having fallen out of favor with him are thoughts anyone might have concerning someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. In other instances, a young girl questions her relationship with all men, or a young priest debates his personal values and convictions. In every case, the characters are also symbolic of elements in society. Aguilera Malta succeeds through an imaginative approach in combining local with universal significance.

However, Aguilera Malta's imaginative experimentation is not limited to the depiction of psychology. He also experiments with that of the reader. The novel is full of bizarre scenes that dramatize secret thoughts, usually of a violent or erotic nature. He tells each character's story in a time sequence that is a chronological mosaic, in which before he explains the motivation behind fantasies, he stuns the senses with a scene that depicts them. One does not know what is the reality until he is well into the novel. By then he has been so inundated in the fantasy world, he may be no longer certain of what is ultimately the most real, the concrete events that are catalytic in the production of the fantasies, or the fantasies themselves. One of the first scenes depicts the erotic fantasy of a young girl who is just reaching puberty. In her cultural background, there are mythological beings called Tin-Tines who are supposed to be instrumental in making women pregnant:

"... advirtió la llegada de dos Tin-Tines. ... Con sus cabezas enormes ... Con sus ojos menudos semillas de papaya. Sus labios abiertos ventosa ambulante. Su cuerpo encogido. Sus brazos y piernas fornidos. Dos Tin-Tines. Hechos sólo de nervios, músculos y sexo. ... Se aproximaron. Se detuvieron. Elevaron las chatas narices. Olfatearon. ... Llegaron al pie de la casa. ... Se observaron ... Los ojos les llamearon. Elevaron la voz. Su tono se hizo airado. Sus ademanes, coléricos. Casi en seguida, empezaron a golpearse mutuamente. Cosa extraña. ... Se golpearon con los miembros viriles. ..."-11

The reader does not realize this scene takes place only in the girl's mind, until after he has read it. This fantasy and others like it are told with as much detail as more "conventional" scenes. They are told as if indeed they did represent reality.

Although he approaches his material from a different angle than in Don Goyo (1933) and La Isla Virgen, (1942) in Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes (1970) Aguilera Malta has refined the technique of the earlier novels. Movement of fantastic elements to a higher plane, de-emphasis of references to native flora and fauna, creation of characters who are symbols of society's components from all levels, and elimination of "localistic" vocabulary are main departures from previous practice.

Nonetheless, the work retains a telluric flavor. One never loses sight he is dealing with a novel that could be only from Latin America. The characters' ethnic mixture draws from the three principal races in that part of the world. In some of the scenes of fantasy a character may turn into a sapo or a tigre. It is clear the action takes place in a tropical setting. The occasional mention of a plant, or a tree, refers to a native variety.

Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes appeals to a broad public. The "general" reader who seeks merely diversion will find enough of the literarily marketable elements of

sex and violence to entertain him. The more sophisticated one with an interest in history, sociology, or anthropology will find it rewarding. The discerning student of literature should appreciate Aguilera Malta's blending of modern narrative techniques with regionalistic material.

Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco

Pareja Diezcanseco has been writing for a public that is ever smaller in absolute numbers but broader in extension.¹² He appeals most to a relatively small elite who can appreciate the high intellectual plane of his work. However, this elite may be found in any part of the world.

None of his contemporary novels use the urban slum as the principal setting, nor is the poor cholo the protagonist. Most of the action now takes place in the environment of intellectuals at the university, gatherings of artists, writers, and political activists, the minds of the characters or abstract thoughts of an anonymous narrator.¹³

In his Los Nuevos Años series Pareja Diezcanseco attempts to write the "biography" of Ecuador.¹⁴ As stated by Edmundo Ribadeneira, "... el personaje principal ... es el país, el movimiento masivo del pueblo, pero individualizado en los personajes típicos que actúan en la gran escena nacional."¹⁵ The novels in this series may be referred to collectively as a novela-río (roman fleuve).¹⁶ In them the author attempts to

depict and interpret the Ecuadorian historical process¹⁷ since 1925 through the impact of the events on the lives of the characters. There had been nothing like Los Nuevos Años previously in Ecuadorian literature. Benjamín Carrión calls it "... uno de los esfuerzos espirituales más serios, una de las aventuras y pensamientos de la ficción más audaces y bien concebidas de nuestra historia literaria."¹⁸

The first three novels of this series (La Advertencia, 1956; El Aire y los Recuerdos, 1959; and Los Poderes Omnímodos, 1964) are tied together by a single character, Pablo Canelos. The author explained his significance:

"... En parte es un testigo inventado, en parte es hecho de distintas porciones de gentes y amigos que he conocido, en parte, acaso, hay en él inevitablemente algo de mi mismo. Sobre todo, acaso él es "los nuevos años", la transición, el crecimiento de una era en la cual empezaron a advertirse los rápidos cambios sociales de nuestro tiempo, un intelectual, vamos, con ciertas audaces pretensiones de ser per se una casi tipología psico-social de una generación incierta y todavía con huellas románticas. Es testigo y parte, es, claro está, un ente de ficción y hasta un pretexto para organizar un semi-mensaje extraído de tan varias y hasta opuestas corrientes de un pensamiento en formación. Un poco de pedagogía y otro de abstracción, de racionalización y de choques emocionales."¹⁹

The reader becomes acquainted with Ecuadorian history through the protagonist's thoughts and his conversations with other characters. In many instances literary as well as socio-political events are brought to light in this manner. The protagonist becomes involved in circles of

intellectuals, writers, and artists. Sometimes the conversations include the members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" as minor characters in the novels, thereby allowing the author to recreate the milieu of the times as it affected him and his friends.

Since his goal now is to interpret Ecuadorian reality on an intellectual plane, Pareja Diezcanseco has modified his narrative technique. The terse dialogue that in his early novels portrayed the cholo is no longer appropriate for characters who are highly educated. He does not describe the environment or a character's thoughts with language and images that might be used by a member of the lower classes. In the following illustration the author describes the protagonist's thoughts after his first intimate contact with a woman:

"... Pablo velaba. La hoguera de su sangre estaba en paz, porque había vuelto de la tibieza de Clara. Sabíase apto para pensar y decidir.... Sobre todo, ella estaba con él, en él se había aposentado, en su tienda, en su fuego. Insomne, pero radiante, alimentado por el placer, odió todo camino falso, tuvo delante el destino mejor, creyó en la bondad, en el hermano hombre y en que a su época le estaba señalado el cambio que trajese pan y amor para todos."²⁰

The concept of manhood is clearly of a different nature than was that of lower class socio-ethnic types depicted by the author and his companions during the early years of their literary production. Here, Pareja Diezcanseco evokes reflec-

tions fitting of an idealistic, sensitive, and educated young man. Concepts of universal goodness and human brotherhood would be too abstract for the poor cholos who populated his first novels.

Pareja Diezcanseco attempts constantly to make his work appeal to a sophisticated reader's intellect. Consequently, he never ceases to experiment with and refine his style. Until his latest novels, he had relied on either the technique of the anonymous and omniscient narrator, or the first person, in which the narrator is the main character but does not depict ostensibly the author's thoughts.²¹ In Los Poderes Omnímodos he begins to experiment with interior monologue. In the following example he depicts the protagonist's thoughts during a time of political and social unrest. The protagonist has lost the woman he loves:

"Pasé la segunda noche sin una hora de sueño, porque si me dormía hubiera temido renacer. En realidad, el deseo de dormir me abandonó pronto. Me ha abandonado quizás hasta cuando. Me siento prisionero de la vigilia y de la vigilancia. Naturalmente, he proseguido en mi búsqueda, de día y de noche, corriendo a veces en pos de un cuerpo parecido, metiéndome en las tiendas, en las pensiones, en los hoteles... ... ya no me es posible ir a mi departamento, no iré jamás a él. Tengo una hamaca y esta mesa donde escribo. Estoy enteramente dedicado a este oficio."²²

While in Aguilara Malta's latest novel interior monologue is appropriate for the creation of characters who are not intellectuals, in Pareja Diezcanseco's contemporary

work the characters are intellectuals. Their thoughts are correspondingly more abstract.

They do not debate issues that relate to elemental concerns, like the meaning of impotency or relationship with peers. They have thoughts appropriate of intellectuals anywhere. They are concerned with matters that could relate to everybody, such as loneliness, or hope.

Nonetheless, in the first three novels of his Los Nuevos Años series Pareja Diezcanseco's protagonist exists in two worlds. On the outside is the world of Ecuadorian reality, where people debate, fight, and die; where governments come and go; and where people in Guayaquil or Quito struggle to maintain or improve their condition or merely to survive, while they become words or statistics on the pages of Ecuadorian history. On the inside is the world of the protagonist, only semi-private because it is enclosed and molded by the other one. In this world he seeks order in spite of exterior chaos. It is also the world where the author attempts to relay a feeling of cautious optimism. Pareja Diezcanseco suggests sensitive, intelligent, educated, and introspective Ecuadorians like the protagonist could most successfully bring their country into line with the best of the modern world.

In Las Pequeñas Estaturas (1970) the author takes a step further in his evolution. While there is no ostensible

indication the novel is specifically Ecuadorian in setting, it is a bitter-sweet and abstract burlesque of the power politics that have long dominated Pareja Diezcanseco's homeland. It displays a deep and intense affection for the pueblo; for the great majority of the people. The characters live, suffer, and sometimes die at the hands of those who would "liberate" them as well as those who would preserve the status quo. People in established power grapple with those who would become the new powers, ultimately at the expense of the common folk. The author shows sympathy for neither the political left nor right here. Through barrages of subtly chimerical caricatures he strips naked political extremists and agitators, dictators, foreign "advisers", and all who seek power. He shows that for all their fanciful rhetoric seemingly expressive of high ideals, what really drives them is personal gain. His message is similar to that of García Márquez in Cien Años de Soledad, when after years of bloodshed between Liberals and Conservatives el Coronel Aureliano Buendía comes to the realization that: "sólo estamos luchando por el poder."²³ Yet Pareja Diezcanseco's message is not so obvious, for it comes out of a novelistic milieu that is much more "kafkaesque". The following commentary of Franz Kafka's work would be equally fitting for the Ecuadorian writer:

"... It is a world in which those in authority are always wrong and yet manage to give the

impression that they are always right. In this world there is no justice; men feel strange, excluded, alienated, so that their most intense desire is "to belong," to be admitted, to be ordered about. ... They live in ignorance of ultimate goals and do not know how to attain such goals as they do recognize. Cause and effect are reversed; because a man is accused of some crime whose nature he cannot even suspect, he becomes guilty, (of what? he doesn't know), acknowledges his guilt, and is executed for it. ... All this irrationality is taken for granted by the mass of humanity as perfectly normal."²⁴

While Pareja Diezcanseco may create a world similar to Kafka's in function, it is different in form. The people, the scenario, the underlying flow of traditions, beliefs, values, superstitions, and even brujería are Spanish American. Still, it is a fantastic and ephemeral world, where nothing seems exactly real or unreal, but somewhere in between. It exists primarily in the thoughts of the characters, who have only a tenuous connection with what is "conventionally" real. Regardless, one is aware the physical setting is an underdeveloped country:

"... Sus habitantes vivían más de la tierra que de las latas ... los negocios se hacían sin logográficas demostraciones, sólo a punta de ojo y regateos. ... La velocidad de los automóviles era moderada, el fútbol se jugaba con los pies, ... las papas no tenían sabor de arsénico y las naranjas entraban y salían del mercado sin maquillaje. Continuaban las vacas recibiendo directamente el amor de los toros ... Se solía rogar a los santos, como en cualquier país civilizado, pero aquí los ponían de cabeza y les quemaban las pestañas con los cirios, si demoraban en conceder favores. En todas partes ... santos y demonios coexistían pacíficamente, o, cuando más, luchaban a garrote y un poco de mentirillas. Y una bruja seguía siendo una bruja, y no un extremista cualquiera."²⁵

However, the place is unimportant. It could be Ecuador, but does not have to be, as is indicated in the following paragraph with which the author ends the novel. It is almost identical to one with which he begins it:

"Pasó lo que pasó en un lugar desconocido. Puede que no hay existido nunca ese lugar, pero también es posible que existiera en cualquier parte. Por conveniencia, llamadlo país, si lo queréis, pero no le deis nombre propio ni le fijeis espacio, porque sería devorado por el análisis, y ni las potencias del sueño ni las potencias del amor bastarían para volverlo a encontrar. Y tendría que ser inventado otro."²⁶

There is an underlying stream of social conscience, but it is not critical of specific elements in society. The author now attacks the human beings who represent its components. Obliquely, he brings out basic human weaknesses that corrupt ideals of every sort. The representative masculine characters who predominate are Ribaldo, the revolutionary in perpetual crisis, and Parcitas, the unscrupulous and fanatical "party" member. They function at the top, in the power structure. The feminine characters represent more basic elements, that strive for constancy in spite of what men do. There are three women who share a house (updated versions of "las tres ratas"); Redama, a simple girl who lives in her own world of pleasant dreams and fantasies, but who collaborates with Ribaldo's political extremism because of her love for him; Anáfora, whose fantasies center on a man who is never there, and perhaps never was; and Edúrea, the intransigent

beata who would preserve things as they are at any cost.

There is also Fascinata, a woman of the pueblo who incarnates its traditions; a witch who becomes a folk-heroine, almost a myth, when the government persecutes her.

The story is told principally through interior monologues of Redama and Ribaldo. They exist simultaneously on several levels, each of which is a varying mixture of fantasy and reality. On one of Redama's levels she is an illegitimate child whose own mother does not know the father. On another, she and her mother have invented a fictitious father-husband, for whom they maintain a room, adding a dimension of concreteness to the dream. On still another level she is Ribaldo's sweetheart. She follows him unquestioningly until she realizes that when his organization attempts to impose by force supposedly humanistic goals, innocent people die. On one of his levels, Ribaldo is an idealistic reformer, struggling messianically to correct society's injustices. On another he is Redama's boyfriend. Here basic needs, love and companionship, are satisfied. On yet another level he is a member of a nebulous organization, which demands allegiance to it as an institution more than to the ideals it claims to purport.

The thoughts that depict these levels of existence are loosely connected, occasionally in harmony, but often in opposition. The author experiments with contemporary narrative techniques. Within the "stream of conscience" method he explores

free association:

"... No me acuerdo de lo que dijo, sino de cosas sueltas, que debieron estar enlazadas por esas menores partes de la oración que la maestra me hizo aprender para que olvidase sus propiedades en cuento empecé a usarlas por mi cuenta y a mi modo. Decía el pelado, decía distinguidos patriotas orden derechos sacrificio herencia mayores conservación nobleza tradiciones propiedad privada destrucción bandera lucha jesucristo corona espinas padres hijos mujeres santidad prostitución columnas sabias hogar virgen maría gloria eterna condenación siemprevivas soberbio decora orden inmaculado costumbres dignas..."²⁶

This technical experimentation caused one reviewer to react negatively:

"... Together with Rayuela, Cien años de soledad, and Aguilera Malta's Siete lunas y siete serpientes (1970) this novel joins an increasing number which shows the snobbish devil-take-the-reader attitude of some of the better known contemporary authors. ... Pareja ... follows the current technique of inventing words, and in combining two or more nouns by using hyphens; for example, 'signos-ojos' and 'idea-temor'. ... the change of narrators without warning, the occasional Latin phrases, and the ... use of single sentences which run from one to five pages ... do slow and impede the author's message."²⁷

However, one should realize it is not the thoughts themselves that are chaotic, but the reality that is their foundation. Like the characters in Las Pequeñas Estaturas, people often do exist on several antagonistic levels. They find their ideals, or fantasies, conflict with what they do tangibly. Finally, they usually satisfy perhaps the most basic human trait, self-indulgence.

Pareja Diezcanseco's ultimate message is as applicable

to the entire world as Latin America. Nobody really believes what he pretends to. Government officials pretend to represent the population, but their first and last concerns are for themselves. Social reformers pretend to work for the good of others, but they are really motivated by the desire for personal recognition, or glory. People may harp endlessly on the value of their pretenses, always avoiding the admission they are pretending; that what ultimately drives them is their own greed. The society portrayed in Las Pequeñas Estaturas is absurd. However, it is an abstract representation of the society people generally consider real.

The author has evolved from the idealism of his earlier novels to cynicism. Witness Ribaldo's thoughts concerning a national economic crisis:

"... El ejército pedía más cañones y aeroplanos. Los importadores, una rebaja general de los impuestos aduaneros. Los industriales, que los aumentasen sobre todo artículo de competencia. ... Los bomberos exigían más escaleras, camiones, y pitones, en previsión de incendios criminales. Los trabajadores, aumentos de salarios. Los economistas ortodoxos, que el Gobierno cortase gastos por la mitad ... Los heterodoxos, que ... gastase las reservas ... para ... dar trabajo a los desocupados. Los maestros de escuela, que les pagasen sueldos atrasados o les dieran píldoras para insensibilizar el hambre..."²⁸

Both individually and in groups the characters sacrifice ideals for self-interest. While they play a game of deception, pretending to each other and to themselves they are something other than what they are, they become similar to each other.

As individuals, they are reduced. They become "pequeñas estaturas".

Of the members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", Pareja Diezcanseco has undergone the most extensive evolution of his novelistic art. He has become more exacting about what and for whom he writes. He still makes one aware he is appalled by the condition of society, but the presentation of the reasons behind that condition are increasingly more complex and his artistic technique is under constant refinement. While this latest novel may be considered another link in the chain of his Los Nuevos Años series, its connection loose. The author states in his preface:

"Este libro, aunque de forma y construcción diversas, es, a su manera, complemento o consecuencia de tres novelas anteriores, partes ... del ciclo Los Nuevos Años ... No es ... Necesario, ni ... recomendable, leerlas, antes de ... esta novela, de la que sólo quiero decir que se integra ... al propósito de Los Nuevos Años." ²⁹

Adalberto Ortiz

In his latest novel, Ortiz approaches autobiography. He has moved from treatment of an alienated black laborer in Juyungo (1943) to a cultured and sensitively introspective black intellectual in El Espejo y la Ventana (1967; 1970).³⁰ The protagonist of this novel is similar to the author. Ecuadorian coastal society is still important, but its function is the milieu in which the character develops.

Similarly, historical events are important primarily for their effect on the protagonist. Instead of portraying the character's psychology as representative of a specific socio-ethnic group, the author now deals with the psychology of an individual. The emphasis is on the process of growth and maturation more than socio-economic elements that may influence that process.

The form of El Espejo y la Ventana is similar superficially to Juyungo. While in the latter novel Ortiz employed a lyrical paragraph to depict the protagonist's telluric roots and describe the physical and emotional setting for the coming chapter, in the former one he uses a similar paragraph to interpret abstractly the effect of the protagonist's experiences on his mind and to set the psychological tone. He calls these paragraphs "Primera Voz en el Espejo". They are the introspective view of the character's development, as opposed to the label given to the bulk of the chapter, "Segunda Voz en la Ventana", which is the presentation of the character's experiences. For example, in the first chapter civil war has forced the protagonist's family to leave its native Esmeraldas for Guayaquil. The following paragraph introduces the second chapter:

"Lien hubiera querido Mauro enterrar ... el duro tiempo de sus niñeces. Casi todos estos recuerdos son pesarosos y crueles. Según dicen, logró sepultar el cadáver en el más inaccesible paraje del yermo. Pero sopla el huracán nocturno, remueve

las arenas y lo deja a la intemperie, mostrando sus serias lacraduras ... Luego, el pequeño cadáver crece silenciosamente como un árbol, y aumentan también las incisiones de su corteza. Quisiera saber cuántos seres hay en el mundo que pueden añorar con nostalgia 'la infancia feliz'. ... El pequeño cadáver siguió creciendo como un árbol matalpalo al impulso de sus sustancias biógenas, y al amparo de su memoria donde todo resulta ingénuo. Inocente y elemental."³¹

The civil war, which is referred to but not described in the first chapter, is of secondary importance. The real issue is the hardship it brings on the young protagonist.

While he still tells the story in the third person, as the "omniscient narrator", Ortiz experiments occasionally with the technique of free association. In the following illustration a man has just shot a caimán that was attacking some swimmers:

"Era el vigilante fusil de don Manuel que tronaba omnipresente, omnipotente, parte de sí mismo, preservador, claro, terminante, voluminoso, báculo de voluntad, sagrado dueño de voluntades, de volumen, volátil, te volio bene, (sic), volare, vapuleador, voli, volutas, bolitas, voliciones, voy y vengo... con virginia... virginal..... vaginal... virgo... potens, virgo fidelis... volantuza, voy y vengo disparándome... voy y vuelvo... .."³²

Nonetheless, *El Espejo y la Ventana* is a less successful novel in its epoch than was *Juyungo*. Other than cautious technical experimentation, it lacks the force, lyricism, and uniqueness of content of the latter work. While it deals with a topic that promises universal appeal, human psychology, it offers neither symbol nor message nor signi-

ficant stylistic innovation, when compared with the contemporary works of Aguilera Malta and Pareja Diezcanseco. However, it does represent a change in artistic orientation for the author, in which he begins to direct his work toward a potentially broader public.

The greatest legacy the six writers from coastal Ecuador left for the Ecuadorian novel is one from which three of them are still benefitting: the concept that society can be interpreted in an artistic way. Art and thesis need not be separated, but the former gives lasting merit to the work. As stated by Pareja Diezcanseco through the protagonist of his Los Nuevos Años series:

"... se puede clamar por la justicia social, ... se puede y se debe poner el arte ... al servicio del hombre, pero no es necesario para eso recurrir sólo al lado feo de la vida, al descuido de lo artístico, que es el descuido de lo trascendente mismo, de la intuición futura, de la ordenación del mundo y la naturaleza, del juicio a que se atreve el hombre frente a lo desconocido.... El realismo que se limita a sí mismo con palabras gruesas y exclamaciones, deja de ser realismo.....¿... la felicidad moral y el patetismo necesario a ella no son completos sino en el revés y el derecho, con toda la complejidad de la vida activa y de la vida íntima? ¿Acaso no hay realidades reales que pertenezcan a la vida del espíritu con el mismo derecho que a la conducta exterior y esquematizada de los hombres?"³³

Probably the greatest success of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" was that it was the vanguard of a generation that brought the greatest attention to Ecuador's literature.

perhaps since Montalvo. Their failure, however, was they did not awaken in the next generation of writers that sense of cohesiveness, self-criticism, and mission.³⁴ The "Grupo de Guayaquil" left a legacy many young writers in Ecuador seem to ignore.³⁵ The literary movement they began failed to gather sufficient momentum to carry other writers with it, much less establish a literary school.³⁶ Since the mid-forties few novels from coastal Ecuadorian writers, other than those written by Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, and Adalberto Ortiz, have won more than a passive nod from readers and critics outside Ecuador.

The remaining members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" are aware of the passing years and loss of frequent contact with each other. Yet they keep writing, and their work grows generally more consummate. One can hope their efforts will have more transcendental effect on other Ecuadorian writers than seems to be the present case. The experience of their companionship during the early years forged a bond between them so strong that regardless of time and space that separates them, in a spiritual sense there might always be a "Grupo de Guayaquil".³⁷

NOTES
CHAPTER V.

1. Personal interview, Guayaquil, August, 1969.
2. Personal interview, Quito, August, 1969.
3. Personal interview, Quito, August, 1969.
4. Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, "A Propósito de la Novela 'Sed en el Puerto'," Letras del Ecuador, No. 129 (Agosto de 1964), p. 25.
5. José Otero, "Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes", Hispania, Vol. 54, No. 2, p. 404.
6. Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970), pp. 71-72.
7. Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes, p. 122.
8. Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes, p. 375.
9. Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes, pp. 249-50.
10. Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes, pp. 358-59.
11. Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes, p. 10.
12. In 1967 I completed a study entitled "The Novelistic Evolution of Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco". Thesis for the Master of Arts degree, Michigan State University, Dept. of Romance Languages.
13. As much a student as a creator of literature, Pareja Diezcanseco has read most prominent modern novelists, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, and Thomas Mann are among those he holds in highest esteem.
14. Pareja Diezcanseco's Los Nuevos Años series is similar in approach and scope to that of the Spaniard Arturo Barea, in his La Forja de un Rebelde (1951) trilogy (La Forja, La ruta, and La llama). However, there is no documented evidence Pareja Diezcanseco was attempting to do in the Ecuadorian scenario what Barea attempted in the Spanish one.

15. Edmundo Ribadeneira, La Moderna Novela Ecuatoriana (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 92.

16. This terminology is found in Benjamín Carrión, El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958), p. 150.

17. Alejandro Carrión, "Los Poderes Omnímodos," Letras del Ecuador, No. 131 (Mayo-Agosto de 1965), p. 18.

Carrión says of this novel that "... el novelista y el historiador se van acoplando cada vez mejor."

18. Benjamín Carrión, El Nuevo Relato Ecuatoriano, p. 152.

19. Personal correspondence. Letter of March 3, 1966.

20. Pareja Diezcanseco, La Advertencia (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1956), p. 275.

21. Pareja Diezcanseco uses the first person in Río Arriba (1931) and in Hombres Sin Tiempo (1941).

22. Pareja Diezcanseco, Los Poderes Omnímodos (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1964), pp. 231-32.

23. Gabriel García Márquez, Cien Años de Soledad (Buenos Aires: Ed. Sudamericana, 1969), p. 147.

24. Ernst Feise and Harry Steinhauer, German Literature Since Goethe, Part Two (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 298.

25. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Pequeñas Estaturas (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1970), p. 16.

26. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Pequeñas Estaturas, p. 33.

27. Bernard Dulsey, "Las Pequeñas Estaturas", Hispania, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 975-76.

28. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Pequeñas Estaturas, p. 38.

29. Pareja Diezcanseco, Las Pequeñas Estaturas, p. 7.

30. El Espejo y la Ventana was published first in Guayaquil in 1967. In the 1970 edition the author revised and enlarged it. This study utilizes the 1970 edition.

31. Adalberto Ortiz, El Espejo y la Ventanna (Guayaquil: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1970), p. 17.

32. Ortiz, El Espejo y la Ventanna, p. 62.

33. Pareja Diezcanseco, Los Poderes Omnímodos, p. 30.

34. Efraín Subero, "La Novela Americana Debe Seguir Siendo de Contenido Social y Humano", Interview with Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, Letras del Ecuador, No. 114 (Enero-Marzo de 1959), p. 5.

The interviewer cites Pareja Diezcanseco's opinions on what he thought should be the best course for the Spanish American novel:

"... En su opinión, la novela americana debe seguir siendo de contenido social y humano. Pero cada vez más exigente en su concepción técnica.

--América está en una toma de conciencia. El novelista tiene que marchar al paso con lo contemporáneo. Exigirse cada vez más. Obligarse a ir más adentro en el camino arduo de su propia ejecución literaria y no quedarse en los fáciles linderos del folklore.

...
El realismo de la novela latinoamericana---es la creencia de Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco-- debe ser un nuevo realismo. Los problemas no los vemos como partes aisladas, sino como todo. Pero a la vez, esto es más exigente que la modalidad practicada anteriormente."

35. Emmanuel Carballó, Hernán Lavín, and Darío Moreira, "Bienales de Poesía y Novela", Letras del Ecuador, No. 146. (Junio de 1970), p. 4.

An international jury declared the following after reading eight Ecuadorian novels submitted to it to be considered for a prize:

"Los jurados ... están de acuerdo en no otorgar los premios establecidos en las Bases por considerar que la calidad de las obras no corresponde a la categoría del Concurso."

However, there have been a few promising novels from coastal Ecuador in recent years, such as Rafael Díaz Ycaza's Los Prisioneros de la Noche (1967), or Nelson Estupiñán Bass' Cuando Los Guayacanes Florecían (1954) and El Último Río (1966). None of these, however, approaches the stature of the novels by the original "Grupo de Guayaquil".

In July, 1970, Angel F. Rojas criticized the younger novelists for not being more active in living up to the legacy of the "Grupo de Guayaquil".

36. Edmundo Ribadeneira, "La Novela Ecuatoriana en Receso," Letras del Ecuador, Nos. 73-74 (Nov.-Dic. de 1951), p. 15.

As early as 1951 Ribadeneira lamented publicly what he already saw as a decline in the Ecuadorian novel:

"El caso es, en definitiva, que nuestra novela se encuentra estancada. Junto a nuestros valores tal vez consagrados muy prematuramente, han surgido escritores in dudablemente débiles, los más sin asomos de personalidad promisoria, lo cual ha contribuido más bien a aumentar el desaliento. A maestros que se duermen sobre sus laureles, correspondería tal clase de discípulos."

37. Aguilera Malta, Siete Lunas y Siete Serpientes; prologue:

"Esta especie de saga sólo es mía en parte. En la medida que una voz perteneciente a un CORO entona --en forma transitoria-- un SOLO cuya melodía pudo vibrar, también, en otras voces fraternas: las de José de la Cuadra y Joaquín Gallegos Lara --ya pasajeros del viaje infinito--; y las de Alfredo Pareja-Díez Canseco, Enrique Gil Gilbert, Angel F. Rojas y Adalberto Ortiz, que aún se proyectan sobre el horizonte."

CONCLUSION

This study's primary purpose was to show that novels written about coastal Ecuador during the thirties and forties by the "Grupo de Guayaquil" had both social and artistic value. A secondary purpose was to determine the artistic maturation in those members of the group who continued to write novels beyond the mid-forties.

In contrast to novelists centered in highland cities, whose characters were mainly Indians and mestizos, the Guayaquil writers concentrated on coastal cholos, montuvios, and Blacks. Through their novels, they denounced and protested aspects of society that they considered unjust to the poor. Some literary critics observed the social orientation in the Ecuadorian novels of the thirties, but failed to give attention to the artistic development in those from the coast.

The writings of European, North American, and Spanish American Romanticists and Naturalists had influenced the littoral authors, as had those of Spanish American costumbristas, regionalists, and social reformers. They were also influenced by the ideals of Marxism, Socialism, and the Russian Revolution. Their interpretation of Ecuadorian life showed the effect of these influences.

The members of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" evaluated and analyzed each other's work in a spirit of discussion

and polemic, to define and solidify their social and artistic goals.

Their literary debut was made with Los que se van (1930), which set precedents in subject matter and artistic approach for later novels. It departed from earlier costumbrista works, in that the depiction of local customs, scenes, and dress was incidental to portrayal of individual cholo, montuvio, and Black characters. They were pictured as intelligent and introspective, with a strong, natural sense of justice, deep, volatile emotions, and an intensely personal interaction with the environment. Outside their sub-culture, they were social misfits. Short, succinct statements and simple, direct dialogue, in keeping with speech patterns of the coastal poor, were used to portray them. Their social problems were made evident without harangue.

When the authors of Los que se van were joined by their friends in the formation of the "Grupo de Guayaquil", they concentrated on the novel. Their goals were to bring out positive and negative aspects in society, in the hope of influencing the amelioration of ills, and to develop the aesthetic qualities of their art as a contribution to the national literature.

The environment is pictured in great depth and against a wide panorama. Struggles against injustice become part of a global picture. Lower class characters

are portrayed as more worthy human beings than those in the upper classes. Cholos, montuvios, and Blacks relate intimately with native plant and animal life, and are deeply rooted in superstition and folk-traditions. They are the most interesting characters and it is clearly suggested that they are the true representatives of the region. Historical references are used to affirm ideas about the nature and composition of society.

These novelists use extensively language and syntax imitative of native speech. Stereotyping the characters is avoided through emphasis on individual traits. Some are symbols of their race or social class, but still have unique psychologies. The protest against social injustice is evident, but propagandism is usually restrained. Lyrical qualities and a sense of the beauty of life in the Ecuadorian tropics are often achieved.

De la Cuadra and Gil Gilbert wrote about the montuvio; Aguilera Malta, Gallegos Lara, and Pareja Diezcanseco concentrated on the cholo; Ortiz focused on the Black. De la Cuadra, Aguilera Malta, and Gil Gilbert characteristically used vivid scenes in which the characters were portrayed primarily through their words and actions, while Gallegos Lara, Pareja Diezcanseco, and Ortiz used dialogue which adds "local color", but which is augmented by descriptive interpretation of the characters' thoughts. De la

Cuadra and Aguilera Malta created characters who were, respectively, symbols of the montuvio and cholo. With Pareja Diezcanseco, the careful attention to the portrayal of his characters' individual psychologies outweighs their possible symbolic value. The attempts by Gil Gilbert and Ortiz to create symbols were unsuccessful. Gallegos Lara's work was flawed by propagandistic elements.

After the disintegration of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" in the mid-forties, its members who continued to write often used settings other than the Ecuadorian coast. There was a tendency to examine society more objectively, through characters representative of good and bad elements in all social classes. History was no longer used to confirm social attitudes, but its events affected the psychologies of the characters. Experimentation with contemporary narrative techniques became one of their primary concerns.

The writings of the "Grupo de Guayaquil" evidently had some effect on the social process, although the realistic description may have offended some readers. While their literature made social defects obvious, they also left as a legacy for newer writers a group of novels that are based on social reality and are also works of art. Their work during the thirties and forties was precursive to contemporary trends in the Spanish American novel.

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APPENDICES

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