SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT
IN THE EARLY NARRATIVE
OF RÓMULO GALLEGOS

by
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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is a study of the essays and short stories written by Rómulo Gallegos in the early years of the twentieth century. It traces his social and political ideas which were set forth in his essays and transferred into the early narrative work of the author. The essays and short stories, presented chronologically according to their date of publication, represent his successive works. Gallegos' ideas derive from the corruption of his native Venezuela ruled by anarchy and dictatorship.

Born in Caracas in 1884 under the dictatorial regime of Cipriano Castro, Gallegos first attracted a reading public in 1906 with his collection of essays published originally in the literary journal La Alborada. The essays, from the obscure files of this long dead periodical, constitute the symposium entitled Una posición en la vida, 1954. Showing the influence of nineteenth century European and Latin-American positivism, these essays set forth his fundamental social and political beliefs and reforms. Another dictator, Juan Vicente Gómez, put an end to this literary activity by closing the review.

Gallegos then made his debut as a short story writer, publishing

more than thirty stories in the literary periodicals entitled El Cojo Ilustrado, La Revista, Actualidades, and La Novela Semanal. In these stories, the patriotic preoccupations of the essays come to life.

Eventually Gallegos became a novelist, establishing himself as a major writer of Spanish-American fiction. He is noted for his intention to effect reform and for his interest in the traditions and the national soul of the Venezuelan people. This dissertation shows the trends started in the essays, applied to the short stories, and developed to a larger scope in the novel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of the efforts and guidance of several persons to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude. I am particularly grateful and deeply indebted to Dr. Graciela Palau de Nemes, Professor of Spanish American Literature at the University of Maryland, who provided the initial guidance of this study. She is both an enthusiastic adviser and a sympathetic listener whose encouragement and unfailing support awakened in me an interest in this subject matter. Her generosity and patience in giving of her time and her penetrating insight made this task possible.

I am also grateful to other professors at the University of Maryland from whom I received instruction, guidance, and assistance.

I express my appreciation to Mr. Rómulo Gallegos who personally gave me so generously the right to reproduce many passages from his works, and for his patience, kindness, and encouragement when he read most of this dissertation.

The writer is indebted to his colleague and personal friend of long standing, Professor Emeritus Charles F. Kramer, for his many patient hours of valuable help, advice, criticism, and support throughout the past seven years. There is no last word of acknowledgement, appreciation, and thanks due Professor Kramer, who has always been my best critic in study, teaching, and research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation deals with the personified concepts in the essays and short stories written by Rómulo Gallegos in the early years of the twentieth century. The essays and short stories, presented chronologically according to their dates of publication represent his successive works, each having its own peculiar force and leading to the genre which made him famous, the novel. Gallegos has achieved enviable distinction in Venezuelan letters as essayist, writer of short stories, and above all, novelist.

Born in Caracas in 1884, Gallegos attracted the attention of critics and the public in 1906 with his collection of essays published originally in the literary journals entitled La Alborada and El Cojo Ilustrado. The most striking characteristic of his first essays, as well as that of his short stories, is his intent to stimulate political and social reform. Gallegos had been born under the dictatorial regime of Antonio Guzmán Blanco. He had grown up under another dictatorship, that of General Cipriano Castro, and began his literary career two years before Gómez' regime.

His country had known little peace since the Wars of Independence. The Civil Wars between rival caudillos and the subsequent dictatorships had left their mark. It is not surprising that the literature of the times should reflect the national conflict.

Although the press was often controlled by the iron hand of the dictators, the European countries, France, England, and to a lesser extent, Spain, provided the necessary inspiration for a national literature to develop. As the artistic ability of the writers captured the local color and customs, it also captured the pulse of the nation. The better they wrote the more capable they were to expose the political evils of the time and the corruption of the entire country.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the repressive measures of Juan Vicente Gómez made the social and political life of Venezuela more violent. For a while the country failed to attain constitutional tranquility and order. Otherwise Gómez proved to be an energetic and resourceful man who brought material prosperity to the country. International capitalism fostered great technical progress in Venezuela. Masses of European immigrants arrived in the country and brought with them new attitudes and work habits. The stress on material progress brought an era of relative prosperity. Venezuelan writers were able then to cultivate art for art's sake, according to the new modernistic trend. Essays and short stories of greater artistic merit began to appear. Even the short stories that were similar to those of an earlier period were written with careful attention to art. Furthermore, new themes made their appearance.

It was then, in 1910, that Gallegos made his debut as a short story writer with the story Sol de antaño, which he followed with La liberación, and Una aberración curiosa. Several of his cuentos are

not strictly short stories, but it is possible to include them in a study of his works from the artistic point of view because, in the evocation of the past, he resorts to all the typical devices of the short story art.[1]

Gallegos, the short story writer, is as Gallegos, the essayist, a patriot, a man whose greatest concern is the welfare of his beloved land. Presently we shall examine the circumstances which so aroused his patriotism.

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[1]A number of his sketches and short stories have been collected and published in the most recent edition of his Obras Completas, 1958.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING FOR GALLEGOS: CAUDILLOS AND DICTATORS

Critics have unanimously agreed that the life and political ideals of Rómulo Gallegos are vividly and accurately portrayed in his writings, and that many of his works are studies and criticisms of the social and political conditions of Venezuela from the time of the regime of General Guzmán-Blanco through that of Juan Vicente Gómez.[1] It is evident, then, that any study of his ideas in literary dress should be preceeded by a brief sketch, at least, of the life and the historical conditions of his country. The circumstances of his early life and his later political career gave Gallegos a thorough knowledge of the social and political reality of Venezuela.

The life of Rómulo Gallegos in its political and social setting in the twentieth century began in Venezuela under a cruel, vindictive, and irresponsible military caudillo, Cipriano Castro. In power for nine years, he bankrupted Venezuela and built up a tremendous personal fortune outside his native land. This cruel and rapacious mestizo mountaineer was born in the Andean section of Western Venezuela in 1858. With scant formal education, Castro began work on a cattle ranch at an early age, entered politics in 1884, and became governor of his native state of Tachira four years later. He took part in an

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[1]For a good basic study of the Caudillo in early 19th Century Venezuelan history, see George S. Wise, Caudillo: A portrait of Antonio Guzmán Blanco (New York: 1951).

unsuccessful revolt in 1892 and was expelled from his country. For several years he lived on the eastern frontier of Colombia, rustled cattle, and bided his time. When he finally crossed the border with an intrepid guerrilla band, he was promptly joined by several professional warriors. Advancing rapidly toward the capital, he expelled the government and installed himself in Caracas in October, 1899.[1]

With a half a hundred revolutionary outbreaks in a period of seventy years, the economic development of Venezuela was necessarily slow. Presidents and administrations disappeared with such startling rapidity in the first forty years of Venezuelan independence that little opportunity occurred for careful consideration of the means best fitted to promote the general welfare. Even when measures of improvement were initiated, political disturbances, as Gallegos repeats so many times in his essays and short stories, invariably arose to obstruct continuity of policy in the proposed reforms. From 1899 to 1906 Venezuela was prey to the intrigues of unscrupulous politicians like Castro and to the attendant evils of ever-recurring conspiracies against the authorities, and, as a consequence, her economic situation was confronted by innumerable difficulties.

Castro's political career was extremely hazardous. No mountaineer had ever ruled the nation before. Venezuela had heretofore been dominated by its plainsmen or by the intellectuals and generals

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[1]For important data on this period of Venezuelan history, see W.D., and H.L. Marshland, Venezuela Through Its History (New York: 1954).

of Caracas or the seaboard. It was perhaps the realization that he was engaged in a desperate enterprise that made him so cruel and so eager to accumulate a fortune. He was determined to hold on to the government as long as he could and to lay up a large treasure for possible years of exile in case he lost control. He obtained considerable sums by means of government contracts, concessions, and monopolies, and within a few years sent heavy bank deposits to Curaçao and New York. He had no scruples. He not only plundered the nation; he jailed and executed his opponents or compelled them to flee the country in order to escape death or imprisonment. He governed Venezuela as if he owned the country and was constantly in conflict with foreign governments because of his abuse of their citizens. He was one of the most irresponsible tyrants ever spawned in Latin America.

Late in 1908 he became seriously ill -- or so it was said -- and went to Europe for an operation. He was succeeded by Juan Vicente Gómez, who had been the strong right arm of the Castro government from the outset. But now Gómez decided to dominate the country in his own right and not in the interest of his former chief, who was forced to wander for years in exile, a "man without a country." Sometime in 1916 Castro established his residence in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where death overtook him late in 1924.

Thus commenced the "Age of Gómez," a cloudy time of tyranny and cruelty against great "héroes civiles" like Gallegos, shot through, nonetheless, with some material progress. It lasted 27 years (1908-35).

Illegitimate son of a poor mountain Indian woman, himself a peasant who never learned to read and write, Gómez had risen to prominence as one of Castro's army of cattlemen and by 1900 was a wealthy rancher. By 1910 all Venezuela was his private property. He never married, but fathered scores of illegitimate children, who lived around or near him on fat government jobs. None of his good fortune ever trickled down to the Indian masses in the back country. His personal holdings were fabulous; he was said at his death to be worth $30,000,000. He maintained order by force and cruelty; common people called him El Brujo, the sorcerer, and could not believe he would ever die. When his death abed from old age was announced in December, 1935, the city of Caracas literally went on a drunken spree of celebration.[1]

Germán Arciniegas has described the country as an "oil heaven" for the military group, and characterized the despotism of the mestizo General Juan Vicente Gómez, who held the country in his iron grasp, in the following pertinent phrases:

> A former cattle-rustler, swift and heavy-handed, given to few but trenchant words, he had the air of a barbarian patriarch.... Like Manuel Rosas of Argentina, Juan Vicente looked upon his country as his ranch. On his ranch he was boss. Those who thought of opposing him were thrown into underground dungeons where they suffered terrible tortures and rotted away in tropical dampness. The phrase "thought of" is used advisedly, for Juan Vicente could read what was going on in people's minds. Besides being a dictator, he was something of a wizard.[2]

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[1]For a detailed study of the dictatorial rule of Gómez, see Thomas Rourke, Gómez, Tyrant of the Andes (New York: 1948).

[2]Germán Arciniegas, The State of Latin America (New York: 1952), p. 95.

Gómez was a shrewd and efficient warrior; and after he took charge of the national government at the end of 1908 he gathered around himself a number of able administrators and journalists who tried to polish and gild his reputation at home and abroad. His rule differed little from Castro's except in one important respect: he carefully cultivated the friendship of foreigners and foreign governments. He promptly settled all the claims of aliens and welcomed investments from abroad. Venezuela possessed rich petroleum deposits, but had no money, technicians, or equipment to extract, refine, and market the oil. Gómez and his supporters formed a partnership with foreign capitalists which proved profitable for both sides. Workers in the oil fields also appear to have received reasonably good pay. The main trouble was that Gómez and his little coterie did not use the Venezuelan share entirely to promote the welfare of the nation, but kept a large part of the profits for their own private purses. Gómez accumulated millions before he died. He invested most of his fortune at home, however, in fine horses and cattle, in lands, houses, and hotels; the property remained in Venezuela, and the national government recovered the major part of it after the dictator's death. Moreover, he redeemed the foreign debt of the country and refused to float foreign loans when he could easily have borrowed millions in New York or London. Either debts were repugnant to him, or else there was a limit to his greed, enormous as it was. He must be given credit for paying off these foreign obligations, and for his harmonious relations with other nations.

The fact remains, however, that Gómez was a despot and not even a benevolent despot. He was among the world's most cruel tyrants. Many hundreds were imprisoned, tortured, killed, or driven into exile during his long rule. Under him, Venezuela had peace and made considerable material progress, but enjoyed neither liberty nor democracy, and almost nothing was done to redeem the mass of the people from poverty and ignorance.

Mildly tolerant of other people's religion -- for Gómez professed none -- he allowed some religious liberty. In spite of being a tyrannical despot he was interested in promoting public works and sanitation, though he frowned on mass education. He employed bright, scientifically trained young men to do the actual work of government. His foreign relations being harmonious, he preserved a prosperous neutrality during World War I. Most important for the future, when oil was discovered in Lake Maracaibo during his rule, Gómez was smart enough to turn it to his own profit, and in time, the country profited from it. Foreign capital was allowed to develop the petroleum, but an eighth-part of all oil produced had to be turned over as taxes to his government. Maracaibo became a fabulously rich oil field; Gómez' government paid off the national debt, reduced domestic taxes to a minimum, and lived luxuriously from the oil revenues. He gave some material prosperity to Venezuela in agriculture, stock raising, and industry, although they were monopolies. In sharp contrast to the rest of Latin America, Venezuela was hurt very little by the depression, and

survived it economically sound. The prosperity of the government from the oil taxes has persisted to the present day.

CHAPTER III

GALLEGOS' INITIATION AS A WRITER: THE RISE OF LA ALBORADA

During his brief studies at Venezuela's Central University, Rómulo Gallegos became associated with two other students who were to become his closest friends and intellectual companions: Julio Planchart, critic, and Julio Horacio Rosales, short story writer and novelist. In Caracas, he had met Enrique Soublette, a handsome, ill-fated, brilliant, but erratic young man who proved to be another intellectual companion of great inspiration and stimulation for Gallegos. These men were to win honor and distinction in the field of Spanish American literature. They revealed themselves as contributors to a new literary review entitled La Alborada that was to help shape a new generation of Venezuelan writers. The importance of their collaboration in the review is attested to in the following lines:

> Por los alrededores del 98, días augurales del próximo siglo, aunque tímidamente, después de la postración en que había caído el espíritu comenzó a sentirse, o mejor a vislumbrarse, la realidad insinuante de una independencia intelectual posible, bien que sofocada por otras urgencias de la vida nacional hasta que, por los años de 1918 al 20, este sentimiento adquirió mayor fuerza, acaso como reflejo del nacionalismo que se despertó en Europa, guía espiritual de América hasta entonces, con el triunfo de los aliados, y sobre todo con el de Francia, después de la Primera Guerra Mundial.
>
> Justo es reconocer que la señal de esta inquietud la dieron en los comienzos de este siglo los jóvenes de La Alborada, Enrique Soublette, Rómulo Gallegos, Julio Planchart, Julio Horacio Rosales y Salustio González Rincones. Pero este revista alborada de buenas intenciones, no tuvo mayor

> influencia inmediata, ni divulgación. Soublette muere en plena juventud y actividad, González Rincones se destierra, por inquietud espiritual, y pasa el resto de su vida entre los halagos veleidosos de las literaturas extranjeras en París. Sólo Gallegos y Julio Planchart persisten en su afán de encontrar el alma y el pensamiento propio en ensayos y novelas. Y tanto el uno como el otro, realizaron lo más importante de su obra en contacto con los escritores un poco más jóvenes de la generación de 18, estableciéndose entre unos y otros, no obstante la diferencia de años, experiencia y conocimientos de aquéllos, una verdadera amistad intelectual, fortalecida por la crítica sincera de las obras, en su mayoría inéditas por mucho tiempo, y el respeto afectuoso hacia las personas.[1]

As the editorial staff of the struggling little magazine which they called La Alborada, these young writers, full of enthusiasm and energy, were to engage in constructive criticism of Venezuela.

The five friends spent many hours together at the Soublette country place or hiking in the valleys of Caracas or on the side of a mountain called El Avila. They were five young men dissatisfied with their country and the times, looking for an amelioration of both. They were, like most young people, ready to remake the world to their own image, and young enough to feel that valía la pena de vivir. Soublette was no doubt the most stimulating of the four companions. He was continually reading new books and conjuring up the wildest schemes, all based on the latest reading, and then abandoning each one with the same enthusiasm with which he started them.

Lowell Dunham, biographer, has suggested that the books

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[1]Fernando Paz-Castillo, "Andrés Eloy Blanco," Revista Nacional de Cultura, Caracas, Año XVII, No. 110, (May-June 1955), pp. 11-12.

Gallegos and his friends then read and discussed are mentioned in the pages of his first novel El último Solar, a title later changed to Reinaldo Solar. Three of Gallegos' four companions appear in the novel as main characters with Enrique Soublette as Reinaldo Solar, the protagonist, and many pages of the work transcribe the youthful sessions as Gallegos later recalled them and worked them into the plot. Dunham has indicated other sources from which this information could be derived, such as Gallegos' essays.[1]

Bearing in mind, then, that the novel Reinaldo Solar was inspired by Gallegos' association and friendship with these young men, we should like to point out the foreign authors that the characters in the novel mention or discuss. It can be assumed that these were the works that Gallegos and his friends were reading at the time. Author's names which appear in the novel are: Tolstoy, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Darwin, Byron, Emerson, Verlaine, Ibsen, Pierre, Max Nordau, Lombroso.[2] In one of his essays Gallegos refers to Zola, Claude Farrere, Renan, and Haeckel. Among titles mentioned are The Imitation of Christ, Renan's The Life of Jesus, Haeckel's Riddle of the

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[1]See Appendix A for personal correspondence from Professor Lowell Dunham, Chairman, Department of Modern Languages, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. Professor Dunham can be considered the foremost authority in the United States on Gallegos. Throughout many years of study, and personal contact with the Venezuelan novelist, he has acquired first hand knowledge of his life and works.

[2]Mentioned by Felipe Massiani, El hombre y la naturaleza Venezolana en Rómulo Gallegos (Caracas: Editorial Elite, 1943), pp. 46-47.

Universe, Tolstoy's The Kreutzer Sonata, Resurrection, and Zola's La Terre.[1]

Commenting upon this reading some forty years later, Gallegos wrote: "We nourished our youth on the marvelous sustenance of good literature.... It was all directed ... toward the problem of the dolorosa alma Venezolana."[2]

Gallegos describes the intellectual outings in two widely separated works; first in a short sketch entitled "Una aberración curiosa"[3] and again, years later, in a beautiful reminiscence written soon after the death of his devoted friend, Julio Planchart, which he entitled "Mensaje al otro superviviente de unas contemplaciones ya lejanas."[4]

In "Una aberración curiosa" the friends have taken a stroll into the outskirts of Caracas. Gallegos recounts it: "Discutimos valores, hablamos de esperanzas defraudadas, comentamos ajenos fracasos vislumbrando tal vez el propio; excitándonos, hacíamos

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[1]From Ramiro de Maeztu, Gallegos became acquainted also with the work of Sidney and Beatrice Webb and the Fabians. See "Necesidad de valores culturales," El Cojo Ilustrado, Caracas, Año XXI, No. 496, (Aug. 15, 1921), pp. 440-441, hereafter cited as CI; Rómulo Gallegos, Una posición en la vida (México: Editorial Humanismo, 1954), pp. 82-109, hereafter cited as Una posición....

[2]See Appendix B for personal correspondence from Professor Lowell Dunham, p. 173.

[3]CI, No. 452, pp. 577-579.

[4]Bohemia, La Habana, Año XLI, No. 2, (Jan. 9, 1949), pp. 44-45, 72; Una posicion..., pp. 374-385.

frases rotundas, algún tanto huecas: el paisaje nos agota; este sol nos devora."[1] And in a more detailed passage he speaks of their preoccupations and aspirations:

> Eramos cinco en una misma posición ante la vida y paseábamos nuestro cenáculo errante por todos los caminos de buen mirar hacia paisajes hermosos.... Salíamos del ensueño universal y milenario en que nos inciaran los grandes libros leídos y compartíamos a toda voz los nuestros propios.... Eramos cinco y a todos se nos occuría imaginar, como a todos los jóvenes les acontece, que con nosotros comenzaba un mundo nuevo, originalísimamente nuestro, donde ya si valía la pena vivir.
>
> Teníamos alimentada nuestra mocedad con la milagrosa sustancia de las buenas letras devoradas o saboreadas y estábamos adquiriendo la costumbre de enderezar las que luego fuesen nuestras hacia la dolorosa alma venezolana. El Avila nos prestó los empinados sitios de sus cumbres para los elevados sueños de ímpetus alardosos durante las anchas contemplaciones y otras veces sus boscosos congilones, con frescura de musgos y suave rumor de aguas corrientes, para los recogimientos graves y serenos. Desde aquellas tendíamos la vista por la Venezuela que nos ofreciera las perspectivas y aprendimos a que nos doliera el corazón por sus campos desiertos, sus tierras ociosas, su gente campesina al desabrigo de los ranchos mal parados en los topes de los cerros, allá y allá....[2]

The first issue of La Alborada announced modestly enough that it would appear each Sunday, that the "subscripción mensual anticipada" was one bolívar, that its editors were Julio Rosales, Julio Planchart, Henrique Soublette, and Rómulo Gallegos. The heading carried the title La Alborada, with a sketch of the sun coming up over a hill and

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[1]CI, No. 452, p. 577.

[2]Bohemia, No. 2, p. 44.

the quotation, "Sustituir la noche por la aurora."

As Julio Planchart was later to write, the program to cure all of Venezuela's troubles was not clear, but each in his own way saw and understood the conditions; and La Alborada was an expression of their concern, the expression of their "dolor de patria."

The intellectual atmosphere in which these young men who were launching La Alborada had grown to manhood was a narrow one indeed. It would not change under Gómez as they hoped it would. Both Castro and Gómez

> redujeron--naturalmente--el ámbito de la vida intelectual; cerraron para el hombre venezolano la consideración de los problemas inmediatos, y por ello en muchos nombres y durante muchos años, la Literatura fué uno como juego convencional y frívolo, una prestidigitación de frases y coloreados epítetos. En un momento en que la Cultura occidental experimentaba tan patéticas tensiones, en que hasta las bases de la vieja sociedad tradicional sufrían el ambate de una crítica profunda, y en el plano de la Historia Contemporánea aparecían nuevas formas y valores sociales, y nuestro país subsistió como una isla amurallada y precavida contra la influencia exterior ... los escritores y artistas reaccionaron de dos maneras; plegándose al conformismo oficial, o rebelándose contra él en la soledad, el exilio y la desesperación. Optimismo ciego y bien pagado, y enconada amargura y corrosiva tristeza, fueron así, las notas dominantes del trabajo literario venezolano en aquel período. Como en la Italia de la Contra-Reforma que sucedía al libre Renacimiento, la frase vacía, el versecillo trivial y melódico, suele ocultar la pobreza del contenido. Periódicos oficiales acogen lo que pudiera llamarse una Literatura epicena, sin opinión.
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> . . . . . .
>
> El discurso frondoso, los versos galantes, la historia heroica, detenida siempre en un como

> narcisismo del pasado, fueron formas específicas de esa expresión intelectual. A los del Gobierno no era necesario pedirles ideas porque se les reclamaban metáforas.[1]

But the hopes of the La Alborada group were raised upon the fall of Castro and the advent of Gómez. It meant a change at least, and there was the possibility that something better might be in store for them. Venezuela was producing its own philosophical and liberal writers in this period. These restless minds were discussing new ideas -- popular education, Indian reform, free trade, and freedom of religion and the press. Reviews such as El Cojo Ilustrado, Alma Venezolana, Sagitario and others contributed to their divulgation and development. Nevertheless, a more important role awaited the new review, La Alborada. A Venezuelan critic has written:

"Sin embargo, es con la aparición de la revista Alborada, cuando se inicia una nueva generación literaria, integrada por valores como: Enrique Soublette, Julio Planchart, Rómulo Gallegos y Julio Rosales. El solo nombre Alborada era una consigna de renovadores impulsos."[2]

Optimistically, La Alborada protested against all that they had seen but could not heretofore express. Enrique Soublette, in the opening article entitled "Todo mentiras," wrote of their past frustration

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[1]Mariano Picón-Salas, Formación y proceso de la literatura venezolana (Caracas: Editorial Cecilio Acosta, 1941), pp. 212-213.

[2]Pastor Cortés, Contribución al estudio del cuento moderno venezolano (Caracas: 1945), p. 26.

and anger:

> Cuántas veces, bajo la opresión que padeció la Patria en los últimos años, anhelamos esta hora, previéndola vagamente pero sin poder precisar cuando ni cómo llegaría. Nuestra frase obligada ante las verguenzas y los horrores que se sucedian sin descanso, la frase con que entreteníamos nuestra necesidad de expansión y consolábamos la angustia de nuestras bocas, amordazadas, y que era como el monótono estribillo de aquella oda trágica: ¡ Ah, cuando podamos hablar, cuando podamos dar curso a esta necesidad de decir las verdades, a este deseo de señalar las erosiones escondidas hoy bajo el manto de la mentira oficial! /Italics mine/
>
> Y en momento llegó.... Llegó cuando menos lo esperabamos, cuando ya comenzaba a ahogarnos el torcedor de la duda.
>
> Fieles a la promesa que nos hicimos en los días de silencio, nos hemos levantado para hablar, y la primera palabra que cae de nuestros labios entorpecidos todavía por la brutal presión que los mantuvo cerrados, era para la mentira conque nos envilecieron y procuraron cegarnos para aquel recurso ignominioso conque los servidores de la Tiranía aletargaron al pueblo, debilitando a fuerza de constancia su criterio, llegando a conseguir al cabo que sus ojos alucinados vieran un gesto de caridad en la mano que lo estrangulaba....[1]

These were the young men; these were the preoccupations and aspirations on which they hoped to found a new Venezuela, and these were the circumstances under which they published, on January 31, 1909, the first issue of La Alborada.

The opening editorial was entitled "Nuestra Intención." It was bold and accusing, and yet it was hopeful; it was indignant but full of the faith that only the young can have:

> Salimos de la obscuridad en la cual nos habíamos encerrado dispuestos a perderlo todo antes que transigir

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[1]La Alborada, Caracas, Año I, No. 2, (Feb. 14, 1909), n.p., hereafter cited as Alb.

> en lo más mínimo con los secuaces de la Tiranía Muchos de nosotros hemos estado a punto de ahogarnos bajo la presión de aquella negra atmósfera, pero nunca de ceder un ápice de nuestra integridad; ...
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> . . . . . .
>
> Aspiramos a tomar siquiera una pequeña parte en la tarea de redención y de justicia....
>
> Al comenzar nuestra faena bajo la clara luz de La Alborada resumiendo todo nuestro programa en la noble frase del Poeta argentino "sustituir la noche por la aurora", presentamos nuestro respetuoso saludo al Pueblo de Venezuela, al Gobierno Nacional y a toda la Prensa del País. Ahora, Comencemos.[1]

Gallegos' first printed article appeared on page two of the first issue. It was an essay entitled "Hombres y principios." In it there was the hope that a new day had at last arrived for Venezuela; there was the bitterness at the farce that had been called a República, one caudillo following another in rapid and disastrous succession.[2]

January 31, 1909, therefore, is the first important literary date in the life of Rómulo Gallegos; it launched him as a serious-minded young writer, although in the field of essay rather than in that of fiction in which he was to make a name for himself. The article gives us a good picture of what and how Gallegos thought as a young intellectual of twenty-five. There are certain characteristics in it that continued to appear in all of his later works, both in the early short stories and novels, and in the celebrated works he was to produce in his maturity. There was (1) a deep and brooding concern over the

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[1] Alb., Año I, No. 1, (Jan. 31, 1909).

[2] Alb., No. I, p. III; Una posición..., p. 11.

wretched social and political conditions existing in Venezuela; (2) the demand for an awakening on the part of the citizens of Venezuela to assume their responsibilities in their country; (3) the protest against the farce of a republic which existed on paper but not in fact; (4) a plea for decency; (5) the sense of an abiding, deep-seated humanity; and (6) a firm belief in moral principles.

It is fitting to note the conclusion of the article: "Ya podemos pensar alto y debemos ser sinceros." Here are the greatest virtues that Gallegos, the reformer, will maintain throughout his essays: intellectual honesty and lack of pretention, and overwhelming sincerity.

The next issue of La Alborada appeared one week late, on February 14, 1909; Gallegos wrote two feature articles, entitled "Algo sobre la 'Revista de Instrucción Pública'" and "Las causas." By the third issue of the magazine, all identifying volume numbering, editors' names, and mottoes had disappeared from the small publication. Number three was issued under the important and basic heading of La Alborada. Gallegos contributed three feature articles: "Por los partidos" and "El respeto a la ley" and the first article of a series that he entitled "El factor educación." Issue number four contained "Los poderes," the second of the series "El factor educación," and "La alianza hispano-americana." In issue number five there appeared Gallegos' article "El cuarto poder." Number six contained his third essay on "El factor educación." Number seven added to his growing list of publications with "El verdadero triunfo" and with number four

of "El factor educación." The final issue, number eight, printed the fifth and final of the series "El factor educación" and a final article under the title of "Los congresos."

But the curtain was to fall rather abruptly on the struggling little magazine. All that Gallegos and his co-editors had looked and hoped for disappeared at the whim of the dictator Juan Vicente Gómez. Julio Planchart tells us that

> el gobierno de Gómez no veía ya con buenos ojos la libertad de prensa, y necesitaba un diario continuador de la labor de "El Constitucional" de Gumersindo Rivas del tiempo de Castro; ya estaban hechos los arreglos para fundarlo y en breve aparecería. Entonces el Gobernador citó a los periodistas, los reunió y los increpó y les dijo cuales eran las normas a que debían sujetarse en sus publicaciones y hasta uno de ellos, Leoncio Martínez, fué enviado a la cárcel. A la reunión provocada por el Gobernador asistimos Henrique Soublette y el que esto escribe y al salir de la reunión ambos nos dijimos: "La Alborada ha muerto."[1]

Unhappy evidence of the growing severity of the dictatorship of Gómez, commonly known as El Benemérito, came in March, 1909, when the government forced the closing of La Alborada, the journal which had shown great promise in Venezuela.[2] Newspapers and other journals were confiscated, suspended or closed on various pretexts.

If we can judge by the numbers printed, counting from number two of Volume I of February 14, 1909, to the last dated issue, we can say with some certainty that the other six issues of La Alborada

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[1]Julio Planchart, Temas críticos (Caracas: Imprenta de la Dirección de Cultura, 1948), p. 43.

[2]See Appendix B for personal correspondence from professor Lowell Dunham, p. 173.

appeared around February 21, February 28, March 7, March 21, March 24, and March 28. This seems to be substantiated by the following notice to subscribers in the last issue: "Nuestra primera edición después de la reforma se hará el primero de mayo del año en curso es decir que será la síntesis de todo el mes de abril."[1]

La Alborada was dead, but it had given birth to a new and promising writer of social essays, who would become a world-renowned novelist. As a result of his participation in the short life of this review he would become a conscientious political leader of the important Acción Democrática party of Venezuela, who was to carry the ideals of this short-lived periodical into the main body of Venezuelan life and literature and finally into the political arena and at last into the realization and execution of a political platform.

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[1]Alb., No. 1, P. III; Una posición ..., p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

GALLEGOS' SECOND PHASE AS A WRITER: HIS SHORT STORIES AND SKETCHES IN EL COJO ILUSTRADO

If we conclude that La Alborada is the first phase of Gallegos' literary efforts, and of the other members of the generation of La Alborada, who were associated with him in its publication, we can consider El Cojo Ilustrado the second phase of their efforts. It was in this well-known Latin American publication that Gallegos obtained his substantial literary fame and an extensive reading public. In his article on Spanish American journals, Luis Leal rightly states that: "No es necesario ser un perito de la materia para darse cuenta de la importancia que las revistas han tenido en el desarrollo de la literatura hispanoamericana. Su valor se debe, principalmente a que en torno de ellas se han formado y daba a conocer las figuras de la literatura de esos países. Baste citar los nombres de unas de estas revistas - El Cojo Ilustrado, La Revista Azul, ... -para formarse una idea de lo indispensable que es su consulta en cualquier estudio de la literatura hispanoamericana, lo mismo que otros aspectos de la cultura."[1]

El Cojo Ilustrado was an undertaking of J. M. Herrera Irigoyen and was financed by the Herrera Irigoyen Company under the sponsorship of "Empresa El Cojo."

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[1]Luis Leal, "Revistas de Hispanoamérica," Hispania, XLIV, No. I, (March 1960), p. 175.

One of the few lasting Spanish-American reviews,

> El Cojo Ilustrado durante sus veinte y tres años de existencia, (1892 - 1915),[1] ejerce la dirección artística y cultura de sus contemporáneos. Su director, hombre de empresa y de voluntad, J. M. Herrera Irigoyen, no fué propiamente un literato, sino un enamorado de la cultural. Por las páginas de su revista, desfilaron representativos de cuatro generaciones, y constituye al decir de don Pedro Emilio Coll, 'una plataforma espiritual que exhibió a propios y a extraños, no una sóla generación, sino las que convivían en una misma época, es decir, a la Venezuela literaria y artística de entonces'. (Prólogo a la obra de Blanco Fombona 'Dos Años y Medio de Inquietud'. 1943)[2]

It was first issued by the company as a small paper advertising tobacco. It was known simply as El Cojo and was distributed free. The history of this magazine, from its humble beginning as a small advertising sheet to its transformation into one of the fine journals of Latin America, appeared in the May 1, 1889 issue:

> El año de 1873, por iniciativa del Señor Augustín Valarino, y en sociedad con el señor M. E. Echezuría, se fundó en esta capital una fábrica de El Cojo, por ser cojo el S. Echezuría. A medida que prosperaba esta fábrica fue extendiendo sus negocios a diferentes ramos industriales, los cuales, como pertenecientes a la misma sociedad, eran conocidos y nombrados como de la naciente empresa de "El Cojo." Esta fundó, entre otras cosas muy beneficiosas al país, el tranway de Maracaibo e introdujo otras innovaciones

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[1]This date seems to be in error. As stated presently, the history of the magazine and the name "El Cojo Ilustrado" appear in the issue of May 1, 1889, which is No. 177 of the VIII year.

[2]Pastor Cortés, Contribución al estudio del cuento moderno venezolano (Caracas: 1945), p. 14, hereafter cited as Cortés.

y creó otros géneros de comercio.

Entró luego a formar parte de la sociedad Herrera Irigoyen, y se estableció, como órgano de la casa, un periódico de pequeñas dimensiones, el cual se distribuía gratis y al que se dió, como era natural, el nombre de "El Cojo." Ensanchada la empresa; fundadas una tipografía especial, la fábrica de sobres que no existía en el país, la fábrica de libros en blanco, que tampoco existía, el periódico de la casa circuló con grabados traídos del extranjero; y, muerto el señor Echezuría, los socios sobrevivientes, en acatamiento a la tradición y respeto al origen primitivo de la casa y sus negocios, continuaron llamando a éstos Empresa "El Cojo," y, por consiguiente, El Cojo Ilustrado al órgano ya exornado con ilustraciones, como ya hemos dicho, importadas.

Años después, al regresar del extranjero el señor Herrera Irigoyen, se fundó por primera vez en Venezuela, por la Empresa "El Cojo," el taller de fotograbado; y con tal oportunidad renació el periódico, al cual, por las razones ya apuntadas, dieron sus fundadores el mismo nombre, El Cojo Ilustrado.[1]

Mr. Irigoyen was very literary minded and was willing to support authors and poets in his new journal, a policy which would soon encourage advanced political beliefs on the part of its readers. Under his encouragement, Venezuela was soon issuing a very cultural review, partly literary and partly scientific, carrying essays on literature and the classics, poetry, current improvements, trade, and articles on philosophy. Those who wrote for this new journal formed a literary group which could be called La generación de El Cojo Ilustrado.

A few years after the establishment of the journal, Blanco-

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[1]"El Cojo Ilustrado, nombre de esta revista," El Cojo Ilustrado, Caracas, Año VIII, No. 177, (May 1, 1889), p. 320, hereafter cited as CI; Lowell Dunham, Rómulo Gallegos (México: Colección Studium, 1957), p. 47, hereafter cited as Dunham.

Fombona, in his detailed study of Spanish American literature, stated:

> Para completar este ligero esbozo de nuestro actual momento de vida intelectual diré como existe asimismo una literatura, una tendencia académica. El ideal de los académicos consiste en el catolicismo como fórmula de moral, y en la imitación de Cervantes, como única manifestación literaria. La Academia es el último baluarte de España en América. Diré asimismo que existe entre nosotros una Revista que ha prestado los mejores servicios a la cultura nacional. Se titula El Cojo Ilustrado. Cuando se fundó, hace doce [sic] años, tomó el camino de la Academia; pero después cambió de rumbo, hasta el punto de ser hoy el único hogar de los espíritus nacionales más independientes. Su director, el señor Herrera Irigoyen, es, por su posición social, por su fortuna y por su inteligencia, uno de los hombres más notables de nuestro país. Su nombre va unido al movimiento literario de Venezuela en los últimos años. El señor Herrera Irigoyen, no contento con ser Mecenas y amigo de los artistas jóvenes de verdadero talento, ha editado con lujo digno de La Fontaine, de Leopardi o de Heine, muchas de nuestras obras.[1]

According to Blanco Fombona, El Cojo Ilustrado was also a divulger of ideas and literary trends. It reviewed new American books and in undertaking this service, it initiated and formed one of Venezuela's best literary judges, Jesús Semprúm. We reproduce Blanco Fombona's words in this respect to give a more complete picture of the importance of El Cojo Ilustrado in the literary life of Venezuela and Spanish-America.

> La necesidad de ganarse la vida honrosamente por medio de la pluma, en revistas y diarios, ha formado, durante el postrer lustro, un juez de letras. El crítico se llama Jesús Semprúm. Conocido con

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[1]Rufino Blanco-Fombona, Letras y Letrados de Hispano-América (París: Sociedad de Ediciones Literarias Y Artísticas, 1908), pp. 66-67, hereafter cited as Blanco-Fombona.

ventaja de poco tiempo atrás, como cuentista y como poeta, El Cojo Ilustrado ha sido parte a que se revele en calidad de crítico. Empezó el Dr. Semprúm cumpliendo para esa Revista caraqueña el encargo de dar noticia de los nuevos libros americanos llegados a la Redacción Suscitada y manifiesta por casualidad la aptitud de juicio, el crítico ha continuado luego, aunque no con la amplitud que debiera, cultivando ese predio donde el cosecha ricos frutos. Defecto primordial de Semprúm, en cuanto crítico, es lo fragmentario de su obra; aunque esto se explique por el carácter de sus ensayos: completes-rendus, más bien que juicios espontáneos. Posee el Dr. Jesús Semprúm, a pesar de sus años todavía cortos, -no creo que llegue a la treintena todavía cortos, -vasta cultura científica y literaria; gusto seguro, exquisito; y espíritu hospitalario, abierto a todas las ideas, a todas las modalidades artísticas.

No es un espíritu fuerte, preocupado por la política y la historia, amante de pertinentes y jugosas digresiones, un pensador a la Macaulay, ... no va al fondo de las almas, ni desmenuza a picotazos de ironía falsas reputaciones, ... su crítica no es pretexto a juegos malabares de ideas - como gusta de praticar ese paradójico y diez veces admirable Pedro-Emilio Coll; pero es necesario insistir en que avaloran a Semprúm, como crítico, una virtud rarísima: la tendencia a comprender y explicarse, exento de prevenciones, toda celebridad; y una aptitud, no menos rara: la de tolerarlo todo dentro del arte, todo, hasta lo chocante, por antitético, a sus preferencias intelectuales. El Dr. Jesús Semprúm, por su ecuanimidad de alma y serenidad constante de juicio; por su temperamento nada fosfórico, más bien receptor que impulsivo, es un crítico de valor cuyas opiniones, generalmente acertadas, expuestas sin acritud ni pedantismo, llevan el sello de una absoluta sinceridad.[1]

Under the heading of "Sueltos Literarios," El Cojo Ilustrado made the following declaration: "En el presente número publicamos un trabajo del señor Rómulo Gallegos. También tenemos en cartera

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[1]Blanco-Fombona, pp. 85-87.

tres hermosos artículos de los señores Julio Planchart, Salustio González Rincones y Enrique Soublette, que verán la luz proximamente. Es motivo de legítima complacencia para El Cojo Ilustrado abrir sus columnas a la juventud meritoria, que lucha briosamente por conquistar un lauro."[1]

Lowell Dunham has written of that first work of Gallegos which appeared in El Cojo Ilustrado: "El trabajo de Gallegos era el primero de sus cuentos que viera publicado, intitulado 'Las rosas.' Era más bien la sórdida y lúgubre historia de un artista desilusionado, que no ha logrado el próposito de crearse un nombre en Caracas. Estaba escrito bajo la señalada influencia de la escuela naturalista. Si bien el primero de enero de 1910 no nos da un anticipo del autor de Doña Bárbara, señala, de todo modos, su entrada en el campo de las obras de imaginación."[2]

From January 1, 1910, to February 15, 1915, Gallegos published in El Cojo Ilustrado seven short stories, two sketches, which he called outlines for future novels, and one essay. Around the years 1909 and 1910 the Venezuelan short story was acquiring individual character and becoming richer.[3] Gallegos was already known as a social and political reformer from his articles in La Alborada. With

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[1]CI, No. 433, p. 36.

[2]Dunham, p. 49.

[3]Cortés, p. 26.

the publication of his first work in El Cojo Ilustrado, he became a regular contributor of short stories to one of the outstanding Latin-American publications. Concerning the stories of that review, the Venezuelan writer Pastor Cortés has written: "...nos sobrecoge la pintura dolorosa y triste de la inmensidad rural de Venezuela, sometida al vértigo de las guerras civiles, las reclutas, los caciques y las endemias tropicales."[1] In short, the patriotic preoccupations are transferred to the short stories.

The year 1913 was of special importance to the author's literary career because on January 2 of that year his first book was published under the title of Los aventureros. The short stories which appear in this collection, with the exception of "El milagro del año" and "Estrellas sobre el barranco," were published originally in El Cojo Ilustrado.

Gallegos was placing himself alongside the noteworthy Venezuelan authors and themes of this period, namely Manuel Díaz Rodríguez (1868-1927), Luis Manuel Urbaneja Archelpohl (1874-1937), Rufino Blanco Fombona (1874-1944), etc. They were not only facile literary masters, they were social philosophers, at times almost profound. They were considered as writers of aristocratic bearing and intent whose words in the realistic realm of narrative literature and artistic production gave life to La Alborada and El Cojo Ilustrado. Cortés

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[1]Cortés, pp. 21-22.

summarizes them in the following paragraph:

> Las dos revistas integran uno de los mejores períodos de nuestra literatura contemporánea. En ambas, podemos señalar dos intenciones motrices: el anhelo de aclimatar en nuestro medio intelectual, refinamientos e influencias de belleza y de estilo más recientes de la literatura europea, en amplitud de conciencia artística; y una actitud que surge por contraste a la anterior, y que implica cultivo y dignificación de una literatura verdaderamente nacional, valorización del paisaje natal y amor por nuestras cosas más recónditas, en esencia de un americanismo integral.[1]

Gallegos' stories spring from a realization of the basic incongruity between man's desire and his achievements, or between man's idea of himself and sad reality. This realization is also evident in the sketches he wrote at the time of the short stories.

It is difficult to analyze the content of his short sketches for they were written to be read for the sake of impression and not to be critically dissected. It is possible, however, to describe briefly their form and technique. They are not, properly speaking, short stories or essays, but brief sketches which touch off a wide variety of human feelings, in some cases real and in others, fancied. They deal with such varied subjects as to form plots of serialized novels. There is no less variety in the techniques used by the author. Sometimes he devises a wholly improbable episode to demonstrate a fracaso, a human shortcoming. Sometimes exaggeration, carried off with a light touch and lively tempo, points out the absurdities of a profession or occupation.

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[1]Cortés, p. 16.

He blends realism and poetic fantasy and he writes political allegory which synthesizes his attitude toward his dual role as author and politician. Gallegos himself feels that only his political essays show a possible fusion of the two. One does not necessarily agree. When correlated, his essays and short stories purport otherwise.

Some of Gallegos' stories are urban in locale; others take place in a rural setting. The characters portrayed belong to the many racial and political classes that comprise the complex society of Venezuela. The diversity of themes is varied: short stories of domestic types, physical conflict, psychological analysis, superstitions, fantasy, love, and death. The variety of mood is equally varied, as the stories depict deep personal tragedy as well as national concern. Throughout his works, the author has striven to achieve and maintain a high level of artistic accomplishment.

Sometimes his stories are derived from the rich popular tradition of his country; sometimes their inspiration comes from the author's own experiences; at other times, they represent colorful legends from indigenous cultures; and at still other times there are both the mestizo and criollo themes which develop abundant narrative elements.

These trends per se illustrate his desire to explore the entire Venezuelan scene. Geographically, the scope of his works widens to include descriptions of regions heretofore mostly unknown. More important, however, is the fact that he believed that Indians, Negroes, mulattoes, and mestizos deserve to be full members of Venezuelan

society together with the whites, and that they should appear in his short stories not as picturesque background characters but as important social and racial elements.

Gallegos decided to explore often his own sensibilities, to idealize reality, and create a world of pure fantasy. His subjective tendency derived from romanticism and, taking on lyrical and idealistic elements, soon led to his very refined style of writing that could be called modernista. Although the great majority of his short stories present a complete panorama of Venezuelan life, each of them delineates a different phase or corner of his nation's history. Since his many stories and sketches were written at an early stage of his literary career, the sustained continuity of his artistic thought and style make him a short story writer worthy to be remembered.

CHAPTER V

A THIRD AND NEW PERIOD OF LITERARY ACTIVITY: LA REVISTA, ACTUALIDADES, LA NOVELA SEMANAL, AND LA LECTURA SEMANAL

On June 25, 1915, Gallegos published a short story entitled "Un caso clínico" in La Revista. The journal had started publication in Caracas on May 16, 1915, as an illustrated weekly, a "revista de literatura, arte, ciencias, historia, variedades." Its director was Adriano Riera and its editor was the very able Jesús Semprúm, later replaced by Eduardo Innes González. On September 26 of the same year, Gallegos published a second story in La Revista, entitled "La esfinge."

"El piano viejo", which some consider as one of his best short stories, was written and published at this time. It first appeared in 1916, in La Revista, and was later republished in 1917 in a newspaper entitled Fantoches, edited by Leoncio Martínez. Dunham relates how one day Gallegos was in the office of Fantoches talking to the editors. José Rafael Pocaterra, the novelist and short story writer was among those present, and was complaining of the poor quality of short stories that the magazine had published. When he read "El piano viejo," however, he exclaimed that he would give all his works to have written this one story.[1]

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[1]Lowell Dunham, Rómulo Gallegos (México: Colección Studium, 1 57), p. 53, hereafter cited as Dunham.

The third and new period of Gallegos' literary activity may be called that of Actualidades. It was a small magazine owned and edited by an Italian by the name of Aldo Baroni. It began publication some time in 1917.

At the request of Baroni, the editor, Gallegos began to write short stories for Actualidades. José Rafael Pocaterra, who had been writing the weekly cuento, was jailed by General Gómez for revolutionary activities, and Gallegos was to continue the short stories. He was to submit one story by each Thursday, for which he would be paid twenty bolívares. The first was entitled "Los Mengánez," under the date of February 9, 1919. Others followed in the same year: "Una resolución enérgica," February 16; "El cuarto de enfrente," February 23; "El crepúsculo del diablo," March 2; "Alma aborigen," March 9; "El paréntesis," March 16; "La cuidad muerta," March 23; "La encrucijada," March 30; "Pataruco," April 6; "Pegujal," April 20; "La hora menguada," April 27; "Mariana," May 11; "Paz en las alturas," May 18; "Un místico," June 1; "La fruta del cercado ajeno," June 8; and "El Maestro," July 27.[1]

January played a unique role in the life of Gallegos as a writer. January 31, 1909, saw him in print for the first time as an essayist; January 1, 1910, was the date of publication of his first short story;

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[1]All of these stories with the exception of "Alma aborigen" and "La encrucijada" were included in the collection of short stories published in 1946 under the title of La rebelión. A notation after "La encrucijada" reads as follows: "Capítulo de la novela Ultimo Solar."

January 2, 1913, his first book appeared; and January 6, 1920, marks the beginning of his career as a novelist. On that date his first novel El último Solar was published in Caracas by the Imprenta Bolívar. The novel was chiefly autobiographical in that, as previously stated, its central characters were figures drawn from among his friends of La Alborada.[1] Many of the unpublished chapters of this novel had appeared as short stories in Actualidades. Attention is called to this fact in the prologue to the 1958 edition of Gallegos' Obra Completas: "En 1919 se compromete a dar un cuento cada semana a la revista Actualidad: cuando no tenía tiempo para escribirlo, entregaba en su lugar un capítulo inédito de su primera novela, El último Solar, indicando a veces la procedencia, y sometiendolo casi siempre a ligeras adaptaciones. El último Solar apareció en 1920, y con ella, su primera novela, Rómulo Gallegos empezó a figurar entre los mejores novelistas venezolanos...."[2] In 1920, Gallegos and Eduardo Coll bought Actualidades from Baroni and continued to publish and edit it. The prologue continues that: "Este hecho fué, muy probablemente, lo que indujo a Lowell Dunham, biógrafo y crítico del gran novelista venezolano, a pensar que Reinaldo Solar (título definitivo de su primera

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[1]See Appendix B for personal correspondence from Professor Lowell Dunham, p. 172.

[2]Rómulo Gallegos, Obras Completas, Prólogo de Jesús López Pacheco, Tomo I (Aguilar: Madrid, 1958), p. XVI, hereafter cited as OC.

novela) estaba compuesta a base de trozos aprovechados en una unidad literaria superior, reprochándoselo como 'defecto'."[1]

Actualidades had a somewhat difficult existence. In a special issue dedicated to the centenary of Carabobo, a story written by Gabriel Espinosa offended the clergy. The story had slipped by Gallegos unnoticed, although Mrs. Gallegos had called his attention to it after its publication. Editor Gallegos was reprimanded and the publication was discontinued by órden superior. An appeal was made to the archbishop, who informed the editors that it could continue publishing provided General Gómez gave his personal consent.[2] The continued repressive measures of the Gómez regime included the suspension of another well-established Venezuelan journal, and attacks on other democratic publications.

In 1922, Gallegos undertook another publishing venture in the form of a small weekly which he entitled La Novela Semanal. It was a timid little sheet printed on poor paper measuring only twelve centimeters by twenty-two. The first issue carried the following information: Editor literario, Rómulo Gallegos; Administrador, Henrique Chaumer; Oficinas, Sociedad a San Francisco, 6 altos; 50 céntimos. the number. It was dated September 9, 1922, and featured a short story by Gallegos entitled "Los inmigrantes." The front page of the

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[1]OC, Prólogo, XVI.

[2]Dunham, p. 55.

little publication carried a full-length picture of the young author.

A nota preliminar sets forth the aims and objectives of La Novela Semanal:

> La Novela Semanal inicia sus ediciones estimulada por el movimiento favorable del público lector hacia las obras de los escritores nacionales. Ya está naciendo entre nosotros el gusto por la literatura que refleja las modalidades de nuestra vida y tal predilección es augurio de un franco y vigoroso florecimiento de las letras patrias, que ya contaban con distinguidos representates y se enriquecen ahora con la pléyade de los escritores nuevos, en cuyos sólidos talentos y segura orientación artística se fundan legítimas esperanzas.
>
> Nuestro propósito es, pues, dar al público obras de autores nacionales, exclusivamente, y al efecto contamos con la colaboración de muchos de ellos.
>
> Abiertas quedan las páginas de La Novela Semanal para los buenos literatos venezolanos, no sólo para los que ya están consagrados por el éxito, sino también para los que comienzan y están en el número de los escogidos. A todos los invitamos a colaborar en esta tarea que emprendemos con el ánimo de contribuir a la divulgación de una literatura verdadera nuestra.[1]

Gallegos' preoccupation with a truly national literature is evident in this foreword.

But La Novela Semanal was doomed to the fate that overtakes most Latin-American publications, whether periodicals or books; financial difficulties closed it down. But from these many editorial efforts, we can see the bold perseverance that is so much a part of Gallegos' character, driving ahead in the face of overwhelming difficulties, not to mention the indifference on the part of the Venezuelans themselves. Gallegos was aware that Venezuela was not a mature

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[1]La Novela Semanal, Caracas, I, No. 1, (Sept. 9, 1922), p. 1.

country. He was pointing out to his readers that a mature literature must spring from the country itself and not from the sophisticated boulevards of Paris. He was encouraging the writers and pointing the way for them as he had indicated the responsibilities of citizenship to his countrymen in La Alborada, and during his political career:

> Soy un hombre con una ideología, claro está, pero sobre todo un hombre que procura el bien de su país, porque he demonstrado en mi obra literaria y en mi conducta personal que le amo y deseo su engrandecimiento. Quiero que los venezolanos vivamos felices en nuestra patria, y que se trate de despejar los horizontes que se carguen de amenazas. No van, pues, encaminadas estas palabras a formular una censura, que ahora sería extemporánea, sino una simple exhortación al patriotismo indudable de todos los que me oyen, y por los cuales siento un igual aprecio.[1]
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> . . . . . .
>
> Es tiempo ya de que le allanemos los caminos, no al mesías que en ninguna escritura nos está prometido, sino al hombre responsable que en cada uno de nosotros reside, para que asuma la actitud que le corresponde, que no puede ser sino la del civismo: respeto a la ley, limitación dentro del derecho, superación ante el deber. La unánime dignidad ciudadana que componga la grande y majestuosa dignidad de la patria.
>
> Y esta es la lección que hoy nos reclama aprendida, ejercitada, ...[2]

Gallegos was not to abandon this way of thinking, for he was even not to be tempted by the modernistas and their artistic ways.

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[1]"Soy un hombre que desea el orden," Discurso pronunciado en la Cámara de Diputados de Venezuela, como Representativo por el Distrito Federal, Caracas, 30 de abril de 1937; Rómulo Gallegos, Una posición en la vida (México: Editorial Humanismo, 1954), pp. 146-147, hereafter cited as Una posición....

[2]"El mundo es del justo," Discurse pronunciado en La Guaira en marzo de 1941, en la conmemoración del natalicio de Vargas; Una posición..., pp. 160-161.

A native literature meant facing native problems; it meant, in a way, an attempt to solve them. Of his own works, he says: "Yo escribí mis libros con el oído puesto sobre las palpitaciones de la angustia venezolana y una de ellos fué leído dentro de las cárceles donde se castigaba con grilletes y vejámenes la justa rebeldía de los jóvenes de hace veinte años contra la tiránica barbarie que oprimía y deshonraba nuestro país y fué por obra de esa lectura que, más tarde, ... se me acercaron a reclamarme:

"-Se te necesita ahora en el campo de la acción.

"Habían sido, además, discípulos míos...."[1]

Shortly afterwards, Gallegos takes his own stand among the literature and writers of Spanish America, stating: "Yo conservo el derecho de sentarme entre las esclarecidas letras de nuestra América ..., porque no le he hecho traición a las mías, construidas conforme a las reglas de concordancia entre escritor y pueblo.

"Y de la nueva experiencia - ... - no me arrepentiré nunca, porque fue ocasión de recto ejercicio y oportunidad sin par, de recoger, en rostro de pueblo que ama, sufre y espera, la mejor sustancia de una emoción que bien vale toda una vida."[2]

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[1]Bohemia, La Habana, Año XLI, No. 2, (Jan. 9, 1949), p. 45; Una posición..., p. 383.

[2]"Rendición de cuentas," Discurso pronunciado en el Cuarto Congreso del Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, efectuado en la Universidad de La Habana, en abril de 1949; Una posición..., pp. 393-395.

Considering the conditions at home, it was indeed absurd for a man of Gallegos' character and preoccupations to turn his back on them and escape into an ivory tower. It was the renunciation of all that responsible citizenship meant. And as the citizen has responsibilities toward his country, Gallegos believed that the writer-artist must assume similar responsibilities in his field.

CHAPTER VI

GALLEGOS, THE ESSAYIST

Few critical articles written about Gallegos mention the importance of his work as a thinker, and those who recognize this fact are likely to overlook his early work as an essayist.

The Mexican, Muricio Magdaleno, in an article entitled "Imágenes políticas de Rómulo Gallegos," calls Gallegos the outstanding political thinker of his country, saying that aside from his exceptional rank as a novelist, Gallegos is presently the Venezuelan who offers "un más jugoso y descollante pensamiento político."[1] Magdaleno, like most critics, comments on the fact that Gallegos began his literary career in the pages of La Alborada. But despite this knowledge, Magdaleno proceeds to extract the "Imágenes políticas de Rómulo Gallegos" from the novels without any mention whatsoever of the early essays.

Ulrich Leo, in his series of articles entitled "La invención en la novela,"[2] attaches great importance to the essential characteristics of the essay which appear in such works as Pobre negro and more especially in El forastero, but not once does he mention the initial work

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[1]Cuadernos Americanos, Caracas, Año X, No. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1951), p. 234.

[2]Revista Nacional de Cultura, Caracas, Año V, No. 38, (May-June 1943), pp. 96-121; Año V, No. 39, (July-Aug. 1943), pp. 71-91; Año V, No. 40, (Sept.-Oct. 1943), pp. 92-109.

of Gallegos in La Alborada.

However, a thorough understanding of Gallegos makes it mandatory that his early works, published in La Alborada and El Cojo Ilustrado, be examined because they indicate the process of the formation of the mind of the future educator, short story writer, dramatist, novelist, and political leader.

The early essays, published in La Alborada, fall into two rather general groups, the political essays and the social essays.

PART I

The Political Essays

The political essays were published in La Alborada, Volume I, numbers one through eight, 1909. Included in this volume are the nine essays: "Hombres y principios," Las causas," "El respeto a la ley," "Por los partidos," "Los poderes," "La alianza hispanoamericana (a la Sociedad Patriótica)," "El cuarto poder," El verdadero triunfo," and "Los congresos." These shall be discussed in chronological order.

A. Hombres y principios

In his essay entitled "Hombres y principios," Gallegos declares the feelings and emotions that most Venezuelans fostered at the downfall of the Andino regime of Cipriano Castro. By the device of proroguing congress, setting up new constitutions, and ruling the country with a ruthless hand, Castro dominated Venezuela for nine years and

dissipated its wealth. A violent, sensual, reckless man, Castro was a disgrace to his country. In the shadows of his government was Juan Vicente Gómez, waiting for the opportunity to overthrow him. Castro's rule not only produced one revolt after another, but brought claims against the government by foreign powers for damages suffered in the disorders.

In "Hombres y principios," Gallegos points out that while Castro's defiance of foreigners stirred support for his administration, he soon lost it by his continued dictatorial national policy.

In 1908, seeking medical treatment in Europe, Castro left the government in the hands of Gómez, the next "Man of the Andes." Gómez' followers filled the army and the congress so that the latter, in 1909, after repudiating Castro's protests over suspension from office, conferred the presidency upon Gómez. Thus began one of the most ruthless dictatorships in Latin America in the early twentieth century. This lack of gubernatorial principle becomes the underlying thought of the literary production of Gallegos and the motivation for his many works of fiction. He forcefully expresses it in the following passage: "Y esto será así, en tanto no nos penetremos todos, desde el primero hasta el último ciudadano, de que vale más un principio bueno que el mejor hombre en la curul del poder. Hombres ha habido y no principios, desde el alba de la República hasta nuestros brumosos tiempos: he aquí la causa de nuestros males. A cada esperanza ha sucedido un fracaso y un caudillo más en cada fracaso y un principio

menos de la conciencia social."[1] This is the story of Venezuela during a good part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The price paid in terms of human suffering for the gilded dictatorship was appalling. The destruction of democratic institutions was complete. Liberal leaders and others who opposed the dictator were, if caught, either executed without remorse, confined to dungeons, or harried out of the land. Laborers worked in the oil fields and on plantations at wages among the lowest on the South American continent; proscribed unions functioned underground. Secret police held the population in a grip of terror. Elections were lifeless, mechanical farces. Civil liberties were nonexistent. Congress was literally a rubber stamp. The church, too, suffered persecution when its leaders criticized the immoral life of the dictator.

Through these ignoble conditions, Gallegos had discovered the Venezuelan man, his problems and those of the tiny somnolent towns. He is anxious to improve their lot: "Apresurémonos todos a reparar, aunque tarde, este error. Los momentos actuales señalan un cambio radical para la República; urge reformar las Instituciones, darles un valor efectivo y urge también, no menos imperiosamente, despertar las corrientes estancadas de la opinión; llevar hasta el fondo de las

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[1]La Alborada, Caracas, I, No. 1, (Jan. 31, 1909), p. III, hereafter cited as Alb.; Rómulo Gallegos, Una posición en la vida (México: Editorial Humanismo, 1954), pp. 10-11, hereafter cited as Una posición....

masas tardías o ignoras el empuje y la luz que las encaminen y conduzcan por los senderos nunca transitados.

"Llevemos hacia los principios a quienes fueron arrastrados por los hombres."[1] Gallegos had analyzed the age of Castro as the typical military and political boss. Like other caudillos, he had been an ignorant adventurer who waded through blood to power, guilty of personal murders, and allied to moneyed interests. He staged elaborate shows of pomp and splendor to hold the masses, arranged at great expense, at no matter what cost to the national treasury. Like many others, he was replaced by another military leader who in turn made himself a dictator.

Now that Castro was dead, Gallegos expressed his wish that the Venezuelan people would at once reveal a mood that would not tolerate the whims of a new dictatorship. He believed that the times called for a cessation to personalismo and caudillaje, and a provision for representative government. True to his words, it was necessary "destruir este absurdo prejuicio que priva en el espíritu de casi todos los venezolanos, marcando nuevos rumbos a la opinión; ello es deber de nuestros pensadores; toca a la prensa discreta y bien intencionada llevar la luz hasta el fondo de las conciencias oscuras. Pretender que, cuando los acontecimientos que han de sucederse determinan la oportunidad, tales entidades democráticas, se yerguen en el concurso de

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[1]Alb., No. 1, p. III; Una posición..., p. 11.

las fuerzas vitales del Estado,..."[1]

There was need for a document to lay a basis for advancing Venezuela on the road to democracy and modernization for all citizens as Gallegos thought not as a "concesión o merced sino como una estricta aplicación de la ley." He sums up his conclusion to this essay with the thought: "Ya podemos pensar alto y debemos ser sinceros."[2]

B. Las causas

In "Las causas,"[3] his second probing essay, Gallegos analyzes the causes for the lack of protection of personal freedom of liberty, lack of individual rights for the citizenry, which naturally lay at the base of the war of political conflictas "en Venezuela, la sóla vía expedita es la que conduce al campamento, y la guerra el único sistema de solución que conocemos.... Nuestro pueblo odia la guerra, y si mal de su grado ha ido a ella en busca de un remedio perentorio, es porque, de natural perezoso, está incapacitado para el esfuerzo perseverante que exige la labor cívica."[4]

There are specific traits of character which make the people act in a certain way towards two important subjects of their country.

> En política como en religión, nuestro hombre del pueblo es fetichista. Un caudillo, la realidad viva de

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[1] Alb., No. 1, p. LV; Una posición..., pp. 13-14.

[2] Alb., No. 1, p. LV; Una posición..., p. 14.

[3] Alb., No. 2, pp. XVIII-XIX; Una posición..., pp. 15-22.

[4] Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., p. 16.

> un hombre, es para él mucho más que una doctrina política, vacuidad de palabras que por no penetrarle lo aburren; aquél fácilmente puede arrastrarlo en pos de sí hasta el sacrificio; ésta no movería en él una sola fibra, no le haría dar un solo paso, tal vez ni siquiera interesaría su curiosidad.
>
> Y si de la unidad social pasamos a la unidad demótica, encontramos en el Estado, las mismas causas produciendo de pueblos -como allá otra de orígenes- que aún no se han fundido en un conjunto homogéneo.[1]

The cause for this rests in a delayed process of social evolution. The people do not have to be acquainted with their caudillos to follow them. "Apenas si saben de ellos los nombres y mucho si conocen sus caudillos; la entidad abstracta de una idea, es cosa que no ha llevado aún a sus conciencias nuestra evolución social."[2]

According to Gallegos, the cause for this delayed social evolution is due partly to racial mixture. Spain transferred the culture of the Old World to the New, but the intellectual, economic and political ideas, propagated by the Spaniards, were not to be made effective in Venezuela. The blending of the Spaniard with the Indian, plus the subsequent intermingling with the imported Negro, produced a hybrid multitude still struggling against the peculiar racial characteristics which survive from each race. "Diversas tradiciones, distintas índoles en medios diferentes, pueblos que son extraños unos a otros, unidos apenas en el organismo nacional por una ley de correlación y no por la

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[1]Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., pp. 18-19.

[2]Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., p. 18.

ley de unidad necesaria para el concepto propio de Estado."[1]

In an uncommon expression of defeat, Gallegos writes that it is useless to attempt to build solid and stable ideas.

> En estas multitudes amorfas, de origen híbrido, formadas por la fusión aún no realizada de diversos elementos étnicos, en las que luchan atavismos y supervivencias de todas las razas, es tan inútil querer edificar nada sólido y estable, como imposible hubiera sido lograrlo sobre la superficie de la tierra en los períodos geológicos de su formación.
>
> El carácter de nuestra raza no ha cristalizado todavía en una forma netamente definida; nuestra alma nacional es algo abigarrado y complejo, sin colorido especial ni determinada fisonomía, con todos los matices de las sangres confundidas y todas las condiciones de las razas ordinarias. Su mentalidad es bastante rudimentaria; . . . las ideas aún no se han desembarazado de la forma concreta que les dio origen, . . .[2]

Throughout all the violence and insecurity of the nineteenth century, one caudillo after another had failed to curb anarchy and frightened away the peace which should have reigned in Venezuela. Gallegos was confronted with examples of caudillo type in the twentieth century; and there had been little evolution away from the more violent type of revolution. To Gallegos' way of thinking, the vicious circle of caudillismo and its endless civil wars in Venezuela were complicated partly by the people's lack of knowledge of their own country and the spirit of regionalism which exists throughout. Gallegos comments that each city and even the poorest town has its caudillo which is the

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[1]Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., p. 19.

[2]Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., p. 18.

intermediary between citizenship and fatherland "que el afiliarse a un partido aporta un contingente de voluntades exclusivamente suyas, círculos de opiniones y tendencias anárquicas, que no obedecen a la atracción de un solo y mismo centro, llevan en si mismos la fuerza capaz de determinar en cualquiera emergencia la disgregación definitiva.... podemos asentar que los partidos políticos - si es que alguna vez hayamos de dar a las palabras su verdadera acepción - no han exisitido aún en Venezuela."[1]

And he concludes that the heterogeneous character of the people, combined with the peculiar psychology of the masses, makes the political party a meaningless concept for the average citizen of Venezuela.

Gallegos then strikes an optimistic note and adds that there are, however, certain groups within the country who have a solid racial and cultural heritage appropriate to organize and formulate ideas of a political and economic nature, which in turn would become guiding principles for the nation. This elite element is the result of social evolution. Here we see the strong influence of nineteenth century philosophy, with its firm belief in the ultimate perfectability of man and the general feeling of scientific optimism so prevalent in the last half of the nineteenth century.

However, the essayist is cautiously optimistic. A revolution may be necessary to impose the reforms needed to allow the social

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[1]Alb., No. 2, pp. XVIII-XIX; Una posición..., pp. 19-20.

evolution to proceed. But in the case of Venezuela, he questions whether the political parties at their present state of development are "al incorporarse de nuevo en el concierto de las energías que despiertan al alba de una nueva era, aportorán un contingente valioso, capaz de hacer inclinar en el sentido de las reformas efectivas y benéficas, la balanza de nuestros destinos."[1]

C. El respeto a la ley

Having analyzed the causes of the political corruption and found them to be a part of the idiosyncrasies of the people, Gallegos examines the effects in his essay "El respeto de la ley."[2] There is a lack of respect for the law and under this positive title he exposes its negative aspects. There are three types of persons who openly violate Venezuelan laws: (1) the official who passes over them; (2) those who interpret them as they wish; and (3) those who amend and reform them.

Gallegos comments that the administration of justice in Venezuela was based on a very low standard, and corruption was deep-rooted in both higher and lower branches of the judiciary. The laws were codified, but the procedure was tedious and costly, and all litigation was avoided as much as possible, no matter how just might be the cause in dispute. The necessity of purifying the judicial system was not appreciated by the Venezuelans, even the more educated segment

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[1]Alb., No. 3, p. XIX; Una posición..., p. 22.

[2]Alb., No. 3, p. XXXIV; Una posición..., pp. 27-30.

of the population being content to allow matters to rest in the existing unsatisfactory condition rather than exert their influence to eradicate the scandal which recurring circumstances constantly provoked. In the various municipalities, detachments of police were maintained but there were more of them utilized as armed troops to suppress seditious outbreaks than as constables. Murder, robbery, and other serious crimes were of common occurrence, and were regarded with indifference. Gallegos calls attention to the fact that the constitution in Venezuela is altered to satisfy the whim of any caudillo who needs a legal justification for his acts.

According to the words of the essayist, a solution would be to instill respect for the law by awakening the social conscience of the people. "Estas y aquéllos, instituciones y gobiernos, tal vez lleguen a lograrse a cabalidad en perfección y patriotismo y sin embargo el mal subsistiría porque no está en el valor intrínseco de una fórmula ni en las condiciones personales del hombre."[1] It will be necessary "convertir en culto lo que es indiferencia, escribir en el alma antes que corregir en el Libro."[2] Urging that laws should always be simple and clear, he denounces the legislators for their verbosity, and remarks further that laws were never better than the men who applied them and that it was useless to change the form of institutions before men's

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[1]Alb., No. 3, p. XXXIV; Una posición..., pp. 28-29.

[2]Alb., No. 3, p. XXXIV; Una posición..., p. 29.

hearts were changed. "Nada importa el valor teórico de un principio o una ley, si no ha penetrado en la conciencia de un pueblo; el nuestro viola las suyas porque las ignora casi siempre...; no porque esté calcada en las de extraños pueblos, no esta Constitución, nuestra Constitución, sino porque no se nos ha enseñado a verla como cosa propia y tan extraña permanecería para nosotros si ella fuera sacada de la propia alma nacional."[1]

D. Por los partidos

In his next essay, "Por los partidos,"[2] Gallegos exposes the corruption of political parties, another effect of the previously exposed causes. He seems to feel that they abound in warlike spirit and suffer from patriotism; they are the nucleus of suggestions about the army, rather than groups of convictions that fraternize. The intellectual element has little influence on them; it goes almost unnoticed, and this inversion of terms, perfectly understandable due to the very conditions of the nation, explains at one and the same time the absurdness of the consequences.

Gallegos concludes with his suggestions as to what the political parties should be. Here again, he emphasizes the civil role the parties should play in governing the nation. At the time of the writing, Gallegos hoped that the political parties would be allowed to organize

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[1]Alb., No. 3, p. XXXIV; Una posición..., p. 29.

[2]Alb., No. 3, pp. XXXVI-XXXVII; Una posición..., pp. 31-35.

again under the Gómez regime and occupy their respective places in the political life of the nation.

In time, through the working of social evolution, he hopes to see them, whether defeated or victorious, assume their place of responsibility in the nation: "La evolución social los restituirá a su orden lógico, cuando se haya cerrado el proceso de nuestras guerras y en vez de huir de las ciudades cuando sea hora de remover un gobernante, sepamos venir a ellas en jornadas de paz y de civismo.... ¿Se llegará a dar el caso de que al día siguiente de la justicia, vaya el vencido, sin menoscabo de su dignidad, ni claudicación, a ofrecer al vencedor su cooperación desinteresada en obsequio de la patria?

"Este sería el verdadero triunfo, ..."[1]

This would indeed be for him what he has called the first day of the republic; but in order to achieve it, it is necessary to make the abundance of instinct strong in conscience, to lessen the value of the warlike character of such political groups, strengthening the civil element in them until it is balanced with the military which is prominent today; giving more value to the essential idea of the masses than to the military officer, and making him become a type of representative and not an absolute lord, a lever moved by general mechanism and not the only force of initiative and impulse, which should come forth from the mind of the association, represented in its intended unities.[2]

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[1]Alb., No. 3, p. XXXVI; Una posición..., pp. 33-35.

[2]Alb., No. 3, pp. XXXVI-XXXVII; Una posición..., p. 35.

E. Los poderes

From an analysis of the political parties and the role they have played, contrasted with the role they should play, Gallegos moves on to an examination of the three governmental powers as they function in Venezuela. He entitles this essay "Los poderes."[1]

In Venezuela, he finds that the legislative and judicial branches of the government have always been subordinated to the executive power. The cause, as he had previously stated with the same expression in his essay "El Respeto a la Ley," is not found in the constitution but rather "en la propia alma nacional.

"El expediente de la refrendación que incumbe al Ejecutivo, de las leyes promulgadas por el Poder Legislativo, ha sido la brecha abierta a la irrupción del personalismo."[2] The loss of the system of checks and balances by the domination of the executive branch had only opened the way for the extension of the old spectre of personalismo, placing the power in the hands of one man and making government a matter of chance. "Obtener un gobierno capaz de orientar por rumbos de patriotismo una labor cuya inciativa ha estado reservada a un hombre sólo.

"Y será cuestión de azar mientras un hombre sea la solución y una voluntad la única capaz de realizar el prodigio. Entre tanto, nada

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[1]Alb., No. 4, pp. LXIX-L; Una posición..., pp. 36-39.

[2]Alb., No. 4, p. LXIX; Una posición..., p. 36.

valen las fórmulas, constitucionalidad o dictadura significan lo mismo; siempre habrá que esperarlo todo de quien las ejerza, siempre tendrá quien las ejerza todos los caminos abiertos, y el calificativo será siempre del hombre y no del sistema."[1]

It is therefore necessary to destroy this preponderance of power of the executive branch of the government, raising the other powers to the category of true entities.

At this point, Gallegos openly attacks the high-handed methods of Castro, implying also a similar criticism for the future encumbent:

> La experencia nos acaba de enseñar otra vez, cómo fue de fatales conciencias para el país, aquella atribución omnímoda que se arrogó el expresidente Castro, de legislador y juez supremo, creando leyes que a él sólo le favorecieran administrando justicia según su propia conveniencia.
>
> Y Castros habrá mientras el presidente de la República no vea en torno suyo más que hombres dispuestos a todas las transacciones y nombres sin valor de poderes irrisorios, y -es necesario decirlo- bondad será de quien ejerza el Ejecutivo reconocer en los otros una soberanía que hasta ahora no han tenido.[2] [Italics mine]

To do this the people must be given a chance to choose freely the men who are to represent them in the legislative branch of government; it will likewise become necessary to choose men of character for the judgeship. Only thus can there be a balance and a check on the dictatorial powers wielded by the chief executive.

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LXIX; Una posición..., p. 37.

[2]Alb., No. 4, p. LXIX; Una posición..., pp. 38-39.

The final step must be accomplished by the press illustrating to the masses the idea of their obligations and rights, guiding the steps of the ignorant crowd down a path of conviction, cultivating old heroism in new civic stock of the families.[1]

Gallegos is again emphasizing the central problems of Hispanic culture; the destruction of personalismo, the substitution of the will of the people for the whim of the dictator, the awakening of the masses to their duties as citizens, and the replacement of a military government by a civilian government.

F. "La alianza hispanoamericana"

As Hispanic America is preparing to celebrate its first hundred years of independence, Gallegos reviews the continental dream of Bolívar to unite Spanish America into a single confederation and writes "La alianza hispano-americana"[2] for the Sociedad Patriótica.[3] It appeared in the fourth issue of La Alborada. The Colossus of the North had begun to interfere in Latin-American affairs. It had defeated Spain and stripped that nation of the greater part of the remnants of its

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. L; Una posición..., p. 39.

[2]Alb., No. 4, pp. LI-LII; Una posición..., pp. 40-44.

[3]Gallegos wrote this essay for the Sociedad patriotica de amigos del país. For additional information on this subject see Asociación venezolana de literatura ciencia y bellas artes (Caracas: Tip. El Cojo, 1895), and Sociedad económica de amigos del país, Habana ... Sesión conmemorativa del 121° aniversario de su fundación (Habana: Imprenta la Universal, 1914).

colonial holdings and was expounding the doctrine of "manifest destiny." As a result, the feeling of Hispanidad arose to take the place of the great admiration that such men as Sarmiento, Lastarria, Alberdi, and Bilbao had felt and fostered about the United States. The essayist is only expressing the concern that he feels as he sees the United States expanding in territory and in power. This is the first published expression of Gallegos' attitude toward the North American nation. It is representative of the average Latin American intellectual's reaction to the United States since the turn of the century.

> Harto se ha ponderado el peligro que para las jóvenes nacionalidades sur-americanas representa en el Norte el afán conquistador del yanqui, siempre en acecho, atisbando la oportunidad para adueñarse de nuestro territorio a nombre de una protección que no necesitamos, mientras el patriotismo aconseje la muerte como remedio extremo, y mucho se ha hablado también de la unión sur-americana como único remedio capaz de conjurar el peligro común.
>
> Ahora, y no sólo nosotros, atribuimos a un hombre la fama ... en el que fue fugaz abrazo de la Gran Colombia.[1]

Gallegos feels that the Bolivarian dream could be realized were the unity of the nations built upon what could be called: "Solaridad de las ideas": "La solidaridad de las ideas prepararía el terreno a la de los intereses de estas naciones hermanas; las alianzas comercial, militar y política vendrían después como una consecuencia de esta, alianza del pensamiento que, pulsando el alma americana, haría ver ya no como una hermosa utopía, sino como una cosa realizable y de

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LII; Una posición..., pp. 40-41.

toda urgencia necesaria, la armonía de naciones que, apenas separadas por fronteras geográficas, parten de un mismo origen, son una sola raza y están llamadas a cumplir un idéntico destino."[1]

The essayist then conceives the press as the instrument which shall open lines of communication and establish exchange of ideas, for he thinks there is a kind of isolation among the Spanish-American nations that must be broken down: "Vivimos en un aislamiento injustificable del resto del continente americano; nada o muy poco sabemos de nosotros mismos, en tanto que conocemos los más mínimos detalles de la vida de los extraños.[2] Nuestra intelectualidad se nutre de la savia europea, como nuestro comercio de sus productos, y generalmente llegamos a interesarnos más por los problemas políticos o sociales que allá se resuelven, que por las propias necesidades que aquí piden urgente solución. Nuestra vida toda pende de Europa, sus destinos parecieran ser los nuestros; de espaldas al continente;...."[3]

Gallegos is close to two fundamental problems touching Spanish American culture: the first, a voluntary isolation between countries where little or no reason for such isolation exists; and the second, a feeling of inferiority toward their own respective cultures.

In actual literary effort, Venezuelan universities had not

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LII; Una posición..., pp. 42-43.

[2]Italics mine.

[3]Alb., No. 4, p. LII; Una posición..., p. 43.

excelled and produced little in the way of exchange of inter-American intellectual accomplishment for the average citizen. Paternalism had tended to retard a spread of intellectual spirit from republic to republic. Progress had been hampered by paternalistic basis of reforms, which were handed down from the top without democratic foundation, as well as the limitations of public education and by censorship on books and journals. Few citizens were aware of the need for an intellectual reorientation, a growing receptiveness to new ideas and a willingness, like that of Gallegos, to question the validity of the old ones.

It is evident to the essayist that if the Spanish American countries are to mature and unite to fulfill the old dream, it must be accomplished through an effort of their own:

> Si alguien se incorporara a gritar a todos que nuestro porvenir es el de la América Latina, que en nuestra sangre está quizás la fuerza que ha de realizar futuros prodigios, que no pende la suerte de la humanidad de las viejas razas que caminan a su decadencia en el extranjero continente, sino del ímpetu y del vigor juvenil de las que se levantan en el nuestro, dando traspiés, porque aún comienzan a andar, y tanteando rumbos, pero seguras de su propia fuerza, sin duda habríamos colocado la primera piedra de aquel edificio que soñó Bolívar.
>
> Y habría de ser ésta la ofrenda más hermosa que consagraría el pensamiento americano, a los libertadores en el Centenario de la Independencia y, ¿por qué no decirlo?, el acto inicial que hará surgir la civilización de la América latina, grande y poderosa, <u>la tierra con su peso equilibrando</u>.[1]

In a measure, this essay is Gallegos' call for a declaration of intellectual independence from the Old World.

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[1]<u>Alb.</u>, No. 4, p. LII; <u>Una posición</u>..., p. 44.

G. El cuarto poder

Having conceived the press as an instrument for the propagation of ideas and being aware of its power to mold national thought, Gallegos aptly calls it "El cuarto poder"[1] and proceeds to examine its role in Venezuela. From its proper role as the mouthpiece of public opinion and the guardian of the rights of the people, it has been relegated to a position of relatively no importance. In Venezuela, the press "desde largo tiempo acostumbrada al silencio y la opresión apenas balbucea y ensaya que hacer en la inesperada hora de libertad que corre.

"...pero necesario es, no embriagarse de ilusiones o promesas; no vanagloriarse de triunfos fortuitos, ni dejarse seducir por el lenguaje de la mentira convencional."[2] He believes that to deceive the people by giving them silence and oppression for the truth is worse than to poison their bread and water; it infects the moral atmosphere of a country like Venezuela. There was need for a free press which would publish the facts about such important matters as the agricultural collapse, widespread strikes, and the importance of citizens' rights.

He adds that the ruling classes in Venezuela have almost always ignored the opinions and advice of the press which has excessively

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[1]Alb., No. 5, pp. LXV-LXVI; Una posición..., pp. 45-48.

[2]Alb., No. 5, p. LXV; Una posición..., p. 45.

praised politics and most often has considered the arbitrary whims of the caudillo leaders in lieu of the opinion of the public.[1]

Deprived by dictator Gómez of the opportunity to improve political practices by example, Gallegos had to depend on precept for a few more years. But he had been teaching his people in these essays that he was to become an expert in setting forth advice. At an early age in life he declared that a false press encouraged a false spirit.

Therefore, he concluded that the press in Venezuela is still far from assuming a position of importance in the life of the nation. It is neither a defender of public rights nor the divulger of information directed at enlightening the masses and leading them along the proper paths. The essayist believes that it will never be so until the national opinion has some effective value, sufficient to balance the action of powers, and when the newspaper stops being a mere pastime, a simple informative organ, and becomes a true social necessity.[2]

Gallegos loved liberty of the press but it must teach a man to have a heart that rises to the level of national thought, and have courage to distinguish between the righteous and the evil.

H. El verdadero triunfo

"El verdadero triunfo"[3] is, like "Las causas," one of Gallegos'

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[1]Alb., No. 5, p. LXV; Una posición..., p. 46.

[2]Alb., No. 5, pp. LXV-LXVI; Una posición..., p. 48.

[3]Alb., No. 7, pp. XCVII-XCVIII; Una posición..., pp. 49-52.

most penetrating essays. It is an analysis of the impetuous character of the people of his country who make the mistake of "pretender realizar de una vez para siempre, con un solo tajo de espada o un solo rasgo de pluma, la reforma radical del país. Nuestro temperamento se aviene mal con todo aquello que exija un empeño paciente y prolongado; nuestra obra ha de ser de hoy para hoy mismo, necesitamos apreciar sus propios ojos el coronamiento final, o de lo contrario no se mueven nuestras energías para el primer esfuerzo."[1]

As a consequence, one revolution follows another and the ruling dictator is rapidly replaced by the leader of another victorious faction. When public discontent reaches the point that something new and better is needed, a caudillo appears to satisfy that need. Gallegos feels that the solution is neither a question of accident nor a thing of the moment; that long is the space of time intended for their goal, and their campaign has to be that of a persevering, invigorating force of interest and decision and wisely directed in order to be fruitful in permanent conquests, because it is a question of extirpating inveterate vices and errors and in spite of their determination they will exist for a long time.

It isn't easy, for example, he proceeds, to arrange that their nation, fully accustomed to seeing in war the single form of revenge, abandon once and for all this barbaric recourse for another more cultured and efficacious of civil action.[2]

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[1]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVII; Una posición..., p. 49.

[2]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVII; Una posición..., p. 50.

Here again, Gallegos is stressing his constant admonition to replace the military by the civilian. The military man had been nothing but a curse to Venezuela as he had encroached upon, and finally usurped, the civilian rights and privileges of the citizens.

He believes that "cuando esto se haya logrado, libre ya el pueblo de la dominación de este moderno señor feudal, el caudillo, . . ."[1] Then and only then will cruel tyrants like Juan Vicente Gómez disappear from the Venezuelan public eye, and the first day of the Republic will begin with the first hour of patriotism. Then the public will arbitrate for itself, and its own destiny. Public opinion will have an effective value in balancing the action of power, and law will be an authority which a government official will not be able to pass over without serious danger.[2]

It is the new citizen's duty to cultivate in the people "los gérmenes de civismo con cuyos frutos se beneficiará después la Patria. El pueblo ignora que en él está la fuerza que ha hecho poderosos a sus señores de todos los tiempos; cuando lo descubra, el imperio de éstos se vendrá a tierra; y nosotros debemos decírselo."[3] Once this is evident, then and only then will the citizen realize that the caudillo is a mortal enemy. "Si logramos convencerlo, haciendo persuasiva y

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[1]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVII; Una posición..., p. 51.

[2]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVII; Una posición..., p. 51.

[3]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVIII; Una posición..., p. 52.

sensata nuestra voz, cuidando de que no vibren en ella rencores de secta, hablándole con la impersonalidad y la buena fe de quien lo sacrifica en la guerra y le aniquila en la paz, tal vez no vuelva a creer en sus arterías con la misma candidez que hambre y vida le han costado..."[1]

Gallegos was looking deep into the soul of his people, and his culture. The tendency to erupt into sudden violence in order to solve national problems was, he felt, an evil deeply rooted in the race. It was, as he knew, an act of desperation which expressed the frustration of the people of Venezuela. But the practice only helped perpetuate the old caudillo system in which the actors in the political tragedy were suddenly snatched from their roles like puppets and replaced by others of the same calibre.

I. "Los congresos

"Los congresos,"[2] Gallegos' final essay to appear in La Alborada, was published in the last issue of the magazine. The essay is an examination of the role that Congress should play under the new regime, and a review of the part it had played under the executives of Venezuela. In the past, Congress and constitution-making had been a favorite pastime for the former caudillos. Congress had guaranteed

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[1]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVIII; Una posición..., p. 52.

[2]Alb., No. 8, pp. CXIV-CXV; Una posición..., pp. 53-57.

personal freedom, bills of rights, etc., composed by well-meaning visionaries. These same rights had to be guaranteed by army leaders and strong men, who had no idea of putting them into practice. When adherence to the letter of the law bothered the caudillo's conscience, he easily called a constitutional convention of his followers and had a new constitution written to suit his pleasure. The people, who were thus guaranteed empty sovereignty and hollow rights, did not have sufficient loyalty to the idea of a nation to understand a national congress and constitution; they had loyalty only to a dictatorial leader or a small region. Throughout the nineteenth century and the greater part of the first half of the twentieth century, the Venezuelan government had been in perpetual conflict between practice and theory in congress. In the past, the congress, like the judicial branch of the government, had been subordinated to the executive. Gallegos states that it is completely known that the supreme power, according to the spirit of the law, rests in this high ranking body of officials which for many years has been a farce, a docile instrument for the shackles of the government officials which in itself has to do with a public office subordinate to the army and whose attributions are fully subjected to the individual initiative of the president.[1]

Its only acts had been:

> conferir honores al Jefe Ejecutivo o rendirle gracias en nombre de la Patria por los, siempre meritísimos,

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[1]Alb., No. 8, p. CXV; Una posición..., p. 54.

> servicios prestados. En verdad para esto sólo no valdría la pena de mantenerlos, y si nos fuera necesario en cierto modo, llenar las apariencias, hubiera asistido razón al ex-presidente Castro cuando alargó el plazo que señalaba la Carta Fundamental para la reunión del Congreso. Sin embargo, hay quienes aducen como argumento denunciador de un progreso indiscutible debido a la bondad de cierto credo político, el hecho - asaz elocuente por cierto-, de que no se haya repetido en nuestra historia, aquella página de tropelías del año 48."[1]

There was one way possible to enable Congress to use the powers that it possessed in theory but never exercised in practice "devolviendo a los pueblos el derecho que les ha sido arrebatados, la atribución constitucional de elegir por sí solos sus representantes, sería la mejor garantía que pudiera presentar un gobierno en su abono...."[2]

At this point in Gallegos' career, the heavy hand of the new dictator fell with an authoritative blow; La Alborada was closed. The hopes of those young men who had launched it, with all the enthusiasm that youth is capable of displaying, were once more frustrated by the caudillo.

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[1]Alb., No. 8, p. CXV; Una posición..., pp. 55-56.

[2]Alb., No. 8, p. CXV; Una posición..., p. 57.

CHAPTER VI

PART II

The Social Essays

For the purpose of examining Gallegos' ideas we have divided his collaborations for La Alborada into political and social essays.

A. El factor educación

Serie I: Among the social essays is the series of five entitled "El factor educación," which ran intermittently in the magazine from number three through number eight, and "Algo sobre la 'Revista de Instrucción Pública'" in the February 14 issue.

Education as an ideal, as well as a profession, played an important role in Gallegos' life. In these essays his philosophical ideas and influences can be more clearly appreciated.

Number one of the series was headed by the following quotation from the French physician and sociologist, Gustave Le Bon: "La prosperidad de un pueblo depende mucho más de su sistema de educación que de sus instituciones o sus gobiernos."[1]

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[1]Gustave Le Bon was born in 1841 in Nogent-le Rotrou, France, and died in 1931. He was a physician by profession, but it was in the field of sociology, not medicine, that he became famous. His four prominent works were L'Homme et les Sociétés, 1881; Les Lois Psychologiques de L'Evolution des Peuples, 1894; Psychologie des foules, 1895; L'Evolution Actuelle du Monde, 1927.

It is interesting to note that Gallegos chooses as a starting point this quotation from one of the eminent French positivists who were having their vogue in France and elsewhere at the time. It immediately reveals his line of thought and approach to the subject matter, and at the same time, places him among such great Spanish American positivists as Sarmiento, Alberdi, Echeverría, Bilbao, and Lastarria.[1] For he, like these men, believes firmly in the role that education must play in the life of a nation.

In the essay entitled "El factor educación," Gallegos wrote: "El cultivo de los hombres es el único método viable de avigorar con energías de savias puras el organismo desmedrado de un pueblo; enriqueciendo las unidades: los ciudadanos, se enriquece la cifra total: Estado, y de modo inmediato, relativamente, si se compara éste con el otro, lento proceso evolutivo que cumple por la exclusiva virtud de la ley...todos nuestros males no son sino síntomas de un vicio originario: el vicio educación.

"Nuestra educación, herencia latina...es la menos apta para exaltar...y la más ineficaz para destruir en el nuestro los vicios atávios;..."[2] The call for regeneration was in the air; Venezuela had to abandon

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[1]See Appendix B for personal correspondence from Professor Lowell Dunham, p. 174.

[2]La Alborada, Caracas, I, No. 3, (Feb. 1909), pp. XL-XLI, hereafter cited as Alb.; Rómulo Gallegos, Una posición en la vida (México: Editorial Humanismo, 1954), pp. 58-59, hereafter cited as Una posición....

sterile traditionalism and open her windows to ventilation by a young progressive thinker. He pointed out the crying need for more discipline, more education, more industrialization, less sentimentality, and fewer illusions. His calling was for the cultivation of concrete improvement in all areas of national thought.

According to Gallegos, many national defects in his country are the result of the type of education prevalent, which annihilates the individuality necessary to create a great state. It then becomes essential to correct this system of education immediately, eradicating many of the conditions originating at the very roots of the race.

The essayist proceeds to point out that in regard to public education, Venezuela was one of the most backward of the South American States, and previous to 1870 no system existed for public instruction. It was due to Guzmán-Blanco that free elementary schools were established, and the attendance of children between the ages of six and fourteen made obligatory; but the law of compulsory attendance had never been enforced, not even at mid-century under Juan Vicente Gómez, and children who should have received instruction were sent by their parents to work on the coffee plantations, or occupied in other employments. In 1904, the period of which Rómulo Gallegos first writes, there were some 1400 Federal elementary schools and about 150 maintained under the different State governments, and the number of pupils enrolled was approximately 100,000, but the attendance was never regular. Away from the towns, no efforts were made toward

the betterment of these conditions. It is worthy of mention that many years later, under the dictatorial regime of Colonel Marcos Pérez Jiménez, there was still no endeavor to furnish primary instruction for the children of the laboring classes. The employers of thousands of workers in the principal coffee estates, oil fields, and mineral deposits found neither school houses nor teachers. Occasionally, rudiments of education were imparted by the parish priests, but such innovations received small encouragement from the plantation owners, and seldom led to substantial results. For secondary education, there were few colleges for boys and girls, and a small number of private institutions, while for higher education only two universities existed. The latter were closed in 1928, and have been oppressed on numerous occasions due to the continued changes in the political climate of the country. Among the social classes in Venezuela, the question of public instruction was regarded with apathetic indifference, and parents considered themselves greatly misused when some unusually zealous official insisted on the attendance of children at the public schools.

At the time of his writings, Gallegos proposed to present to his readers in the forthcoming issues of the magazine some sensible modern ideas on education, supplementing the shortcomings of his own opinion with more authorized and experienced judgment.[1]

Gallegos' indictment of the Latin heritage and the pernicious

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[1]Alb., No. 3, XLI; Una posición..., pp. 60-61.

role that it plays in the education and the social life of his people follows closely the famous remark of Echeverría: "The arms of Spain do not oppress us; but its traditions weigh us down."[1] Gallegos, like early positivists, is advocating a scientific approach to the solution of the problems involved.

In the first of this series of essays, he is following the thinking of the most eminent intellectuals that Latin America had produced. He has aligned himself with the positivists, placing the blame for the poor educational system on the Spanish culture, and by a scientific and positivistic approach he proposes to find an answer to the questions confronting him. He would seek the best authority in the scientific field and use this knowledge to solve the problem at hand.

B. El factor educación

Serie II: Gallegos sets out to expose in detail the evils of education in the Latin-American countries. In the second of the series, "El factor educación,"[2] he states that the principal defect in Venezuela "-aunque en él no ha habido pecado de iniciativa, pues es el mismo que priva en casi todos los pueblos de origen latino- es el confundir la educación con la instrucción propiamente dicha. Esta obra sobre la inteligencia

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[1]Cited by William Rex Crawford, A Century of Latin American Thought (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944), p. 17.

[2]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., pp. 62-66.

y produce la cultura; aquélla sobre el carácter y forma el hombre, pero de tal modo han sido confundidas estas dos funciones, que bien podemos decir que entre nosotros si apenas se instruye no se educa en absoluto."[1]

This was his main theme. Without educating the local power, without educating all the people, there could be no genuine republic and little national progress. Public education was the duty of the state. Gallegos called for results laid in the foundation of literature, art, the general character of the people, and all phases of higher culture. It was the essayist's high ideal in obtaining "el tesoro de un carácter bien acrisolado" and "una voluntad sabiamente cultivada." He explains: "Poseemos un programa de enseñanza en el que se ha procurado copiar cuanto hay en los de extraños países, nutrido de materias, superabundante de hombres de ciencias, ... pero apenas si hay un párrafo entre sus muchas clausulas consagrado a la edificación del carácter, al cultivo del hombre."[2]

In addition to his objection that the education offered in his country does not produce men of character and will, the essayist points out that it does not take into consideration the conditions of the race, of the educators who are indolent and frivolous by nature, nor the influence of the methods of education, paying no attention to the times

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., p. 62.

[2]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., p. 62.

and social customs.[1] The ignorant masses could know nothing of real freedom where there was little education and no free press; they could see only the hopes of being on the right side of a new and forthcoming revolution. Here again, Gallegos is following the positivistic philosophy, and in particular, the theory of Taine, in which man is explained in the light of the race, milieu, and moment.[2]

Education in Venezuela, Gallegos continues, seems to produce a "sociedad de Doctores" rather than one of "hombres, como si no hubiera muchos de aquéllos y pocos, muy pocos, de éstos.

"Será necesario invertir los términos, pensar más en educar que en instruir, restar inteligencia al lauro para sumar voluntad a la Nación, y para esto, tocar los modelos, reformar los códigos y torcer los rumbos. Distanciarnos del sistema de educación que rige en los pueblos latinos, de donde copiamos el nuestro, para acercarnos en cuanto sea posible al de los sajones que estiman en más las cualidades del carácter, menospreciado por nosotros."[3] Teachers in the public schools were to be trained laymen with the zeal of the early Christian missionaries. It was the burden of the teacher to provide the conditions for educational progress by equalizing opportunities and setting free the genius of the individual student.

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., pp. 63-64.

[2]See Appendix B for personal correspondence from Professor Lowell Dunham, p. 171.

[3]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., pp. 65-66.

The essayist then offers a solution typical of the Spanish American positivistic tradition of the already mentioned Echeverría, Alberdi, Sarmiento, Bilbao, and Lastarria, that is to be quite remote from the system of education which governs the Latin-American towns and to approach as much as possible the educational system of the Saxons who give more attention to the quality of their character, less appreciated by Latin-America.[1]

C. El factor educación

Serie III: In the third article of the series on education,[2] Gallegos attacks the central problem of the educational system. He reiterates that the purpose of education is to produce a man fitted for life and not one fitted only for the school room. He believes the student's will, initiative, self-discipline, and integrity of mind should be developed and that the Venezuelan school system has failed on all of these scores. In particular it has failed to cultivate the will of the student for any end other than that of enriching the intellect. The need is "educar para la vida y no para la escuela."[3] It is interesting to note here that Gallegos quotes a rather extensive paragraph from the French philosopher Jules

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., pp. 65-66.

[2]Alb., No. 6, p. LXXXII; Una posición..., pp. 66-72.

[3]Alb., No. 6, p. LXXXII; Una posición..., p. 68.

Payot's popular work, L'Education de la Volonté.[1]

The essayist attacks the repressiveness of the Venezuelan school system for it accounts for the undisciplined graduates of the school. These young people, having been discouraged from personal initiative, are later incapable of adapting themselves on their own to any method. He states that the school system is responsible for these shortcomings because "todo está sometido a reglas, salirse de ellas amerita un castigo; nada puede hacer por sí mismo y consultando sus propias aptitudes e inclinaciones; el régimen es inflexible, el maestro severo y hay que someterse en todo a ambos. Se dirá que esto lo requiere la disciplina, cosa por demás necesaria en la vida, y ciertamente que estaría justificado con esto sólo, si no fuera que de tal sólo hay el nombre."[2]

Venezuelan youth is corrupted by substituting vanity or fear for conscience, deploring true moral responsibility to educate men in any way other than as a trainer tames wild animals.

D. El factor educación

Serie IV: Gallegos probes into the psychology of the Spaniard and in this

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[1]Jules Payot, French philosopher, born in Chamonix, France, April 10, 1859. His most popular work was L'Education de la Volonté, 1894, which by 1912 had gone through thirty-seven editions and had been translated into several foreign languages, including Spanish.

[2]Alb., No. 6, p. LXXXII; Una posición..., p. 70.

fourth essay of the series,[1] approaches that peculiar contradiction in the Spanish soul which he calls "mezcla de servidumbre y rebeldía..."[2] But improvement in specific areas could only be attempted after the general spiritual and intellectual climate of the country were refreshed. First, there had to be a deep probing into the soul of Spain, into its roots, into its true and over-vigorous traditions. These were the authentic sources of courage and meaning. Gallegos says:

> Otra de aquellas muchas cualidades de que a menudo nos lamentamos, es esta típica forma compleja de nuestro carácter, mezcla de servidumbre y rebeldía, que en todas las fases de nuestra vida, individual o social, nos adscribe como voluntades subversivas a toda ley o principio de autoridad al propio tiempo que como siervos sumisos del hombre en quien encarna la entidad abstracta de aquellas mismas leyes o autoridad desconocidas.
>
> Aspecto de nacionalidad incipiente o atavismos de razas de señores y siervos confundidas, esta peculiar condición, fecunda causa de males para la sociedad, es cultivada en nuestros hogares y escuelas, merced a aquel ya anunciado error pedagógico proveniente de una falsa interpretación del principio fundamentalde la educación.[3]

As a result of this, in the words of the essayist:

> -mañana cuando se transforme en hombre aquel niño, llevará en sí mismo, como una fuerza de depravación, aquel odio cobarde, que le hará rebelde a toda ley, deber, o autoridad, y esclavo a todo instrumento de toda tiranía.
>
> Tales son ..., las fatales consecuencias que

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[1] Alb., No. 7, pp. C-CI; Una posición..., pp. 72-77.

[2] Alb., No. 7, p. C; Una posición..., p. 72.

[3] Alb., No. 7, p. C; Una posición..., pp. 72-73.

> el individuo y la sociedad derivan de este absurdo sistema de educación, practicado en nuestros hogares y escuelas, sancionado por muchos y tolerado por todos. Ello proviene ... de aquella y enunciada ignorancia del principio y ... de la funesta privanza de un absurdo concepto moral basado sobre valores falsos, que ha conservado la tradición y respetan las costumbres.[1]

Gallegos concludes, however, that education per se is not the complete answer to Venezuela's social problems since it alone cannot change the characteristics of a race, doing away with its inherent traits.[2]

In his opinion, Venezuela can help modify these deficiencies by adopting a rational type education in which present day empiricism and quackery are replaced by scientific methods of deduction from observation and experience.[3]

E. El factor educación

Serie V: The fifth and final article in the series is subtitled "El concepto moral."[4] Gallegos rails at Venezuela for neglecting its special spiritual and religious mission; he urges his country to forget the sad tinsel of the past, to shake off its torpor and catch up with the spirit

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[1]Alb., No. 7, p. CI; Una posición..., pp. 75-76.

[2]Alb., No. 7, p. CI; Una posición..., p. 76.

[3]Alb., No. 7, p. CI; Una posición..., p. 76.

[4]Alb., No. 8, pp. CXVII-CXVIII; Una posición..., pp. 78-81.

of the times. He believes that the influence of the Roman Catholic church in Venezuela has been of a negative character. Insofar as the educated man was concerned, the tendency towards free thought in religious matters was strongly developed; but whether this attitude sprang from the restraint imposed by church ritual on the methods of life, or was the result of a careful consideration of religious belief, is, in his opinion, not clearly defined. He adds that with the women of the higher social classes the Catholic doctrines were predominant, and the rites and ceremonies of the church sincerely venerated; but it was with the lower grades of the community that the Venezuelan clergy had most power.

For Gallegos, the moral concepts taught by the church in the past have been a violation of nature and tend to pervert men, defacing all laws of life with the idea of mortal sin, and changing the most precious of human values. This doctrine, he believes, has rendered another name of vice to each virtue and claimed all misery as meritorious. Gallegos pours hot coals of criticism on the dictatorial teachingings of the church, stating: "Humildad de esclavos que abomina toda altivez, desinterés de mendigos que aniquila todo, valor, generosidad de agonizantes que quiere encadenar la vida a su propia muerte."[1] He closes the article with a quotation from the French geographer,

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[1]Alb., No. 8, p. CXVIII; Una posición..., p. 80.

Jacques Elisee Reclús:[1] "tratemos de salvar a nuestros hijos de la triste educación que nosotros mismos recibiéramos; tengamos la firme resolución de hacer de ellos hombres libres, nosotros que aún no tenemos de la libertad sino la vaga esperanza."[2]

In his biography on Gallegos, Lowell Dunham points out that the essayist's dissatisfaction with the educational system of Venezuela was similar to that prevalent in Spain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as evidenced by writers like Galdós, Giner de los Ríos and men of the Generation of 1898, such as Ganivet, Baroja, and Azorín.[3] The entire series, "El factor educación," likewise shows the influence not only of the Latin American positivists but also that of several of the French positivists popular at that time, through translations, in Latin America: Payot, Le Bon and Reclus. Gallegos' insistence concerning the repressive nature of both church instruction, in the moral code, and civil instruction, in the school system, clearly shows a strong influence likewise of Rousseau and his "natural man." The essayist felt that the end product of the Latin American school systems was a man deprived of initiative, submissive to the point of servitude to any word of authority, and incapable of imposing upon

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[1]Born in Sainte Foy la Grande, France, March 15, 1830. Well known in Latin America for his book of travel entitled Voyage a la Sierra Nevada de Sainte Marthe, Paysages de Nature Tropical, 1864.

[2]Alb., No. 8, p. CXVIII; Una posición..., p. 81.

[3]Lowell Dunham, Rómulo Gallegos (México: Colección Studium), p. 165.

himself any self-discipline. In his opinion, Venezuela's, and, in a larger sense, Latin America's great social problems could be solved in part by a new type of education. It was, indeed, the time in which the Latin Americans believed that all their problems could be solved by education.

CHAPTER VII

GALLEGOS' EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN EL COJO ILUSTRADO

When La Alborada was closed by Gómez, the entire editorial staff found an outlet for their social ideas and literary talents in El Cojo Ilustrado. Although Gallegos now turned his attention mainly to the short story, he continued to serve the cause of freedom and to examine the social evils of Venezuela. His essay entitled "Necesidad de valores culturales," was published in the August 15, 1912 issue of El Cojo Ilustrado.

"Necesidad de valores culturales"

"Necesidad de valores culturales,"[1] belonging to the general category of the social essay, is important not only because of its content but also because it reveals further intellectual influence upon the young writer.

In general, Gallegos considers the lack of culture as one of the fundamental problems of the Spanish Americans. He classifies their most urgent need of action as education, a duty for the intellectuals to perform in their social surroundings.[2]

The essayist finds that there are those who refuse to see any

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[1]El Cojo Ilustrado, Ano XXI, No. 496, (Aug. 15, 1912), pp. 438-442, hereafter cited as CO; Rómulo Gallegos, Una posición en la vida (México: Editorial Humanismo, 1954), pp. 82-109, hereafter cited as Una posición...

[2]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 82.

problems inherent in the culture. Hence any attempt to find solutions for problems which do not exist is "ocioso y hasta pedantesco."[1] Nonetheless, the problems exist.

It is the old struggle between "civilización" and "barbarie." Gallegos matches Sarmiento's maxim "to govern is to educate" and calls these two opposing forces "la ciudad" and "el monte". There is only a difference in emphasis between the two critics. To Gallegos, barbarism means also youth, strength, promise and hope.[2] He considers well-selected immigrants as agents of practical instruction. The European who comes to his shores should bring more civilization through the habits he spreads among the people. The perfection that is seen, touched, and felt is well understood. A hard-working man would be the most edifying catechism.

The education of the masses of Spanish America should have practical unity. Teaching the Venezuelan people to read without teaching them the skills to earn a better living and instilling a desire to improve their level of life would do them little good. Venezuela needs more specialists, engineers, scientists, technicians, and skilled

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[1]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posicion..., p. 82.

[2]This idea parallels Ganivet's remarks regarding the Latin American nations rather closely: "Las luchas pequeñas que en las unas perturban la vida política no son signos de degeneración: son signos de vitalidad excesiva y mal encauzada." See Idearium Español. Colección Austral, (Buenos Aires - México: Espasa Calpe Argentina, S. A., n.d.), pp. 98-99.

laborers as well as lawyers, authors, and theologians. It needs greater individual initiative and stronger ambition for material improvements, citizens more ready to collaborate in private enterprises for the common good and less inclined to look to political dictators for salvation. Science and economic pursuits should no longer be stifled since they are the best ways of teaching good behavior to the youth of Latin America and lead to happiness and stability, and through these, to order and liberty. How this process of introducing and spreading new ideas is to be carried out preoccupied Gallegos, for it was necessary to face this problem. He is clear and definite in his ideas. He is clear and definite in his views for a need of publication of these modern ideas in Venezuelan society which "se hace sentir tanto más cuanto que de todas las que llamamos deficiencias originales de nuestra sociedad, la principal es sin duda la deficiencia de la cultura. Todo lo que no vaya dirigido contra este vicio fundamental no pasará de ser una medicación sistemática. Necesitamos población, pero no somos exactos al expresarlo diciendo que nos hacen falta brazos, porque el inmigrante sólo es bueno cuando es portador de alguna cultura...."[1]

There is a need for more roads, but not open only for the most comfortable of "trajín de recuas y convoyes, sino porque en esta edad de materialismo se ha descubierto que el espíritu de las naciones discurre por los caminos mejor que por las veredas...."[2]

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[1]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 92.

[2]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 92.

There is a need for railroads because they are a "eficaz lección de cosas que nos dé la civilización y porque su velocidad no se pierde sin suscitar otras velocidades espirituales;..."[1]

Finally, and of most importance, there is a need of "cultivos, porque el árbol sembrado con las suyas clava en la tierra las raíces del hombre,..."[2]

Gallegos believes that ideas, attitudes, customs, and value-patterns can never be cast aside. He quotes the eminent Argentina writer, Leopoldo Lugones: "La civilización es una cuestión de ideas."[3] Who is to bring these ideas to the nation? Surely not the masses themselves, for "no debemos esperarlo todo de las masas porque como observa Angel Ganivet, el trabajo de las masas es demasiado pegado a la tierra."[4]

It is obvious that the essayist's criticism of the traditional teaching methods does not imply a criticism of Spain's true values. As noticed before, he himself is greatly influenced by the ideas found in the best literature of Spain, in Ganivet who anticipates Ortega y Gasset, and in Maeztu, as we shall presently point out.

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[1]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 92.

[2]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 92.

[3]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 92.

[4]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., pp. 97-98.

Prosperity and greatness will not be owed to the power of dictators, adds Gallegos, but to intellectuals, because "la democracia ineducada no puede encargarse del gobierno del mundo en tanto no tenga a su servicio médicos e ingenieros, abogados y maestros, -dice Ramiro de Maeztu en una conferencia dada recientemente en Barcelona de España."[1]

Following the thought of Maeztu, Gallegos points out that Sidney Webb found it necessary to organize a small intellectual group which became known as the Fabian Society with the objective of "constituir una minoría intelectual que fuera preparando administrativamente e triunfo de la idea."[2]

This essay adds considerably to a great list of social thinkers' systems whose works have the merit of originality in both expression and thought. In this essay, we see the names of the literary men, the thinkers, and the critics of the American social order: Domingo F. Sarmiento, Angel Ganivet, Leopoldo Lugones, Ramiro de Maeztu, William James, Sidney Webb, and by inference, Juan B. Alberdi. As previously noted, we must add the philosophers Le Bon, Payot, and Reclus mentioned in other essays published in La Alborada.[3] These

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[1]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 99.

[2]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 100.

[3]See Appendix B for personal correspondence from Professor Lowell Dunham. pp. 173, 175.

names represent the intellectual influences which were forming the mind of Gallegos as he looked at his society and found it wanting. Like these thinkers, he wrote with a social purpose. He was motivated by a profound interest in the development of character, above all, that of the Spanish-American people.

It is to be noted that Gallegos has not only won his renown in his home country and in other parts of Latin America, but in other parts of the world through both high personal achievement and increasing interest in national problems.

In recapitulation, the main tenet of Gallegos' essays on education is: a firm belief in the constructive role of education, through which Venezuela was to attack and solve the special problems that confronted the country. The problems, as shown in the political essays, were derived from the corrupt political situation. To solve them, the following was necessary: elimination of a semi-feudal system of government which kept the nation always at the mercy of the personal whims of the caudillo; the democratization of the nation in spirit as well as in reality by the inclusion of the masses into a participating, integral part of the country, and the consequent substitution of a civilian for a military government.

The essay, in which the Hispanic Americans have excelled, is for Gallegos the vehicle of expression of his ideas about the problems of the fundamental themes of Spanish-American letters. The failure of the Spanish whites with the Indian, with all its political, historical,

and social results, is an object of his analysis of Venezuela.

Besides a call for material achievement in the positivistic manner, Gallegos' essays were a plea for betterment of the individual and to help him see human life and destiny as a whole. As he used Europe and the United States in his essays as examples of material progress, and as a warning, he would eventually indicate to the people the influence and power of these other nations which were beginning to be feared in the republics of Spanish America at the turn of the century. He prefaced his criticism of the lands to the south with a desire to translate dictatorships into freedom, by illustrating the virtues of hard work, by championing religious liberty, public education and the great skills needed in the development of material resources. But mainly because the Venezuelans were suffering from fear of the caudillo, they overlooked his message at the time it was written and found compensation for frustration in politics and inefficiency in education and collective well-being.

He contended that nations should be guided and governed by their superior personalities and that a way must be found to teach the people to distinguish between their great men and the demagogues who were always ready to promise everything calculated to gratify mass appetites and whims. He did not scorn tradition. He believed that democracy without respect for hallowed traditions and personal genius would lead fatally to mediocrity.

The essayist believed in equality for men but he also believed

that men could be superior through culture and spiritual qualities. He believed that a feeling for order, for hierarchy and almost a religious respect for genius were the inheritance of classic civilization but it had been corrupted by a certain disdain for the humble and the weak.

In his essays, Gallegos advocated Pan-Hispanism and Latin-American solidarity. But the primary interest of his life was personal and cultural rather than political. He was a seeker after ideals for himself and the select spirits of his day. He recognized that professional and technical skills were necessary as a means of livelihood; but he contended that man's highest vocation was the development of his entire personality by constant inner probings and eternal self-renewal.

CHAPTER VIII

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT STORY IN VENEZUELA

The short story has held a very important place in the development of Venezuelan letters. Its manifestations include a wide variety of forms which range from the very short folk tale or fable to a quite complex and intimate expression of a writer's personality. Pastor Cortés, the well-established Venezuelan short story critic, states: "Venezuela es un país de cuentistas. Uno de los más fértiles del Continente. Afirmación que corre hecha válida por los circulos authorizados de crítica. Esta fertilidad cuentística nos ha llevado a obtener obras fundamentales en la novela. De ahí que, tanto en el uno como en el otro, poseemos ya maestros y modelos."[1]

The tendency in Venezuela has been to group all short sketches under one single category, namely, the Cuento. Under close observation, however, and in making a historical survey of this general form, one can easily notice how varied its expressions have been. The twentieth century has continued to produce in Venezuela a great number of excellent writers who have vigorously cultivated narrative literature in various forms as Cortés describes them:

> En donoso e incisivo estilo, hacen desfilar por sus páginas, personajes y situaciones criollísimos.

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[1]Pastor Cortés, Contribución al estudio del cuento moderno venezolano (Caracas: Tip. La Nacion, 1945, 1945), p. 7, hereafter cited as Cortés.

> Mérito excelente el de esta generación, que prepara año tras año, las herramientas de la obra futura.
>
> Es lamentable que algunas veces, dichos cuadros se convierten en meros pasatiempos literarios, sin trascendencia, cercanos de la anecdota chabacana, y en obras, haya cierta endeblez artistica y una candidez de exagerado moralismo.
>
> Con ellos, sin embargo, el genero narrativo va trasmontando el periodo amorfo de las imitaciones y tanteos, y nos acercamos a la hora augural de una Literatura genuinamente venezolana.[1]

There is some confusion in terminology not only in Spanish but also in English letters when one is confronted with the short narrative form. Thus in Venezuelan literature one may find the same short piece included in one work as a short story as well as in another work as a short sketch.

Some avid readers of short stories have sensed a basic difference between these two genres. The distinction seems quite clear to several readers, although the problem of distinguishing between the short story and the short sketch is not so readily resolved. Cortés makes a clear delineation between these two forms in his first chapter, informing the reader that:

> El cuento moderno ha ampliado extraordinariamente la posibilidad de sus temas. Ha venido a constituir algo así como un pequeño universo de humanidad y de sentimiento.
>
> El autentico cuentista posee la audacia creadora de fijar en un mínimum de espacio un máximum de vida. Es suya la ambición de plasmar en pocas páginas, a golpes de luz y de intuición, toda la capacidad emocional que representa una trayectoria vital.

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[1]Cortés, p. 12.

> Hay quienes no quieren comprender la misión artística del cuento corto. No es el novelín de intriga, ni el relato cursi de la revista de moda ni el cuadro costumbrista; es todo lo contrario, un documento de realidad dinámica y viviente, envuelto en red sutil de poesía y de lirismo.
>
> Se ha afirmado que nuestra prosa narrativa y en general toda nuestra literatura, arranca de raíces románticas. Ciertamente es con el Romanticismo, cuando el cuento empieza a florecer confundido con la novela. Pero los escritores de esta época, apenas si lo entienden en su exacto valor. La mayoría de ellos, con excepciones altísimas vivían absortos ante paisajes lejanos, ciegos ante la belleza de las cosas natales.[1]

Qualitatively, the tendency among some critics has been to distinguish the short story from the short sketch by the greater importance of plot over style in the former. An excess in ornamentation of style distracts the reader from the main objectives essential to the short story. Therefore, what may be termed a straight narrative short sketch has served as the Cuento during the past and this does not imply an absence in technique or of art. In Venezuelan literature:

> El pueblo tiene en el cuento y en la copla dos de sus mejores expresiones. Corre de boca la tradición narrativa y el folklore venezolano se enriquece. En la quietud de los caserones coloniales, en el silencio nocturno de las haciendas, una voz cansina y abuela arrulla la mente candorosa de los niños o la imaginación exaltada de los peones. El cuento popular se confunde así con la anécdota, y está más cerca del tradicionismo y del género costumbrista.[2]

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[1]Cortés, pp. 9-10.

[2]Cortés, p. 8.

Gallegos' most praised short sketches tend to present only one interesting, decisive moment of human life, reflecting an experience known by everyone. They often deal with incidents so insignificant and ordinary that they give the impression of an almost complete absence of plot, compared to his other, more traditional short stories. Let us observe this for instance in his "El crepusculo del diablo," a short story where plot is almost absent. There are elements in the story which stand out over plot, emotions not unlike that which one finds in poetry. Yet, these emotions could not have been successfully expressed in verse form because they would have proved to be too prosaic. However, they could lend themselves to a more extensive narrative form such as the novel because there they would have become developed and still have retained their poetic quality.

Here, perhaps is the key which will differentiate his short stories from his short sketches inserted in his novel Reinaldo Solar.

The short story was particularly popular among Venezuelan writers who published in the journals La Alborada, El Cojo Ilustrado, La Revista, Actualidades, etc., in the first years of the twentieth century. In fact, with little exception, it may be said that the short story became especially popular during the first 20 years of this century because: "Por los años del 80 al 95 se está gestando el verdadero cuento nacional, bajo la influencia cada vez más poderosa del Naturalismo francés, en especial de Zola, y de otras influencias como las de France, de D'Aunzio y de Queiroz. Cultívanlo decididamente, los

integrantes de nuestra generación modernista. Denominación compleja en la cual se amalgaman disimiles tendencias, actitudes en influencias literarias. En realidad, hay un alborear de horizontes distintos."[1]

The literary attitude among writers of the Venezuelan generation of 1928 as well as their followers is toward the short story and its brevity, which is: "Un paso laudable hacia el logro de la prosa narrativa, ... Ellos preparan en cierto modo las sendas de lo venezolano y son los precursores del criollismo."[2]

Perhaps among the first writers of the generation of '28 we find the greatest number of novelists devoting themselves to the short story, either through personal choice or because of a general trend, or more specifically because of the publishing facilities available at the time in the short-lived journals entitled La Revista, Cosmópolis, Alma Venezolana, La Novela Semanal and La Lectura Semanal.

In his prologue to Cuentistas modernos, antología, the Venezuelan Julian Padrón, wrote:

> ... nuestro cuento es uno de los primeros géneros literarios que nacionalizaron las letras patrias, elevando el pueblo venezolano [sic] al nivel de la literatura.
>
> Entre los más eximios cultivadores del cuento nacional, iniciadores destacados los unos, enamorados del paisaje o de los personajes los otros, animadores de nuestro criollismo literario los más, figuran Luis Manuel Rubaneja Achelpohl, Manuel Díaz Rodríguez, Pedro Coll, Rufino Blanco

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[1]Cortés, p. 13.

[2]Cortés, p. 11.

> Fombona, Rómulo Gallegos, Leoncio Martínez, José Rafael Pocaterra, quienes han contribuido a hacer de la ficcion de mas favorita lectura del publico venelozano [sic] .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Importantísimo papel desempeñaron en la evolución y auge de nuestro cuento revistas literarias como "El Cojo Ilustrado," "Actualidades" y otras publicaciones que alimentaban el gusto de la época por la deliciosa lectura del relato.[1]

Among this group of writers, Rómulo Gallegos is considered in many ways most representative of the Venezuelan generations of La Alborada, El Cojo Ilustrado, and Actualidades.

Don Rómulo, as he is universally known, has never been presented in short story form to the English speaking students of Spanish-American literature in a special annotated edition, whereas some of his contemporaries have already been introduced to the classroom. Nevertheless, this amazingly prolific writer can give us a representative example, not only within Venezuela, but within the Spanish-American tradition of a literature characterized by social context. This at times gives it a certain air often found in a work of art in which the creative sense and the social circumstances live joint lives.

During the simultaneous publication of many of the essays and short stories, the ideals of Gallegos did not materially change. The essays emphasize content; the short stories, form.

In several discourses of existing Venezuelan social conditions,

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[1]Julian Padrón, Cuentistas modernos, antología (Caracas: Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Venezuela, 1945), pp. 7-8.

there is a direct rephrasing of words themselves from the essays found in the short stories. We propose to show this parallellism in the following discussion of Gallegos' short stories and sketches.

CHAPTER IX

GALLEGOS, THE SHORT STORY WRITER

Since the discussion of the short stories will follow the chronological order of their publication, with emphasis on thematic trends in the essays, the first to be considered is "Las rosas,"[1] later entitled "Sol de antaño," which appeared in the January 1, 1910 issue of El Cojo Ilustrado and afterwards in 1913 in Gallegos' first book, a collection of short stories entitled Los aventureros. It is a study in frustration, a theme that the author developed in many of his short stories.

Altares, a young artist, returns to his provincial home from a stay of several years in Caracas. Stopping overnight at a country inn, he ponders over his failure to depict the beautiful aspects of life as an artist in the capital city. He is, as one of his friends had remarked, a painter, "'de cuyas lívidas tintas parecía brotar un fuerto olor de recinto clínico'...[2] On the way home, he pondered:

> ¡Cómo se había ido! ¡Cómo regresaba ahora! ¡Cuántos sueños, esperanzas y proyectos! ¡Qué confianza en sí mismo, a los dieciocho años, en la plenitud del aliento, pura el alma todavía...! ¡Qué sordidez ahora...! ¡Qué desgana de todo: de su arte, de la gloria, de la vida, de sí mismo... Sobre todo, que

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[1] El Cojo Ilustrado, Caracas, Año XIX, No. 433, (Jan. 1, 1910), pp. 19-22, hereafter cited as CI; see also Rómulo Gallegos, Los aventureros (cuentos) (Caracas: Imprenta Bolívar, Jan. 2, 1913), pp. 75-88, hereafter cited as aven.; Rómulo Gallegos, Obras Completas, Tomo I (Madrid: Aguilar, 1958), pp. 1089-98, hereafter cited as OC.

[2] CI, No. 433, p. 20; aven., p. 80; OC, p. 1093.

> profundo disgusto de sí mismo.... Defraudada la esperanza de su talento, depravado a fuerza de refinamientos malsanos el sentimiento artístico, la vida gastada en orgías, corrompida el alma, el hastío sobre ella.... [1]

During the entire trip, he is beset with doubts and a feeling of absolute emptiness. One morning, while he stays at an inn, he recalls his first love, Marcolina, and a picture of a bunch of roses he had painted for her. Suddenly the familiar tone of a voice arouses him from his thoughts. He finds that the girl who has spoken is the innkeeper's beautiful step-daughter, and that her mother's name was Marcolina. The innkeeper speaks of her with pride and compares her to a painting which belonged to his deceased wife. It is the picture of the roses and the innkeeper remarks: "-Y paque vea usté, cómo son las cosas de la vida; son dos hijos de otro hombre que no doy por ná del mundo."[2] As Altares leaves the inn, he is suddenly aware that a ray of light from the "sol de antaño" has brightened his spirit again. His daughter and his picture were two fresh and beautiful pieces of art. He had found redemption in the past.

This first short story shows several traits that had appeared for some time in the essays of Gallegos. There is the frustrated, disillusioned artist, a figure familiar to that of the student in the third article of the series of essays on education entitled "El factor educación." The

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[1]CI, No. 433, p. 20; aven., p. 81; OC, p. 1093.

[2]CI, No. 433, p. 22; aven., p. 87; OC, p. 1097.

lack of will, initiative, self-discipline and integrity of mind are recalled by the ruminations of the painter, who, on returning from Caracas after several years, discovered in the inn near his old home the beautiful girl who proved to be his own child, and finds redemption in this souvenir of the illicit love affair with the majordomo's daughter. In his essay, the author advocated a family upbringing and a program of instruction which would produce individuals capable of controlling themselves as well as their natural and social environment.

This first story has no main subject plot, as it is only a character study. Although it contains a description of an American region, it is little more than the point of view of the protagonist, Hilario Altares, an abúlico, who fails to adapt himself to his surroundings.

The second story, a psychological tale, published first in El Cojo Ilustrado and afterwards in Los aventureros, was entitled "La liberación."[1] It is also a study in frustration, technically better constructed than "Sol de antaño." Ricardo Fariña, a medical student, receives a letter from his old schoolmate, Venancio Branto, telling him he will soon pay him a visit. The letter sends Fariña into fits of rage, for he has had a great personal struggle to overcome the evil influence that Venancio had exercised over him since they first met in school. Ricardo is a weak-willed character who had suffered from epileptic attacks; he is easily led into degenerating vices. Venancio had taken him under his wing and protected him from the other

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[1]CI, No. 437, pp. 126-130; aven., pp. 51-72; Rómulo Gallegos, La rebelión y otros cuentos (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, S. A., 1948), pp. 69-85, hereafter cited as La rebelión...; OC, pp. 1099-13.

boys. He, in turn, had helped Venancio with his studies. After many escapades he had broken away from Venancio and at last is making a good record as a medical student. He hesitates to meet Venancio at the train. His fears are well founded, for he begins to carouse again as soon as his friend arrives. He loses his standing in his class work and the affection of his fiancée. As the two men return from a drunken orgy, Ricardo is beset by an old vision; he imagines himself choking Venancio to death. It is his only way to freedom. The thought on his mind as he hears the heavy breathing of Venancio in the next room is: "'Si yo lo hiciera esta noche,'"[1] and in detail, he imagined the act that would liberate him from the long indenture.

His last thoughts are "incorporarse de nuevo, llegar conteniendo la respiración al bordo de la cama, inclinarse sobre el durmiente, agarrarlo de pronto por el cuello y apretar..., apretar..., apretar."[2] The following morning, after one of his attacks in which he had imagined that he was strangling his "amigo," Ricardo is found stretched across the bed with his hands at his own bloody throat, the victim of his own rage.

With Ricardo Fariña, Gallegos adds another frustrated character to what shall become his rather large gallery of types known as fracasados. In spite of his academic progress, Fariña is a failure, the result of little or no will power and a human shortcoming. The problem of will and the disease known as abulia loomed large in Gallegos' early thoughts.

Another favored characteristic of Gallegos' essays and short sketches

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[1] CI, No. 437, p. 130; aven., p. 71; La rebelión..., p. 84; OC, p. 1113.
[2] CI, No. 437, p. 130; aven., p. 71; La rebelión..., p. 84; OC, p. 1113.

is the use of a pair of contrasting characters, one strong physically, one strong intellectually, each of whom depends upon the other as if both qualities could not exist in one individual. In his essay "El factor educación," Gallegos aspires to obtain, through education "el tesoro de un carácter bien acrisolado" and "una voluntad sabiamente cultivada," adding, as we previously mentioned in the essay, that "poseemos un programa de enseñanza en él que se ha procurado copiar cuanto hay en los de extraños países, nutrido de materias, superabundante de hombres de ciencias, ... pero apenas si hay párrafo entre sus muchas cláusulas consagrado a la edificación del carácter, al cultivo del hombre."[1] Ricardo was indeed the type from the essay, "nutrido de materias, ..."[2] But after the long interval, in which the two friends did not see each other and Ricardo had attained an excellent reputation as a medical student, Venancio appeared and Ricardo, the outstanding student, lacks the will power to escape the evil influence of his brutality.

The third narrative published by Gallegos, "Una aberración curiosa,"[3] never reprinted until 1957 after it first appeared in 1910 in El Cojo Ilustrado,

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[1]La Alborada, Caracas, I, No. 4, (March 1909), p. LVII, hereafter cited as Alb.; Rómulo Gallegos, Una posición en la vida (México: Editorial Humanismo, 1954), p. 63, hereafter cited as Una posición....

[2]Alb., No. 4, LVII; Una posición..., p. 63.

[3]CI, No. 452, pp. 577-579; Rómulo Gallegos, La doncella (drama) y El último patriota (cuentos) (México: Ediciones Montóbar, 1957), pp. 119-128, hereafter cited as La doncella....

cannot be classified as a short story. It is rather an impressionist "sketch" as the author himself suggested. It was made by him on one of his many walks into the outskirts of Caracas. A small, sleepy, and peaceful Venezuelan town is a subject often found in his works. At this stage Gallegos observes it without yet being able to define the concern which shall become, in later narratives, the great preoccupation, as stated in the essay "Necesidad de valores culturales," in which he presents as opposing forces "La ciudad y el monte." Gallegos' "el monte" is equivalent to Sarmiento's "barbarie." It stands for the less civilized interior of the country, the neglected and backward areas, the towns and villages. For him they are one of the most pressing problems of his country. How are they to be regenerated and lifted out of their lethargy, filth, and misery?

His minute observation of the small village in "Una aberración curiosa," will acquire particular social significance in both the short story and novel. For the moment the idea is vague:

> Este aspecto del poblado me es familiar; es el mismo de los arrabales ciudadanos. Como en éstos, allí predomina el ocre; en la calle de tierra desnuda, en las fachadas de las casas inconclusas, porque allí, como en los arrabales, abundan las casas en fábrica que nunca serán concluídas, por los huecos de cuyas puertas y ventanas se entrevé un cielo siempre azul o trozos de un paisaje cuya tinta adquiere por la virtud del marco, un prestigio singular. Esto último que es en sí apenas un simple efecto de contraste, me sugiere pensamientos muy vagos, tan vagos que quizás no son sino espejismo de ideas, inaferrables impresiones subliminares a las que aún no corresponde ninguna expresión humana o a las que tal vez sólo podrá acordarse la vaguedad sugerente de la música. Y a fuerza de estar ligado a

> tan íntimas ideologías, el hecho sencillo ha adquirido para mí un sentido profundo, que he querido interpretar como una máxima de arte: hacer ver a través de un alma la angustia o la alegría ajenas, como por el hueco de una destartalada pared, un trozo jovial de paisaje o por una puerta indiscreta, una escena de vida íntima.[1]

The following story "Las novias del mendigo,"[2] one of the collection in Los aventureros, introduced us to a favorite character Crisanto, who will appear often in the stories of Gallegos. He is the raro, a type of which Gallegos is said to be fond. Crisanto, has been compared with Doña Bárbara's Juan Primito.[3]

Crisanto makes the rounds begging prayers, not bread, so that he can teach them to "las muchachas de su campo, siempre expuestas a las malignidades de los echadores y a las mordeduras de los animales venenosos.

"Por este motivo muchos le cobraron recelo y hasta mala voluntad algunos, pero a él no se le daba cuidado porque en cambio muchas también lo querían, y el cariño de éstas, como que era de almas puras y tiernas, tenía que ser para él más dulce que amarga era la malevolencia de los otros."[4]

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[1]CI, No. 452, p. 578; La doncella..., pp. 123-124.

[2]CI, No. 455, pp. 663-665; aven., pp. 115-129; La rebelión..., pp. 117-128; OC, pp. 1114-24.

[3]Dillwyn F. Ratcliff, Venezuelan Prose Fiction (New York: Instituto de las Españas de los Estados Unidos, 1933), p. 238.

[4]CI, No. 455, p. 665; aven., p. 115; La rebelión..., p. 117; OC, p. 1114.

His calls are made in the nearby town, especially during the summer season when the girls leave the city to spend their vacations at their country places. Crisanto has his favorites. Although there is something repulsive and lascivious in his look and manners, nevertheless the girls are pleased by his tales and gossip, and he is always sad when one of his niñas or noviecitas dies or marries.

Among those who listen to him is a girl from the city, at whose home he makes a daily call. One morning he is told by the sisters that she is no longer there. Perhaps he is a hex; the people in the country have long murmered that he was an evil-doer, bringing bad luck to his niñas. Perhaps he is to blame for the loss of this novia and his other two favorites who in previous years had married, had died or taken to the primrose path. Driven to desperation, he tries to dig out his eyes so as never to see another woman. The story ends with: "allá, en su interior, daba su último parpadeo la razón."[1] The old romantic beggar has become insane.

"Las novias del mendigo" is a character sketch rather than a short story, for there is little or no plot other than Crisanto's visits and his final desperate act of self-inflicted punishment. Crisanto is an abnormal degenerate, and yet another fracasado. Like the other raros. he is no more normal than a brainless fool.

Both the moral teaching and the perversion of the main character

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[1]CI, No. 455, p. 666; aven., p. 129; La rebelión..., p. 128; OC, p. 1124.

in "Las novias del mendigo" recall the essay "El factor educación," serie V, entitled "El concepto moral." Its main characteristic almost word for word is the "Humildad de esclavos que abomina toda altivez, desinterés de mendigos que aniquila todo valor, generosidad de agonizantes que quiere encadenar la vida a su propia muerte."[1] The Mendigo was a queer individual with a changed sense of values. He occupied himself with telling women weird, superstitious stories, in exchange for which he sought prayers. He pretended to be only the object of their charity, but is deceived to believe he is the object of their love. Finally he considers himself capable of casting an evil spell on them and tries to atone for it by self-inflicted corporal punishment. As in many other stories, there is lack of description of local color and native types.

"El último patriota"[2] was published in El Cojo Ilustrado January

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[1]Alb., No. 8, p. CXVIII; Una posicion..., p. 80.

[2]CI, No. 458, pp. 59-61; La doncella..., pp. 129-140. Unforfortunately for the renown of Gallegos as a short story writer, his fine whimsical story was never published in either of the three collections of short stories which were printed. It is surprising that Gallegos did not choose it as one of the short stories among the seven which constituted aven., in which he included five which had been published previously in CI. Neither did he incorporate it in the 1949 and 1958 editions of his complete works, nor in his second volume of stories, La rebelión..., (Caracas: Editorial y Librería del Maestro, 1946). Footnotes herein refer to the 1948 edition published by Espasa-Calpe Argentina, S. A. Neither was this story included in Rómulo Gallegos, Cuentos venezolanos (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, S. A., segunda edición, 1950), hereafter cited as CV.

15, 1911. It is the story of an old gentleman whose "ancestors" have been great figures in the history of the country since the days of independence. A newspaper article comes to his attention in which the writer charges that all the so-called historical, national heroes were not quite free from royalist sympathies. Don Máximo is enraged at the insult and at the chiding of his family. He answers the article; another article appears with historically substantiated data. Don Máximo is driven to investigate the papers of the family archives. Much to his shame, he finds that the newspaper article was correct. Many of his prominent relatives were tinged with royalist leanings. His family hears him one day in the room which had contained the family papers and portraits, muttering as he removes each portrait, "Realistas, Mercedes; hija mía, realistas; realistas, Antonio. ¡Quién iba a creerlo!

"Y fue entonces cuando se libró la verdadera última batalla de la Independencia. Don Máximo, empinado sobre una silla, batiendo triunfalmente aquel escuadrón de realistas rezagados, era el último patriota, y el primero de su casta."[1]

Don Máximo represents the man of principles in whom Gallegos sees the salvation of the country expressed in his essay "Hombres y principios." Perhaps better than any other of his characters in the short story this is the man with a solid background of racial and cultural heritage who, according to Gallegos, would become a leader for ideals. The next

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[1]CI, No. 458, p. 61; La doncella..., p. 140.

time Gallegos exalts this type in a short story he creates a woman character under circumstances more akin to his patriotic thesis, as we shall see in future analysis.

If "Los aventureros,"[1] is not important structurally as a short story, for several reasons it is of major importance in the historical development of Gallegos as a fiction writer: One, it is the first piece of fiction in which Gallegos assumes directly, the role of a social critic of his country; two, it is the first time that we are presented to two types of characters that will appear time after time in the novels - the two opportunists who dominate Venezuelan political life, the caudillo and his scheming partner, the crafty lawyer; and ultimately because it is indicative of the turn that Gallegos' writing will take, shifting from the short story to the novel.

The tale is constructed around a bandit leader, Matías Rosalira, who through the high-handed tactics of the highwayman is finally appointed comisario by the government in the mountainous area where he lives. He sets up his own fee collection rackets and becomes a popular figure in the eyes of the natives. Jacinto Avila, a young shyster lawyer, a failure in his profession, but with overweening ambition, seeks out Rosalira, convinces the latter that he is a born leader, and incites him to revolution

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[1]aven., appeared first in CI, No. 483, pp. 81-85, and was used later as the title of Gallegos' first volume of short stories. In the original in CI, Gallegos added "Boceto de novela" to the title; aven., pp. 5-29; CV, pp. 9-26; See also OC, pp. 1125-41.

by promising him his legal advice and coöperation.

Rosalira knows how to rule a su modo:

> Y como tenía don de mando, y se daba tanta maña para atraerse la voluntad de los hombres, a vuelta de poco no había en todos los contornos sino amigos suyos, porque a los que por las buenas no habían querido serlo, los exterminó sin piedad, con lo que quedó la montaña en paz y sólo él dueño de ella.
>
> A fuero de tal, dirimía las querellas, administraba justicia, cobraba impuestos a los terratenientes, y sin reparo ni consulta, sino a todo su talante y beneficio, dictaba leyes y repartía privilegios sin que nadie se atreviera a discutirle el suyo, porque las contadas veces que esto quiso suceder, dióle al insubordinado tan contundentes razones que por muchos días le duró el dolor de ellas. Y hasta tanto llegó su señorío que edificó su casa en el preciso punto por donde pasaba el único camino que era de recuas, sobre una loma tan escarpada y angosta, que no era posible hacer rodeos para evitar la casa, por dentro de la cual Rosalira permitía el paso mediante un peaje estipulado.[1]

Jacinto Avila was another type: the perpetrator of all the unethical practices which Gallegos discusses in his political essays:

> Graduado ya acudió al periódico y a la tribuna propicios y tanto escribió y declamó tanto, con el solo objecto de hacer ruido para lo que era bastante hueco y vacío, que a vuelta de poco ya tenía una gloriola y era acatado en todos los círculos de la Capital. Pero no era este llegar a medias todo lo que él aspiraba, y siguió trabajando con tesón por llegar de un todo hasta donde fuera posible llegar en su país, sin que su delicadeza estableciera distingos de escrúpulos.... Pero reveses de la fortuna o torpeza para calcular, hiciéronle dar un paso imprudente y cayó en desgracia.
>
> Entonces fue cuando llegó a sus oídos la fama que cobraba Matías Rosalira y resolvió ir en su busca para intentar junto con él, y a su amparo, la gran aventura. Buen conocedor de su medio, por instinto y por experiencia, sabía que sólo con un apoyo de esta suerte podría hacerse carrera por los

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[1] CI, No. 483, p. 83; aven., p. 14; CV, p. 15; OC, p. 1131.

> caminos del éxito y para lograrlo resolvió hacerse espaldero del Caudillo. Este era la fuerza, el instinto cerril, impetuoso y dominador, la energía acostumbrada a imponerse; la única energía de la raza blindada de barbarie....[1]

Although he had failed, Avila refuses to join the company of fracasados. With his overweening ambition he plans a way out.

> Y estaba en su camino. Acordóse de los que le negaban méritos, de los que le escatimaron su aprecio, de los orgullosos que habían sabido estarse en retiro de dignidad, mientras él iba placenteramente con la maltratada y peor tenida suya, en subasta, y se complació en pensar que pronto podía pasearles su triunfo por delante y humillarlos, y no sólo a ellos, sino a la sociedad entera, a los mismos que le habían dado la mano, porque Avilita tenía un profundo rencor contra todos, gratuito al parecer y que en el fondo no era sino un deseo de represalias, en el que se revelaba inconscientemente la aspiración de virtud que la vida no le había dejado tener: grandeza de alma, hidalguía en el corazón, ideales, integridad, orgullo.[2]

To incite Matías to revolution, he plays on the latter's vanity and his hatred of the foreigners who are trying to run a railroad through his remote section of the country. Matías' sole reason for destroying the work of the workmen and engineers is not money: "Lo que quería no era dinero, con lo que le daba la montaña tenía de sobra; su punto era no dejar pasar el ferrocarril, porque era cosa de extranjeros, y él los odiaba cordialmente. Recurrieron éstos a otros arbitrios, y el Gobierno mandó gente armada para proteger las obras. Recomenzaron éstas y con ellas el

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[1]CI, No. 483, p. 85; aven., p. 26; CV, pp. 23-24; OC, p. 1140.

[2]CI, No. 483, p. 85; aven., p. 27; CV, pp. 24-25; OC, p. 1141.

estado de guerra en la montaña. Matías Rosalira fue declarado faccioso."[1]

Avila, a violator of the law, the type of violator which Gallegos describes in the essay "El respeto a la ley,"[2] brings the people together and incites them by reading his call to arms "en la cual se mentaban las Instituciones, la Soberanía nacional, los fueros sagrados de la Patria y otras cosas más, altisonantes y arrebatadoras, que nunca habían oído nombrar los montañeses, a quienes, sin embargo, les pareció muy bueno todo."[3]

The next morning, Matías tells the motley crew, "-muchachos, lo que les ha dicho el doctor es la pura verdad, y por eso yo los he convocao pa que nos alcemos contra el Gobierno, porque el Gobierno ha faltao a las leyes y nos quiere quitá la montaña de nosotros pa vendésela a los musiúes."[4] They started ontheir way, shouting "-¡abajo el ferrocarril! ¡Muera el Gobierno! ¡¡Mueran los musiúes!! -gritaron entonces los amotinados, y con gran tumulto salieron al camino."[5] As they advance down the mountains into the cities, their thoughts become "ávida de sangre y botín...."[6]

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[1]CI, No. 483, p. 84; aven., p. 17; CV, p. 17; OC, p. 1133.

[2]Alb., No. 3, p. XXXIV; Una posición..., pp. 27-30.

[3]CI, No. 483, p. 85; aven., p. 29; CV, p. 25; OC, p. 1141.

[4]CI, No. 483, p. 85; aven., p. 29; CV, p. 25; OC, pp. 1141-42.

[5]CI, No. 483, p. 85; aven., p. 29; CV, p. 25; OC, p. 1142.

[6]CI, No. 483, p. 85; aven., p. 29; CV, p. 26; OC, p. 1142.

Here in fiction was what Gallegos had written of in his essay "El verdadero triunfo."[1] It was "la tan socorrida idea del dictator, superstición política profundamente arraigada en nuestra conciencia y al propio tiempo, abono a la simiente del aventurero."[2]

"Los aventureros" has all the necessary elements to become a first rate story, but the plot is suddenly decimated and the reader is left without any idea of the outcome, a fact which further substantiates our thesis. Gallegos' patriotic preoccupations set forth in his essays dominated most of his narrative production.

The reviewer in El Cojo Ilustrado anticipates this tendency in his comments on "Los aventureros":

> Los más de los lectores encontrarán la narración trunca, pues el autor, después de lanzar sus aventureros a la guerra, los abandona al misterio; vale decir, que no existe un desenlace, y si existe en la intención del autor parece difícil desentrañarlo. Aunque bien pudiera ser que el cuentista no hubiera querido presentarnos sino un símbolo de las dos fuerzas contrarias que mueven el cuerpo social venezolano: la barbarie y la mala fe del ambicioso sin escrúpulos, representadas por el bandolero y por el leguleyo; y la cultura y el progreso, representados por el ferrocarril que va penetrando en la oscura montaña bárbara.[3]

In the files of El Cojo Ilustrado Gallegos' original title appears as: "Los aventureros, boceto de novela."

With "Los aventureros," Gallegos took the position that he was to

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[1]Alb., No. 7, pp. XCVII-XCVIII; Una posición..., pp. 49-52.

[2]Alb., No. 7, p. XCVII; Una posición..., p. 49.

[3]CI, No. 509, p. 146.

maintain in his best and more mature works; he places himself squarely in the midst of the social reality of his country, from which, as a conscientious, devoted patriot, he could not stray.

In the following story, published by Gallegos in Los aventureros, he returns to the themes of his first essay, "El factor educación." "El apoyo,"[2] like "La liberación," is a study in will. It uses the technique of opposites which Gallegos had also used in the latter story, and again there is the theme of the fracasado.

Two young friends, Manuel and Francisco, are both studying for the priesthood. Francisco has always been the moral strength for Manuel. Their friendship is finally dissolved, for Francisco decides to leave the seminary for a monastery. Manuel is disconsolate. "Ya no tendré quién me aliente cuando me vengan mis vacilaciones; esos desmayos de la voluntad, tan frecuentes en mí."[2]

Years later, Francisco calls on Manuel, who is now a village priest. Francisco confesses to Manuel that he has abandoned both the seminary and the monastery, that his faith has always been a falsehood. That day Manuel does not open the hermitage.

When Gallegos describes in this story the strong and weak characters, he reaffirms his tenet from "El factor educación," stating that the principal defect has been "el confundir la educación con la instrucción

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[1] CI, No. 499, pp. 537-540; aven., pp. 33-47; La rebelión..., pp. 57-67; OC, pp. 1143-53.

[2] CI, No. 499, p. 537; aven., p. 34; La rebelión..., p. 57; OC, p. 1143.

propiamente dicha. Esta obra sobre la inteligencia y produce la cultura; aquélla sobre el carácter y forma el hombre...."[1]

At the conclusion of the story, Francisco, "the strong," writes to Padre Manuel, "the weak," who leaned on him:

> Has de saber que abandoné el claustro y por lo mismo que abandoné el Seminario: por no haber encontrado tampoco en él lo que buscaba. ¡No encontrar lo que se busca! Parece que esto quisiera decir que el Ideal que perseguimos es tan alto que en ninguna parte se alcanza. Ahora bien: ¿sabes por qué no encontré en el claustro lo que buscaba? Por lo que no lo encontré tampoco en el Seminario: porque yo no busco nada. Soy una voluntad muerta que va por el mundo sin rumbo fijo, sin objeto ni fin, haciéndose la ilusión de que persigue alguno inalcanzable.[2]

And "the weak" Padre, not capable of the struggle for himself, feels that all his efforts have been in vain. "Inclinó la cabeza sintiendo el acorador desaliento que deja un largo esfuerzo inútil, y aquel día la ermita no se abrío."[3]

These two individuals submitted themselves to religious life. Manuel idolized Francisco whom he considered superior. In reality, it was Manuel and not Francisco, who was more the man of the two because Francisco, not being able to accustom himself to militant life, had to leave religious life.

This story is a psychological study of these two individuals who are of the raro type whose friendship turned out to be a spiritual fulcrum. This

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LVII; Una posición..., p. 62.

[2]CI, No. 499, p. 540; aven., p. 46; La rebelión..., p. 67; OC, p. 1152.

[3]CI, No. 499, p. 540; aven., p. 47; La rebelión..., p. 67; OC, p. 1153.

relationship was most abnormal, indulged in by neurotics only, but not by sane men. The story is indeed of the modernistic vein. Gallegos manifested the exotic and rare. The story lacks description of the American landscape or of criollo types. As the author described no other type, the psychological study treats only of the raros.

"El milagro del año,"[1] first published in 1913 as a short story and later adapted for the stage, is considered as one of the three outstanding short stories that Gallegos has written. It has excellent local color, good character study and development, and a fast-moving plot.

The scene is a fishing village. El Chavalo, a fisherman, brother of the local priest, murders the members of his crew for the payroll. Only one escapes; he dies of knife wounds, but not before confessing to the priest that El Chavalo was the criminal. The guilty one, in spite of his crime, had a special image to the Virgin wrought in silver as a gift of gratitude to her for the miracle she performed by saving his life. The priest tries to convince El Chavalo he should confess his crime but he refuses. A miracle has been promised the small fishing village for the year, but during the sermon to the villagers the priest warns: "La sangre se ha puesto entre Dios y nosotros; no veremos el milagro. Un gran crimen nos priva de la gracia divina. Desagraviemos al Señor.

"¡Desagravio, desagravio!

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[1] First published as one of the seven short stories in the collection aven., pp. 113-160; La rebelión..., pp. 129-148; see also Rómulo Gallegos, El forastero, seguida de Los inmigrantes, El milagro del año (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 348, 1952), pp. 371-402; OC, pp. 1159-77.

"¡Perdón, Señor, Perdón!"[1]

The fanatic townspeople, incensed by the priest's words and suspecting the crime of El Chavalo, hack him to death with knives while clamoring for the miracle to occur.

The excellent depiction of the picturesque fishing village, its local color, its tragedies, and its celebrations, spring from the very soil of the country. Gallegos now thoroughly understands his position as regards the people and consequently writes a convincing story. In his criticism Gallegos does not abuse the clergy. On the contrary, as can be seen in "El milagro del año," he observes them in the light of his preoccupation. In "El concepto moral,"[2] Gallegos had lamented the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Venezuela whenever it was of a negative character. The ignorance of the peasantry was so dense that superstition played a great part in their lives, and the priesthood could instill into their minds an outward respect for religious forms and dread of dire consequences to follow disobedience to priestly injunctions. In one respect, however, the clergy had failed to impress on the peasant classes a standard of morality similar to that appertaining to most other countries.

Although devoted especially to Our Lady, El Chavalo murdered

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[1]aven., p. 158; La rebelión..., p. 147; Rómulo Gallegos, El forastero, seguida de Los inmigrantes, El milagro del año (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 348, 1952), p. 400; OC, p. 1176.

[2]Alb., No. 8, pp. CXVII-CXVIII; Una posición..., pp. 77-81.

and robbed his employer, the owner of a fishing boat, and one day while at sea, killed one helper and mortally wounded another. Believing that the Virgin, whose help he had invoked, had aided in the acquisition of the boat bought with the stolen money, El Chavalo placed on her altar, as evidence of his appreciation, a little silver boat. The survivor, whose silence the murderer bought, confessed the crime to the village priest, El Chavalo's brother, who tried in vain to make the criminal atone. Then came the day on which each year the villagers revered their patron saint, the Virgin, who, according to the priest, would then demonstrate her power through a miracle. That, he hoped, would be the confession by El Chavalo of his crime; but when the latter remained obdurate, the priest explained that the Virgin, angered by a crime committed in her name, refused her favor. To appease her, the villagers, who already suspected El Chavalo, slew him.

The struggle in the mind of the priest, his duty to guard the secrecy of the confessional, his love for his brother, and his obligation to see justice done, are handled with master craftsmanship. But as the righteous moral leader of the people, the priest is unable to save them from their superstitions and passions. Their standard of morality is such that they violate the Commandments for the sake and in the name of their faith. Finally, the priest, in spite of his good intentions, unwillingly leads them to catastrophe.

"Estrellas sobre el barranco,"[1] included as the fifth story in

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[1] aven., pp. 91-112; La rebelión..., pp. 99-115; OC, pp. 1178-92.

the collection entitled Los aventureros, is, in content, one of the dreariest stories Gallegos has ever written.

Genaro, a crippled half-wit, is driven, with his sister Petra, from their home in the city. They take a hut on the banks of a ravine. Beset by poverty, Petra struggles and works to provide for her brother, defending her virtue against the evil ones who try to mislead her. She is unaware that her brother has lascivious designs on other miserable girls like herself. One day, during one of his epileptic attacks, the poor desire-tortured creature conceives the idea to take advantage of her. She fights him off and forces him to cower on the floor where he sleeps. She calls to him; he is motionless, his eyes serene, with the smile of the demented on his lips. Petra, shouting, runs out of the hut. The stars shine over the ravine clear and bright.

"Estrellas sobre el barranco" is more a sketch and study in abnormal psychology than it is a short story. Here again we take note of the raro types. They are incorrigible immortals neither impeded by rules of society nor by fraternal respect. Like the great majority of the other stories, this one is filled with an exotic sentimentality which is found only in abnormal types. The description is limited mostly to the sketch of these unique types. The study has little developed or delineated plot. The characters are victims of both fate and poverty. As in "Las novias del mendigo" Gallegos studies an abnormal type, almost perverted, but the circumstances leading to his total degeneration are not strictly of a social character. In "Las novias del

mendigo" religious superstition plays a social role. In "Estrellas sobre el barranco" there is the social topic of the sister who, unable to earn a living, faces prostitution as inevitable, but from the beginning the brother is portrayed as a miserable, sick and half-witted character of insane lust.

In his next story, nevertheless, Gallegos does not veil his ideas on the negative aspects of secular matters, and openly discusses them through the main characters. "El análisis"[1] continues in the psychological pattern of "La liberación," "Una aberración curiosa," "Las novias del mendigo," "El apoyo," and "Estrellas sobre el barranco." It was not republished in either of the first three collections of short stories, but finally reached Gallegos' reading public in 1957 in the collection entitled La doncella y otros cuentos. Of the stories and sketches written in the psychological manner this one is considered the best in regard to technique. The analysis is detailed and well-developed, so that the whole process leads to a logical outcome. The story is written in the form of letters, a technique Gallegos used in his story "El apoyo." The first letter, written by Carlos to Jacinto, tells him how he came to doubt his wife after he has taught her advanced and modern ideas of morality. The following extensive quotation is necessary to understand fully the message of the author.

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[1]CI, No. 536, pp. 210-214; La doncella..., pp. 181-192.

> Contra tales prejuicios se nos dice, en nombre del buen sentido, que debemos luchar y los que tenemos un espíritu paradójico emprendemos la lucha tratando de poner en lugar de ellos, ideas nuestras, cuyo valor de verdad y de justicia hallamos comprobado por nostros mismos.... Yo creía que había realizado en mi espíritu esta reconstrucción original y que sólo había en él los conceptos míos que yo había verificado por cuenta propia; pero he aquí que acabo de descubrir que en él permanecían solapados y con todo su vigor los prejuicios seculares. Te referiré el caso concreto. Como tú sabes desde los primeros días de mi matrimonio emprendí la tarea de rehacer por mi cuenta y de acuerdo con mis convicciones la educación de mi mujer, que apenas había recibido en la casa paterna, por todo bastimento educativo, los dos o tres principios de moral católica que se da entre nosotros a las mujeres y éstos barajados entre tal fárrago de prejuicios y preocupaciones ridículas que apenas componen una mentalidad menos que mediocre. Mi empresa era difícil, pero no fue imposible, mi mujer asimiló mis ideas y a poco tiempo las mas libertarias de las mías arraigaban en su espíritu como en medio natural y propio, sin resistencias ni reservas. A primera vista parece que este éxito ha debido llenarme de orgullo y contribuir a la mayor felicidad de mi matrimonio, puesto que establecía una efectiva comunidad de ideales y sentimientos entre mi esposo y yo, que es el ideal de todo amor; pero, por lo contrario, entonces fue cuando comenzó a verificarse en mí un raro fenómeno inesperado: empecé a perder la confianza en mi mujer; la libertad de su pensamiento me asustaba, viéndola sin sus prejuicios temí por su moralidad y sobre todo me intranquilizaba su concepto, que no era sino el mío mismo y que yo le había inculcado a propósito del amor. ¿Has visto tú nada más insensato?[1]

In the second letter, also from Carlos to Jacinto, the former admits that he has become a monster and tells Jacinto that his wife has committed suicide. The third letter is an answer from Jacinto, who calls Carlos a wretch for having destroyed his own happiness. Jacinto encloses

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[1]CI, No. 536, p. 210; La doncella..., pp. 182-183.

two letters from Carlos' deceased wife written to his wife. The fourth, fifth, and sixth letters are also from Carlos' wife to Jacinto's wife telling of the loss of Carlos' affection and thanking her for the explanation she sent her of Carlos' actions. She confesses that she has deep-seated thoughts that disturb her. "-No tenía nunca malos pensamientos, ahora los tengo a cada momento. No estoy volviendo mala, se me ocurren unas atrocidades que no le puedo contar."[1] Tormented by these thoughts, she tells Jacinto's wife that she will commit suicide to save her reputation.

Again it is to be noted that there is morbid subject matter and, that in the case of both the wife and the husband, there is a failure -- failure of character and will brought about by the evils which Gallegos discusses in his first essay "El factor educación." The husband breaks with tradition by teaching his wife advanced and modern ideas. But tradition weighs him down by making him doubt his now enlightened wife. On the other hand, the wife herself is unable to accept the new knowledge with an open mind and spirit and becomes a victim of it. In his essays on education, Gallegos takes note of the fact that in his country education does not take into consideration the conditions of the race, nor the times and social customs. "El análisis" bears out his theory by showing the effect on the individual when the gap is suddenly breached.

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[1]CI, No. 536, p. 214; La doncella..., p. 192.

"Cuento de carnaval"[1] was written for the carnival issue of El Cojo Ilustrado in 1915 during the carnival season in Caracas. It is the brief story of an old man who has driven his only daughter from his home because of her affair with a worthless suitor who seduced her. One year at carnival time three masked girls come to visit him. As they leave he recognizes his daughter's sobs but remains adamant. The next year the same three return. He still refuses to recognize his daughter. The following year when carnival time returns, he is prepared to grant her forgiveness and open his heart and home to her. His daughter, nevertheless, does not come back. One of the girls unmasks and tells him she is dead. The old man closes the door on the merriment in the street.

It is obvious that in this story Gallegos is still preoccupied with the "weight of tradition" on the individual of his country. The righteous father: "Conservaba todos los resabios de los viejos tiempos, en los cuales la conducta estaba regida por principios rígidos, que no permitían la disipación, ni reconocían la necesidad, tan proclamada ahora, de la alegría, y sin embargo el rumor callejero le parecía ahora grato."[2]

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[1]CI, No. 556, pp. 101-105; La doncella..., pp. 195-201. It is difficult to explain how and why this excellent story was not included in the collection of stories entitled La rebelión..., and the two editions of OC. Finally, it was discovered some forty-two years later in the darkened pages of CI, and published in 1957 in La doncella..., after so many years of unavailability to the author's many readers. Gallegos states that it is his opinion that it would be of interest only during carnival season.

[2]CI, No. 556, p. 101; La doncella..., p. 195.

With this story, Gallegos closes his series of short stories for El Cojo Ilustrado, which ceased publication with the April 15, 1915 edition.

La Revista of Caracas published two stories for Gallegos, "El caso clínico" on June 20, 1915,[1] and "La esfinge"[2] on September 26 of the same year; neither of these stories was republished in the collections. Like many of his outstanding stories, they were omitted also from the two collections of his complete works and published only in 1957, some forty-two years afterwards, in the third collection of his short stories.

The former is a study of an over-ambitious, unscrupulous young man who, by dint of great determination, overcomes his poor background and becomes a leading doctor in the city. But his success serves him ill, for it turns into "rencor y en deseo de venganza." He resolved to make society pay for "his humiliation." He receives a call from the wife of a very wealthy man in the city. This patient turns out to be in search of love instead of medical attention. Taking advantage of this situation, the doctor tells his patient that he needs to go to Europe to advance his studies, but needs money. "Y sin darse cuenta de la situación, se intrincó en este tema inoportuno y ridículo con una vehemencia desagradable. A poco su acento era el de un pedigüeño,

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[1]La Revista, Caracas, Serie II, No. 6, (June 20, 1915), n.p., hereafter cited as Rev.; La doncella..., pp. 205-212.

[2]Rev., No. 6, n.p.; La doncella..., pp. 215-220.

hablando de dinero con aquella mujer rica que adivinaba deseosa de amarlo, y se le había ocurrido que podría obtenerlo de ella."[1] Insulted at his poor taste, she rises and dismisses him when he tells her his fee is ten bolívares; "este no había dejado de ser el panadero que fue antes...."[2] The doctor was guilty of belonging to what Gallegos called in his social essay "El factor educación" a "sociedad de Doctores" rather than one of "hombres, como si no hubiera muchos de aquéllos y pocos, muy pocos de éstos."[3]

This theme appears again in the next story, "La esfinge,"[4] considered a better than average story. An old guerilla soldier sits listening to the exploits of two of his three sons; the eldest, who has just returned from medical school in Europe, and the second son, a lawyer. The youngest son is astounded as he hears the dishonest, contemptible incidents recounted. He is enraged at his brothers' cynicism and lack of principle. "El joven no quitaba de ellos sus ojos, como si quisiera arrancar a aquellas caras de esfinge un secreto terrible, acaso el secreto destino de la Patria, y en un instante de locura le pareció ver en las de sus hermanos el costurón paterno, pero no como trofeo de valor que mostrara como se arriesgó la vida, sino como blasón hereditario que

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[1]Rev., No. 6, n.p.; La doncella..., p. 211.

[2]Rev., No. 6, n.p.; La doncella..., p. 211.

[3]Alb., No. 4, p. XLII; Una posición..., p. 65.

[4]Rev., No. 20, n.p.; La doncella..., pp. 215-220.

ahorra el sacrificio y da derechos al reparto del botín."[1] He faces them all; demands angrily, "¿Qué son ustedes y qué van a hacer?"[2]

They look at him as if he were a fool, and the father cynically asks, "¿Qué le habría sucedido a mi hijo el tonto?"[3]

As in "Los aventureros," Gallegos built his story around a social reality of his time.

In "La esfinge," and shortly afterwards in "Una resolución enérgica," and "El crepúsculo del diablo," as in the political essay "Hombres y Principios," the trend of thought is the cynical disregard for any set of moral or ethical principles in the national life of the country. The social reality of the author's time was such that it led him to state his famous axiom: "Hombres ha habido y no principios, desde el alba de la República hasta nuestros brumosos tiempos: He aquí la causa de nuestros males. A cada esperanza ha sucedido un fracaso y un caudillo más en cada fracaso y un principio menos en la conciencia social."[4]

After a series of minor stories in which Gallegos tries his hand at new techniques, he produces one of the outstanding short stories in the

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[1]Rev., No. 20, n.p.; La doncella..., p. 220.

[2]Rev., No. 20, n.p.; La doncella..., p. 220.

[3]Rev., No. 20, n.p.; La doncella..., p. 220.

[4]Alb., No. 1, p. III; Una posición..., p. 11.

literature of Hispanic America, "El piano viejo."[1]

It is the simple, touching tale about an old maid sister, Luisana, who stays at home to take care of her father. Her other brothers and sisters, Charles, Raymond, Ester, and Mary, leave home, each one in his or her own way following a distinct road of life, but turning out to be either a failure or warped character. Life disperses them, carrying them in different directions and leading them astray. First, Ester marries a young man who is rich and vain; Mary, then marries a young man of fame but of questionable reputation, and after her, Charles, the adventurous and aggressive type undertakes all kinds of crazy enterprises. Finally, Raymond, the misanthropist, goes astray. Since childhood he has revealed a passion for money and solitude. All leave home to face a different destiny.

Louise, the oldest sister, is the only stable member of the paternal household. She decides to comply with the self-made promise to care for her father, who languishes paralyzed, lamenting his sons and daughters in whose hearts he would never see a just impulse nor a generous feeling of sentiment. On his death bed, the father says to her, "Tú serás la paz

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[1]"El piano viejo" is considered Gallegos' best short story and one of the finest written in the Spanish language. It first appeared in Rev., No. 21, (1916), and was later republished in 1917 in a newspaper edited by Leoncio Martinez, entitled Fantoches; La rebelión..., pp. 43-48; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de La rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), pp. 493-500; OC, pp. 1154-58.

y la concordia."[1] Louise fulfills her promise and lives alone in the family house, keeping each room just as it had been left, even having fresh water in the pitcher on the washstand, as if at any moment her brothers and sisters would come to wash their hands before sitting to eat at the family table where she prepares a place for each of them. From then on she feels the pleasant importance of a notable predestination and an innermost contentment in her life.

She carries out her father's words as her duty and spends the rest of her life settling disputes among her brothers and sisters. Her only diversion is playing a piano, the old piano, where her mother played her first scales which sounded out-of-tune like discordant voices.

Louise "Tocaba a la sordina unos aires sencillos que fueran dulces. Muchas teclas no sonaban ya; una, rompiendo las armonías, daba su nota a destiempo, cuando la mano dejaba de hacer presión sobre ella; o no sonaba, quedándose hundida largo rato. Esta tecla hacía sonreír a Luisana."[2] Then she would say to herself, "Se parece a mí. No servimos sino para romper las armonías."[3]

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[1]Rev., No. 21, n.p.; La rebelión..., p. 43; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de La rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), p. 498; OC, p. 1154.

[2]Rev., No. 21, n.p.; La rebelión..., p. 45; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de La rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), p. 496; OC, p. 1156.

[3]Rev., No. 21, n.p.; La rebelión..., p. 45; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de La rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), p. 496; OC, p. 1156.

One morning Louise died at the old piano, still pressing down on the keys. Her brothers and sisters arrive, prepare her for burial, and carry her to her grave. Afterwards they meet to divide the estate and when the habitual quarrels start, the brothers draw their weapons. The sisters intercede without succeeding to separate them, and suddenly, in an unexpected pause from the clamor of their voices, they hear the sound of a note which comes from the closed piano. The brothers put away their weapons. Each feels that Louise has returned, announcing herself with "aquel suave sonido, dulce, aunque destemplado, como su alma simple, pero buena."[1]

Louise of "El piano viejo," and Don Máximo of "El último patriota" are both leaders for ideals and the philosophy upon which Gallegos based his essay "Las Causas." The two characters are "capaz de hacer inclinar en el sentido de las reformas efectivas y benéficas, la balanza de nuestro destino."[2]

The remaining short stories, with the exception of two, were written for the journal Actualidades.[3] They appeared with some regularity from February 9, 1919, to July 27, 1919.

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[1]Rev., No. 21, n.p.; La rebelión..., p. 47; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de La rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), p. 499; OC, p. 1158.

[2]Alb., No. 2, p. XIX; Una posición..., p. 22.

[3]The third period of Gallegos' literary activity may be called that of Actualidades, hereafter cited as Act. It was a small magazine owned and edited by an Italian by the name of Aldo Baroni, and began publication early in 1917.

The first to appear was "Los Mengánez."[1] It is a study of a family with social pretensions that have moved from the country into luxurious city surroundings; they take Caracas by storm. But their wealth diminishes. The two sons who were educated in Europe are forced to give up their offices; the poet-journalist son no longer has any readers. Instead of tea, the family once again is drinking its native coffee with brown sugar in it, and forgotten are the magnificent social functions they once gave. Again the work is more of a sketch than a story. It has the usual number of fracasados: the three sons, the mother, and the daughters.

Gallegos returns to the social reality of his essay "Necesidad de valores culturales" for subject matter. The lack of culture combined with excessive social pretentions are such that "esta necesidad de la divulgación de las ideas modernas en nuestro medio social, se hace sentir tanto más cuanto que de todas las que llamamos deficiencias originales de nuestra sociedad, la principal es sin duda la deficiencia de la cultura. Todo lo que no vaya dirigido contra este vicio fundamental no pasará de ser una medicación sistemática."[2]

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[1]Act., Año III, No. 6, (Feb. 9, 1909), n.p.; CV, pp. 35-42; OC, pp. 1194-99.

[2]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., p. 91.

He persists in his observation of this type, the social pretentious, in "Una resolución enérgica"[1] an ironic title given to a sketch of a young man who has made his way into the high social circles of Caracas, only to have his closest friend seduce his own sister. Torn between his duty to his family honor and his own petty desires, he pretends he will kill his friend or himself. The mother persuades him to go to Europe to escape the family disgrace; he readily agrees, for it has been his life-long dream.

Repeating the similar theme of the essay "Hombres y principios," as in the story "Los Mengánez," Gallegos is using the upper circles of Caracas' social life as a background for this subject matter, with another fracasado, an abúlico, as the main character, who in this instance justifies his poverty of spirit with a perverted concept of rights and duties. When he discovers the illicit love affair between the sister and the seducer, he justifies his indifference as follows: "Y al cabo de un indescriptible vaivén de pensamientos, concluyó a media voz, tirando el cigarrillo y encogiendo los hombres, como para echar lejos de sí aquella inoportuna preocupación, incompatible con la esencia caraqueña de su caracter:

"-Lo dicho: ahí está el viejo.... A mí no me corresponde meterme en estos líos. No tengo el derecho...." Gallegos interrupts the narrative with his moralizing: "Como todo buen venezolano, confundía la noción de deber con la del derecho. Mejor dicho: no pensaba que tenía

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[1]Act., No. 7, n.p.; CV, pp. 27-34; OC, pp. 1194-99.

deberes, sino derechos."[1]

"Una resolución enérgica" is a sketch rather than a short story and belongs definitely to the tradition of social satire. In a larger sense, the young escapist in the story typifies another Venezuelan without principle.

The tendency to escape from social responsibilities at home by fleeing to the boulevards of Paris was all too common among the elite and upper class members. Gallegos was of stronger fiber; his place was in the midst of the social situation in Venezuela.

The next story, "El cuarto de enfrente,"[2] continues in the same vein. It is a satire on a family of Caracas which is taken in by a mysterious young Mexican-about-town who palms himself off on the city as a wealthy eligible bachelor. He wins the hand of the only daughter of a Caraqueña family. The night before the wedding he confesses to the girl's father that he is an imposter and without money. To save the family's name and pride, the girl's aunt urges that the wedding be carried out. They all fear public gossip. As the aunt says: "-Y es natural que se le tema. Es muy desagradable saber que la gente está haciendo chacota de uno. A ti mismo no puedo agradarte pensar que si este matrimonio se desbaratara mañana tu familia estará en ridículo, siendo objeto de

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[1]Act., No. 7, n.p.; CV, pp. 29-30; OC, pp. 1205-06.

[2]Act., No. 8, n.p.; CV, pp. 43-49; OC, pp. 1212-18.

murmuraciones y de calumnias."[1] The couple is so destitute that the old aunt moves her own bed out of the "cuarto de enfrente," which is infested with rats, for the newly weds while she herself sleeps in the store room. This compensated for the unpleasant nights which she had been compelled to spend in that rat infested room.

The methods and techniques of analysis of human character in this story are not unlike those of his essay "El factor educación." Probing into the traits of the Venezuelan, Gallegos stated that:

> Otra de aquellas muchas cualidades de que a menudo nos lamentamos, es esta típica forma compleja de nuestro carácter, mezcla de servidumbre y rebeldía que en todas las fases de nuestra vida, individual o social, nos adscribe como voluntades subversivas a toda ley o principio de autoridad al propio tiempo que como siervos sumisos del hombre en quien encarna la entidad abstracta de aquellas mismas leyes o autoridad desconocidas.
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> Aspecto de nacionalidad incipiente o atavismos de razas de señores y siervos confundidas, esta peculiar condición, fecunda causa de males para la sociedad, es cultivada en nuestros hogares....[2]

"El crepúsculo del diablo"[3] is a second carnival story, but different from the first story of this type. The town is, in a way, the collective protagonist. In the opening scene of Chapter I, Gallegos paints the multitude of his native Caracas during the annual celebration of

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[1]Act., No. 8, n.p.; CV, p. 48; OC, p. 1217.

[2]Alb., No. 6, p. C; Una posición..., pp. 72-73.

[3]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, pp. 51-56; OC, pp. 1219-25.

carnival week:

> La turba vocinglera invade sin cesar el recinto de la plaza, se apiña de las barandas que dan a la calle por donde pasa "la carrera," se agita en ebrios hormigueos alrededor de los tarantines donde se expenden amargos, frituras, refrescos y cucuruchos de papelillos y de arroz pintado, se arremolina en torno a los músicos, trazando rondas dionisiacas al son del joropo nativo, cuya bárbara melodía se deshace en la crudeza del ambiente deslucido por la estación seca, como un harapo que el viento deshilase.[1]

As an introduction to this sketch, the typical carnival diablo is briefly described but highly characterized. The method and technique here are unlike those of his other sketches. The central character, Pedro Nolasco, is an old man disguised as a devil who "oye aquella música que despierta en las profundidades de su ánimo, no sabe qué vagas nostalgias. A ratos melancólica, desgarradora, como un grito perdido en la soledad de las llanuras; a ratos, erótica, excitante, aquella música era el canto de la raza obscura, llena de tristeza y de lascivia, cuya alegría es algo inquietante que tiene mucho de trágico.... la música que escarba en el corazón del Diablo, como un nido de escorpiones."[2]

This detailed attention to customs manifests the mastery Gallegos now has of the Venezuelan scene. The "joropo" music and dance which are popular in the llanos, in the home, in the street, on the concert stage. This music evolved from the melancholy strains of the Indians, the rhythmic

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[1]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, pp. 51; OC, p. 1219.

[2]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, p. 51; OC, p. 1219.

genius of the Negro, and the technical influence of Europe.

Nolasco formerly ruled the carnival during the festive season with a dictatorial hand. Overcome by his character, "dábalos Pedro Nolasco con verdadera indignación, que la parecía la más justa de las indignaciones, pues una vez que se vestía de diablo y se echaba a la calle, olvidábase de la farsa y juzgaba como falta de lesa mejestad los irreverentes alaridos de la chiquillería."[1]

He badly marks an influential boy's shoulder and is taken in by the police and arrested. He decides to conceal himself no longer and accepts a shortcoming of his established dignity. He tries to regain his fame and power during another carnival celebration, but an enemy crowd stones him and leaves him to die on a heap of rubbish. A rival to his fame, the effeminate carnival clown, leads the mob to attack him with the facial expression of "la risa pintada de albayalde en su rostro, el asombro adquiría una intensidad macabra."[2] As his rival leaves him, buzzards circle in the sky. "Al pasar sobre el lomo de un collado su sombrilla se destacó funambulesca contra el resplandor del ocaso."[3] One notices that Gallegos gives a symbolic turn to the story which somehow veils the message.

The only reference by Gallegos to the physical description of the

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[1]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, p. 52; OC, pp. 1220-21.

[2]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, p. 56; OC, p. 1225.

[3]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, p. 56; OC, p. 1225.

typical carnival devil in this sketch, and this in passing, is the phrase "su pupila quieta y dura taladra en el aire una visión de odio, pero de una manera siniestra."[1] He does elaborate upon the dance custom of the "joropo." That is to say, his purpose in this sketch is the description of a picturesque type, but unlike Los aventureros, the analysis is not openly one of social phenomenon. Nevertheless, the Diablo is also a leader, replaced in the hearts of the people by a near weakling, the clown.

In this sketch one is impressed by the vividness and comprehension with which the Diablo is characterized. This is, of course, because Gallegos was dealing with a type whom he had known personally, for he had seen them annually in his own native Caracas. But this Diablo is also a symbol, a passing figure whose place has been usurped by an effeminate clown. In his own tragic way he is also a fracasado. And the people who stone him assume the place of the ignorant fisherman in "El milagro del año," driven this time not by religious fanatacism, but by an almost whimsical, barbaric feeling.

Following the chronological order of Gallegos' publications, "Alma aborigen,"[2] which appeared in Actualidades during its surrender, March

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[1]Act., No. 9, n.p.; CV, p. 51; OC, p. 1220.

[2]This story, like "La encrucijada," is a chapter of the novel Reinaldo Solar, written in 1913. See La doncella..., pp. 155-163 for only complete version.

9, 1919, should be treated here.

Like the major part of the works published in Actualidades, it is more a sketch than a short story. It is an account of a love affair between Reinaldo Solares, the son of the father of the household, and América Peña, a girl from the village. Threatened to death by América's brother, an unknown bully, Reinaldo proves his manliness in the arena by throwing bulls. It is unnecessary to say that Reinaldo overcomes the admiration of America's brother. Those who have read Gallego's last essays will recognize the basic elements of the essay "Necesidad de valores culturales" in "Alma aborigen," as well as in his last short stories "La ciudad muerta," "Pataruco," Pegujal," "El Crepúsculo del Diablo," "Marina," "Paz en las alturas," "Un místico," and "La rebelión." In most of these stories Gallegos is concerned with the opposing forces "la ciudad" and "el monte"; "civilización" and "barbarie." He brings into play, as in the story "Alma aborigen," intellectual and brutal forces. He does not scorn physical force, as he believes it to be a characteristic of his people derived from their geographical circumstances. But he believes this force should be channeled in the proper direction. In "Alma aborigen," Gallegos shows that civilization is not incompatible with physical strength. This thesis will appear at best in the person of Santos Luzardo in his famous novel Doña Bárbara.

The following story, "El paréntesis,"[1] is a character study of a

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[1]Act., No. 11, n.p.; La rebelión..., pp. 49-56; OC, pp. 1226-33.

pious young girl who gives her time almost completely to church work. The village priest encourages her to become a nun, against the wishes of her mother and brother. One morning a distant relative comes to visit the home. He goes on walks with her, enlivens her drab life, and buys her orchid plants for the patio. The family looks with hope upon a possible marriage, but the young man departs as quickly as he had come. Soon letters fail to arrive and the nun-like atmosphere of a convent settles again on the house. Within a year the orchids symbolically die. The young girl dreams of becoming a nun, after the brief parenthesis of happiness.

In a sense this work is a social study of a type of life common among unmarried women in Latin-American homes. Instead of entering a profession, as in other countries, these girls and women are condemned to convent-like life in their own homes; they are known in Spanish by the title of beatas. The death of the orchids is Gallegos' old device of using symbolism to portray the death of love in the young woman's life.

Chapter VIII of the novel Reinaldo Solar[1] of the Primera Jornada

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[1]This novel by Gallegos has been published in several editions having to do with the main character. In 1930, it appeared as Rómulo Gallegos, Reinaldo Solar, segunda edición (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Araluce), in 1937 as Rómulo Gallegos, Reinaldo Solar, Cuarta edición (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Araluce), in 1942 as Rómulo Gallegos, Reinaldo Solar (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, Argentina, S.A., Colección Austral), and in 1946 as Rómulo Gallegos, Reinaldo Solar (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Peuser).

is the story of "El paréntesis," with considerable reworking; some paragraphs were extracted exactly as they originally appeared in the novel, but in the main the paragraphing and phrasing were altered in the short story.

If we count nothing more than the number of times the words fracaso and fracasado occur in the short stories alone, without considering the number of characters whose personal or professional life ends in frustration, that alone would indicate the turn that the early novels of Gallegos would most logically take. Reinaldo Solar is not the mere personal tragedy of Reinaldo, of Alcor, or of Menéndez, all men of talent; it is in a large sense the personal tragedy of Gallegos' generation; it is the theme of the fracasado carried from the essay into the short story and developed into the scope of a novel.

Another short story, "La encrucijada,"[1] is a selection written for the first version of El último Solar. It is the first known account of the love affair between Reinaldo and Rosaura Mendeville. This sketch such as it appears with the title of "La encrucijada," was used, apparently, as a subtitle for the authro's weekly story in Actualidades. It is in the same vein as El último Solar. Like "Alma aborigen," this story, although it appeared in Actualidades, March 30, 1919, was written in 1913.

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[1]La doncella..., pp. 167-178.

Roxana Mendeville is Rosaura in the short story and has the same last name in the novel where she is a married woman who plays the piano well; in the short story, she is a Uruguayan poetess. But the same subject, the same as in "Una aberración curiosa," is the short visit to the outskirts of Caracas and the attention given to the humble neighborhoods and the life of the town, the plaza, the church and the good-natured priest who could have been preparing a sermon while passing back and forth on the platform in front of the church, the hypostasis of the apparition of a not-so-very religious woman who disturbs the peacefulness of the burgo and gave subject matter to the Levite for his Sunday function. Also, the beginning of the story, where the project is mentioned about the Asociación Civilista in Reinaldo Solar's plans, although foreign to the theme of the sketch, it is found in the onset of Chapter II of the Segunda Jornada.[1]

Thus, the major part of "La encrucijada," was a theme already developed in "Una aberración curiosa,"[2] which Gallegos used in El último Solar (Colección Austral, 1941, pp. 189-194) and repeated without modifications in Reinaldo Solar (Araluce, 1930). However, when the

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[1]Reinaldo Solar, Cuarta edición de la Colección Austral, 1947, pp. 147-149; OC, 1949, pp. 107-108; Novelas escogidas, 1951, pp. 488-490; OC, 1958, pp. 132-140.

[2]Neither of these stories, "La encrucijada," nor "Alma aborigen," was reproduced in the three collections entitled Aven., La rebelion..., and CV.

Colección Austral started using the modified title of Reinaldo Solar for the first novel by Gallegos, the text of the sketch was that of the first edition without the fundamental modifications introduced by the author in the second edition printed by Araluce.

"La ciudad muerta"[1] is an important social study of a small Venezuelan town, a topic that Gallegos dealt with in many of his essays, short stories, and political speeches.

In this small, sleepy, river town, there is only failure and a depressing atmosphere of defeat. Three people long to escape: a young man, son of the druggist; a judge who is also a novelist; and a mechanic generally regarded as crackbrained by the townspeople. The mechanic is building a boat in which he hopes to leave the town. When he launches his boat and departs, the druggist's son, much to the despair of his father, leaves with the mechanic. Thus the two of them have succeeded in escaping "de aquella ciudad mortal de donde emigraban todos los hombres."[2] The judge who "hablaba dolorosamente de su vida fracasada,"[3] is left behind, soon to be burdened with still another child and so doomed to his life in the village. As the boat disappears, he is heard remarking, "¡Los últimos fuertes! ¡Ya se han ido todos!"[4]

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[1]Act., No. 12, n.p.; CV, pp. 103-108; OC, pp. 1234-40.

[2]Act., No. 12, n.p.; CV, p. 106; OC, p. 1237.

[3]Act., No. 12, n.p.; CV, p. 107; OC, p. 1238.

[4]Act., No. 12, n.p.; CV, p. 108; OC, p. 1240.

Burdened with an overwhelming sense of failure, the town accepts fatalistically the circumstances which had made flight the only hope of the strong. The results of such flights, however, were disastrous for the provinces, as Gallegos saw, for all the talented and intelligent sought opportunities in the capital and left the town in its lethargy.

The first eight and a half pages of Chapter VII of the novel Reinaldo Solar of the primera jornada are almost word for word the short story published under the title "La ciudad muerta," with the exception of the third paragraph, which in the novel has been developed in more detail out of the third and fourth paragraphs of the short story.

"La ciudad muerta" reflects Gallegos' growing concern, as seen in his essay "La alianza hispano-americana (a la Sociedad Patriótica)," for the backward conditions and the stagnation of the small Venezuelan town, a problem that has assumed national proportions. In a measure, the town, like the judge and its other citizens, though on a large scale, live "en un aislamiento injustificable del resto del continente americano; nada o muy poco sabemos de nos otros mismos, en tanto que conocemos los más mínimos detalles de la vida de los extraños."[1] [Italics mine]

"Pataruco"[2] likewise has its roots in the native soil. It is Venezuelan local color at its best. Gallegos gave authenticity to his

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[1]Alb., No. 4, p. LII; Una posición..., p. 43.

[2]Act., No. 14, n.p.; CV, pp. 57-62; Rómulo Gallegos, Pobre negro, seguida de Pataruco, Pegujal y Marina (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 344, 1952), pp. 415-424; OC, pp. 1241-46.

novels by deftly using local color.

The best harp player in the entire coffee plantation district is Pataruco, an Indian plantation overseer, who by some mysterious means becomes wealthy, marries a white woman, and moves to Caracas. His only son Pedro Carlos is sent to Europe to continue his musical education. Upon the latter's return to Venezuela, he has some initial success as a pianist but his music does not ring true. He returns to the coffee plantation during the harvest season; in the distant night he hears the music of a country dance. Something stirs up within him. He joins the group, asks for the harp, and hypnotizes the dancers with his native music. At last he has found himself. As he leaves the dance, one of the peons asks him the name of the joropo he had played. "Pataruco" is his answer. Pedro Carlos finds himself before it is too late.

Gallegos' description of the coffee plantation district, with its picturesque customs and local color, is admirably done. He would use this same general locale for the setting of his novel La trepadora.

The story, however, is something more than a local color story of the coffee-growing district in Venezuela. It embodies a conviction that Gallegos has held for many years that foreign study is quite likely to produce a personality that can no longer adjust itself to its native environment. In "Pataruco," Pedro Carlos has turned against what he is: the real Pedro Carlos is hidden beneath a thin veneer of foreign culture. Only when he hears his own native music does he find himself. "Y el músico pensó en aquella oscura semilla de su raza que estaba en

él pudriéndose en un hervidero de anhelos imposibles. ¿Estaría acaso germinando, para dar a su tiempo, algún sazonado fruto imprevisto?"[1]

It is not that Gallegos is opposed to foreign studies, for he has done as much as anyone to break down the old Spanish cultural bars to modern foreign ideas but, as he wrote in his essay "La alianza hispano-americana," under the subtitle of "Solaridad de ideas," they must be adapted to the reality of the country. "Nuestra intelectualidad se nutre de la sabia europea, como nuestro comercio de sus productos, y generalmente llegamos a interesarnos más por los problemas políticos o sociales que allá se resuelven, que por las propias necesidades que aquí piden urgente solución."[2]

As a young man, Gallegos had seen many of the intellectuals of Venezuela flee to Paris and return with a veneer of foreign culture, no longer able to find anything worthwhile at home. "Pataruco" is pointed directly at that type of citizen. In "Pataruco" Gallegos shows how by channelling the new knowledge in the proper direction the foreign educated Venezuelan can find a place in his native society. The new music Pataruco played was no longer "crude" and "primitive." Although "strange," it was authentic. It had "el aire de la tierra y la voz del

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[1]Act., No. 14, n.p.; CV, p. 60; Rómulo Gallegos, Pobre negro seguida de Pataruco, Pequjal y Marina (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 344, 1952), p. 422; OC, pp. 1244-45.

[2]Alb., No. 4, p. LII; Una posición..., p. 43.

alma propias. Y a un mismo tiempo, como antes, lanzaronse los bailadores en el frenesí del joropo."[1]

"Pegujal"[2] belongs, like "La ciudad muerta," to the group of essays "Necesidad de valores culturales" which study life and conditions in the small towns of Venezuela. Gallegos gives us the setting in the opening sentence. "Pegujal es un poblacho triste y pobre, lleno de polvo y de moscas, lleno de silencio y de modorra, lleno de infinitas amarguras grandes y pequeñas."[3]

As Gallegos tells us, Pegujal's inhabitants are as unpleasant as the town itself. One day there appears a company of bull fighters, led by an effeminate Spanish toreador. Hatred and resentment are strong in the town against him. Preceding the bull fight, some of the town rowdies learn the manner in which the toreador is to work and they train the bull accordingly. On the day of the bull fight the bull gores him, and he is dragged out of the ring to die. There is both laughter and terror among the crowd at the brutal trick they have played on the young Spaniard.

The story uses the same type of perverted humor to be found in "El crepúsculo del diablo." In "Pegujal," it is employed to show the

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[1]Act., No. 14, n.p.; CV, p. 61; Rómulo Gallegos, Pobre negro, seguida de Pataruco, Pegujal y Marina (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 344, 1952), p. 424; OC, pp. 1245-46.

[2]Act., No. 16, n.p.; CV, pp. 69-75; OC, pp. 1247-52.

[3]CV, p. 69; OC, p. 1247.

effect of the town life upon the people themselves. They are as miserable as the town itself. The social problems of Venezuela seem to trouble Gallegos more and more. The social theme of his essays, in its various aspects, appears again and again in his short stories.

Gallegos returns to the psychological character study in "La hora menguada."[1] At the death of her husband, a sterile wife is struck by the grief of her unmarried sister. The widow learns that the sister is to have a child by her husband. To protect the family name, they move to the country and the widow takes the boy as hers. Hatred grows in the hearts of the two sisters as the child grows to manhood. The real mother's maternal instinct is blocked, while the sister who has adopted the boy, jealously guards the secret to satisfy her desire for a child. The boy overhears them quarrelling one day over a broken goblet and learns the truth. He leaves the house, never to return. Deprived of their one source of happiness, they confess their regret over the words which cost them their happiness in "La hora menguada."

This work, again more of a sketch than a short story, is almost a case study in frustration, the frustration of the maternal instinct. The married sister is sterile; the unmarried sister has the child whom she is forced to hand over to her barren sister as her own. Both find some happiness sharing "the son." Both end in failure.

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[1]Act., No. 17, n.p.; CV, pp. 63-68; OC, pp. 1254-59.

> ¡La vida rota! Destrozada en un momento de violencia por un motivo baladí: años de sacrificio, dos existencias de heroica abnegación frustrada de pronto porque a una se le cayó una copa de las manos y la otra profirió una palabra dura. Así comenzó aquella disputa vulgar y estúpida en la cual se fueron enardeciendo hasta concluir sacándose a las caras la mutua vergüenza; y así terminó para ellas, de una vez por todas, la felicidad que disfrutaban en torno al hijo común, y la santa complacencia de sí mismas, que experimentaban cuando medían el sacrificio que cada una había hecho y se encontraban buenas.[1]

"Marina"[2] is a naturalistic story. A woman guards her dead husband's body, afraid to leave it alone for fear the devil will carry off the soul, and she is unable to carry it to a grave, since the only human beings near are her two small children. Terrorized by native superstitions, she stands guard like a dumb brute over the body as it decomposes. Over the distant sea, shooting stars fall. They are the souls of the dead escaping from their bodies, safe from the clutches of the devil.

This is the first instance in which an entire story has been constructed on the basis of folklore, an element that characterizes a considerable part of Gallegos' later fiction. The subject might have been revolting if Gallegos' artistic ability had not saved it from mere ugliness. The modernistic influence on Gallegos becomes more apparent in his last short stories. This aspect of his literary creation will be discussed

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[1] Act., No. 17, n.p.; CV, p. 67; OC, pp. 1258-59.

[2] Act., No. 11, n.p.; CV, pp. 77-82; Rómulo Gallegos, Pobre negro, seguida de Pataruco, Pegujal y Marina (Madrid: Aguilar Colección Crisol, núm. 344, 1952), pp. 437-446; OC, pp. 1260-65.

later.

"Paz en las alturas"[1] is as forbiddingly naturalistic as "Marina". In this story, Gallegos is apparently more concerned with the artistic creation than with the patriotic ideal. Felipe is the crippled, deformed child of a wretched woman known as Plácida, La Negra. She lives on the edge of a ravine in a poor hut with her only child. He witnesses her love affairs with a charcoal dealer called Crisanto, who urges her to rid herself of the monstrosity. She plans to trap the boy and plunge him over the ravine. She hurls a piece of bread which hangs on a bush at the edge of the ravine; the boy guesses her intention; the dog plunges for it and falls instead into the canyon. That night Plácida is terrified as her son repeats, "Why do you want me to die?" By the very depiction of this stratum of society, Gallegos is protesting its evils. The characters of these two stories live in abject poverty. Likewise abject are their souls and minds.

"Un místico"[2] appeared in the June 1 issue of Actualidades. It is a sketch of another of the small Venezuelan towns, portraying the difficulties encountered by a reform movement started there. Two college friends meet in the town years after their graduation, one a young doctor who visits his college classmate, now the village priest. The town is plagued by fever and the inhabitants are dying like flies. The

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[1]Act., No. 11, n.p.; CV, pp. 83-89; OC, pp. 1266-73.

[2]Act., No. 20, n.p.; CV, pp. 109-117; OC, pp. 1274-82.

doctor discovers it is the polluted water; the priest blames it on the lack of any spiritual faith. When the doctor tells the people the cause of their illness, they are insulted to hear that their water supply is bad; the name of their town is maligned. The local doctor defends the water; he is now wealthy and has on his property the only source of pure water which the town could use. To attain the end desired, the young doctor persuades the town physician to retract his statement and then sell the pure water to the city. By devious means he has obtained the desired objective. But the priest is disturbed and chides his friend for using the precept "the means justifies the end" to good work. He feels it only further perverts his people. As the priest bids his friend goodbye, the young doctor hears him murmur, "-¡Valle de los Delirios! ...¿Por qué será que en tu suelo toda semilla de bien se pudre o malea?"[1]

The picture Gallegos draws is not a pleasing one. His two main characters are again opposites: one a positivist, the young doctor; and the other a mystic, the village priest. The town is the victim of its own pride, ignorance, superstitions, and the greed of one local doctor who could help them. Gallegos' thesis seems to be: Is progress, health, and happiness justified if it is obtained through unethical means ?

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[1]Act., No. 20, n.p.; CV, p. 117; OC, p. 1282.

In the case of the doctor who is the modern, scientific-minded reformer, the answer is positive. For the mystic, the priest, it is negative. Good must come from within, and further evil, regardless of its aims, adds to the perversion of the already evil soul.

"La fruta del cercado ajeno"[1] is the story of a young man who makes a trip to the seashore to conquer himself and recover his will power. Instead, almost unwillingly, he has an affair with a married woman. The affair is complicated by the presence of the woman's small niece, who is used by her as an innocent pawn to further her relations with her lover. The child, however, realizes what is taking place and reveals to them her awareness of their relationship. The young man is horrified that he has given cause for scandal before an innocent child, a thought that will always haunt him.

Parts of the story "La fruta del cercado ajeno" belong to the body of the novel Reinaldo Solar.[2] Chapter II of the primera jornada expresses the same idea as the opening paragraph of the short story: Reinaldo's fear of the sea and his determination to conquer it. The short story uses the name Reinaldo Solares, the novel, Reinaldo Solar; Antonio Menéndez appears with the same name in both works; the woman in question is referred to in both by the name of La Giaconda; in the short story her true

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[1]Act., No. 23, n.p.; CV, pp. 91-102; OC, pp. 1283-94.

[2]During a personal interview with Rómulo Gallegos in Washington, D.C., in the winter of 1960, he told this writer that he published parts of his novel Reinaldo Solar in lieu of short stories.

name is Romelia Soja, in the novel, Rosaura Mendeville; the child in the short story is Teresita, Romelia's niece; in the novel, she is Rosaura's daughter, Olguita. In Chapter V of the segunda jornada, there is the reference in the novel to the shame Reinaldo feels at making Olguita a partner to his lust, the note on which the short story ends.

The last of Gallegos' short stories to appear in Actualidades was "El maestro."[1] Like a morality play, it is concerned with the forces of good and evil. The maestro is a drunken old scoundrel who spends his nights in bars and plazas, and the days by sleeping off his excessive drinking in the tool shed of the caretaker of one of the paseos. His biting, cynical wit gives him a great following in the city. "Y aunque en realidad en las sátiras del Maestro el humanismo remaba como forzado en galeras, su regocijante fama se extendió por todas partes, y llegó a decirse que en aquel burlón, descreído y escéptico se encarnaba el alma deliciosamente frívola de la ciudad, que siempre había tenido un famoso epígrafe en despique de las calamidades de todo género que lloviesen sobre ella.

"Dicho y creído esto, la ciudad se sintió orgullosa de poseer tal representativo. Mimabásele y agasajábasle en todas partes; tolerábase su mordacidad..."[2]

One afternoon he finds the city abandoned; the inhabitants have gone to the cemetery to bury the saint of the city. El Maestro is broken-

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[1]Act., No. 30, n.p.; CV, pp. 119-124; OC, pp. 1295-00.

[2]Act., No. 30, n.p.; CV, pp. 119-120; OC, pp. 1295-96.

hearted; his followers have betrayed him, and he decides to abandon the city. As he leaves, he meets the crowds returning from the burial. El Maestro senses that some transformation has taken place in their souls: "una huella de alma, un destello de luz interior, algo parecía anunciar que una humanidad nueva estaba naciendo en ellos..."[1]

The crowd seem to feel if they disperse as individuals they would lose the good that had drawn them together for the purpose of paying homage to the saint.

El Maestro begins his sarcastic comments. Suddenly, as if on a given signal, they fall upon him and beat him to the ground. There is a feeling that by that act they have lost touch with the pureness of soul they had just won. "Nadie respondió. Cada cual presentía que su vida había sido transformada; pero ya la luz interior se había extinguido y solo veían sombras dentro de sus almas.

"Rompiendo el silencio, alguien preguntó, sin saber si lo deseaba o lo temía:

" -¿Habremos muerto al Maestro?"[2]

Gallegos again uses the symbol. El Maestro belongs to that company of raros we have already mentioned. He is the symbol of cynicism and evil. El santo is pure symbol, for he is never described.

The story, like the essay "Las causas," seems to tell us that a

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[1]Act., No. 30, n.p.; CV, p. 122; OC, p. 1299.

[2]Act., No. 30, n.p.; CV, p. 124; OC, p. 1300.

people, a social group such as the inhabitants of this city, are capable of spiritual regeneration, once given the proper ideal to follow. In the essay, Gallegos states that in Venezuela, "la sóla vía expedita es la que conduce al campamento, y la guerra el único sistema de solución que conocemos.... Nuestro pueblo odia la guerra, y si mal de su grado ha ido a ella en busca de un remedio perentorio, es porque, de natural perezoso, está incapacitado para el esfuerzo perseverante que exige la labor cívica."[1] In "El maestro" the town symbolically turns to a peaceful almost holy endeavor. But as if echoing the words in Gallegos' essays: "pero la hora de las reivindicaciones no había sonado aún en la evolución de Venezuela y hubo que regresar al antiguo expediente de las represalias a mano armada, a alto precio de sangre,"[2] by a bestial deed of violence the city lost the spiritual regeneration it had experienced and returned to evil ways.

Gallegos, steeped in the scientific philosophy of the late nineteenth century, with its firm belief in the possibility of social progress, does feel that there is something basically good in human nature, and that with the proper encouragement it can be aroused to better itself. The essays and short stories of Gallegos are consequently often peopled with situations and characters which undergo complete changes, generally for the better.

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[1]Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., pp. 16-17.

[2]Alb., No. 2, p. XVIII; Una posición..., pp. 16-17.

The first issue of La Novela Semanal featured Gallegos' story "Los inmigrantes."[1] It has a native, creole background, using the theme of the transformation that Venezuela has worked upon the lives of two immigrants who had come to the tierra brava to start life anew. Abraham, a Lebanese peddler, becomes wealthy and marries a common Venezuelan girl. She turns into a social climber and belittles her hard working husband for his foreign ways. She instills in her children scorn for their father. Finally, wife, son, and daughter desert him. Abraham returns to his native country but comes back home to Venezuela.

Domenico, an Italian fruit peddler, makes his fortune in a pasta factory. Little by little he gives all of it to his Venezuelan son, an easy going young man fond of parties and apparently without any of his father's persevering traits. Domenico becomes a poor man.

One day, the two immigrants meet at a sidewalk bench. They tell each other their stories. Abraham's family had lost their money. His contrite wife had taken him back. They were expecting a visit from their daughter who had eloped and was now married and in good circumstances. She had extended financial aid to her mother. The daughter's husband, a true "criollo," had been a revolutionary, a civil official, and had finally become a wealthy proprietor.

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[1]La Novela Semanal, Tomo 1, Entrega 1 (Sept. 9, 1919), n.p.; CV, pp. 125-144; Rómulo Gallegos, El forastero, seguida de Los inmigrantes, El milagro del año (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 348, 1952), pp. 335-369; OC, pp. 1333-53.

He was the other immigrant's son. "- ¡Ese es mi hijo! Giácoma! ¡Venezolano neto! ¡Un palo de hombre! Como dicen aquí.

"Y musiú Domingo se enternecía hasta las lágrimas el hablar del hijo.

"Ya oscurecía cuando abandonaron el banco del paseo. Estaban viejos, se arrastraban penosamente por los caminos de la tierra, de aquella tierra que había sido dura y cruel con ellos, pero allá en el corazón del país, sangre de su sangre corría, transformada, pero vigorosa y fecunda por los cauces infinitos de la vida."[1]

"Los inmigrantes" is in keeping with the general purpose of the author's definite ideas on immigration outlined in his essay "Necesidad de valores culturales." During the administration of Gómez there were occasional endeavors made for the introduction of immigrants to form colonies on national lands, but as Gallegos states, little was achieved due to the fact that "necesitamos población, pero no somos exactos al expresarlo diciendo que nos hacen falta brazos, porque el inmigrante sólo es bueno cuando es portador de alguna cultura..."[2] The immigrants in his story had brought with them their good, industrious habits. Through their offsprings Gallegos shows the struggle between "civilization" and "barbarism." Finally, the former prevails as shown by their

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[1]La Novela Semanal, Entrega 1, n.p.; CV, p. 144; Rómulo Gallegos, El forastero, seguida de Los inmigrantes, El milagro del año (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 348, 1952), pp. 335-369; OC, p. 1352-53.

[2]CI, No. 496, p. 438; Una posición..., pp. 91-92.

regeneration.

In the aforementioned essays, Gallegos remarks that "progress begins when man takes roots." Abraham and Domenico had uprooted themselves from their own lands and grown roots in Venezuela. They had failed apparently only in the eyes of their offsprings who had been successful. In these "civilized" Venezuelans, Gallegos sees the hope of his country. The theme appears again in La rebelión [1] used as the title story for the collection published in 1946. It was begun as a novel.

Juan Lorenzo sees his own father killed in the presence of his mother, Efigenia. His father was a zambo who had eloped and married Efigenia, who had been reared by her aunts, the gentil Cedeño sisters. Upon the death of her husband, for whom she felt little but indifference because of his brutality, she takes Juan and returns home to her aunts, the Cedeños. Financial difficulties have struck the family and Juan is sent into the streets to peddle cheese. Juan and Maneto, the washerwoman's son, become the gang leaders of the street urchins. There are gang fights between Juan's group and the boys of wealthy families in the Capitolio district. The gang from the Capitolio area win him over to their side. Although he longs for his old friend, he enters a new type of

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[1] La rebelión..., pp. 9-42; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de la rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), pp. 443-489; OC, pp. 1301-32; see also, Carlos Dorante, Los mejores cuentos venezolanos (Caracas: Primer Festival del libro popular Venezolano, biblioteca básica de cultura Venezolana, 1959), pp. 31-56, hereafter cited as Dorante.

society. One night as he leaves a dance, he is met by Maneto, who insults him, his family, and his mother. He knocks Maneto to the ground and throws terror into the hearts of Maneto's followers. "Y fue así como Juan Lorenzo Figuera, el hijo de Mano Carlos que era un hombre de la plebe, rompiendo con el Maneto, se rebeló contra su casta."[1]

Contrary to the fears of Juan's mother that he would follow the steps of his father, Juan takes a stand for something better; he undergoes that sudden regeneration in character which we have already pointed out. As in the essay, "Necesidad de valores culturales," it again is an incident that shows Gallegos' faith in the possibilities of human nature. It echoes the thought in his essay that barbarism also means youth, strength, promise and hope. This positive position is maintained by Gallegos in his future and more famous works of fiction, the novels.

"La rebelión" gives the impression that there is something more to be said, that the subject matter is better fitted for a more detailed development. It is still a novel in embryo, as Gallegos left it. With this work, Gallegos closes his career as a short story writer.

Before drawing any further conclusions as to the importance of these stories in the development of Gallegos as a writer of fiction, we shall examine the earliest critical mention relative to Gallegos as a short story writer.

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[1] La rebelión..., p. 42; Rómulo Gallegos, Canaima, seguida de La rebelión y El piano viejo (Madrid: Aguilar, Colección Crisol, núm. 340, 1952), p. 489; OC, p. 1332; Dorante, p. 56.

CHAPTER X

CRITICAL APPRAISALS OF GALLEGOS' EARLY WORKS

Alejandro Fernández García, writing for El Cojo Ilustrado in an article entitled "El año literario,"[1] mentions Gallegos among the more promising new short story writers of Venezuela. In his remarks on the short story he says: "Una de las formas literarias que ha tenido entre nuestros escritores mayor auge, ha sido la forma breve del cuento. El cuento por su brevedad y concisión, se ha prestado más que ninguna otra forma de arte para que se hagan en él los ensayos en que después, en obras más amplias, se expresen nuestra psicología y nuestra naturaleza."[2]

Fernández García then mentions the names of a new group of writers who in their works concern themselves with national life. Gallegos' name is among them.[3] "A los que en esta breve forma del cuento pusieron los primeros la sal y la miel de la vida nacional, como Díaz Rodríquez, Urbaneja Achelpohl, Cabrera Malo, Santiago Key Ayala, Blanco Fombona, Pedro Emilio Coll, Juan José Churión, Juan

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[1]El Cojo Ilustrado, Año XXI, No. 481, (Jan. 1, 1912), pp. 36-38, hereafter cited as CI.

[2]CI, No. 481, p. 36.

[3]Other short story writers mentioned by García are: Carlos Paz García, Juan Santaella, Julio H. Rosales, Leoncio Martínez, Rafael Benavides Ponce, Luis Yepez and Ricardo José Castillo.

Tinoco, Fernández García y otros, se ha agregado una falange nueva, vigorosa y entusiasta que ha hecho en el año que finaliza una obra a la vez delicada y robusta."[1]

The decade between 1910 and 1920 saw this plethora of younger writers of first magnitude, often grouped under the rubric of the Generación de La Alborada. They became numerous and their rank expanded. Some were socially oriented, others deeply religious and patriotic; but, in general, perplexity, certainty, anguish, and a deep sincerity are the distinguishing marks of their work. These were modern writers; some used the resources of folklore as their raw material, others used as their themes several different national matters: the Indian, the alcoholic, the politician, rural life, and many others. A marked and uniform tendency towards melancholic realism is to be noted in the works of these writers. They show a trace of bitter melancholy, revealing the sick state of social conditions prevalent in their country. The peculiarities to be observed in the stories of these new story writers are precision and flexibility of subject matter, their doleful themes, their sketches of the untamed countryside, and the lively and artful naturalness of their fast-moving, colorful and musical sentences. These are the traits which these writers contributed as peculiar characteristics, giving new merit to the Venezuelan short story.

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[1]CI, No. 481, p. 36.

García concludes his article stating that "en el cuento, pues, que con mayor ahinco y más prolijamente hemos trabajado, hemos alcanzado un triunfo, porque en cada uno de ellos, entre el oro de la prosa se hospeda un pedazo vivo y palpitante del alma de la patria."[1]

While the aforementioned article lists Gallegos among other Venezuelan short story writers of that time, this next article by the critic, published simultaneously with Gallegos' stories, is confined strictly to the author's work. It was published in the study of Los aventureros, the first group of his short stories.

The following passages from García's article indicate his close analysis of Gallegos' first literary collection.

> En los siete cuentos que componen este volumen Rómulo Gallegos aparece como un narrador hábil, fuerte y original, cuyo ser literario se encuentra ya casi definitivamente formado. A poco que se esfuerce en corregir algunos defectos de visión y en acrisolar y acendrar el estilo, podremos contar con un cuentista cabal, tal vez un excelente novelista, pues en estos relatos que hoy publica, muestra, por más de un aspecto, tendencias hacia la novela de largo aliento antes que hacia el cuento breve y sucinto.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Su manera literaria lo inclina más bien a interpretar la naturaleza por medio de líneas y colores, y mezcla éstos sin atenuaciones, tal como los ven sus ojos de artista. Acaso el tiempo logrará corregir la intemperancia con que prodiga las tintas crudas, las cuales, sin restar en realidad mérito a sus composiciones, producen cierta desazón y cansancio a la postre. Verdad también que los asuntos mismos que elige para sus cuentos implican y le imponen esa áspera manera de ejecución.

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[1]CI, No. 481, p. 36.

> Su estilo, de ritmo amplio, carece de sutileza recóndita, de músicas refinadas; pero posee en cambio un colorido enérgico, que se adapta muy bien a la índole misma del relato. A veces se diluye en pormenores que vuelven a recordarnos el naturalismo francés zolesco en sus días de lucha. Pero por lo común es preciso y claro. Acaso lo que principalmente le falte es concisión. Ella llegará sin duda cuando el autor se desentienda de vanos epítetos e incidentes secundarios, y nos ofrezca la belleza que concibe en toda la gloria de la desnudez. El brillante porvenir literario de Rómulo Gallegos está afirmado enérgicamente en este libro.[1]

In his review, the critic made several remarks that seem to be significantly important: he believes that Gallegos, in spite of some stylistic shortcomings, has already developed into a skillful and original story-teller but that his field appears to be more in the novel than in the short story; and that he has a brilliant literary future ahead of him. Although he based his conclusions on these seven stories, García was amazingly accurate in regard to Gallegos' possibilities.

The short stories in the development of Gallegos, the novelist, are of paramount importance. Through them, Gallegos feels his way, finding his proper medium of expression. One sees some of the formative influence at work on his creative mind, and the growth of certain ideas and techniques that he will use in the novels. Even though Gallegos did write some outstanding short stories, the short story as a genre was only a starting point for him.

In support of the social framework of the principal characteristics

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[1]CI, No. 509, p. 146.

of two of the stories in the collection Los aventureros, the critic Hugh D. Barbagelata observed:

> Allá para el 1913, cuando formábamos parte de la dirección de "La Revista de América," nos sorprendió gratamente la lectura de un libro de cuentos, de autor para nosotros desconocido y que tenía por título el muy sugerente de Los aventureros. El hecho de no traer dedicatoria no nos impidió recorrer el pequeño volumen con atención y formar juicio favorable sobre Rómulo Gallegos (1884) que no había llegado aun a la treintena de su edad y que, después tras siete años de silencio, se transformó en el prestigioso novelista de El último Solar (1920), de La Trepadora (1925), de Doña Bárbara (1929), de Cantaclaro (1934), de Canaima (1935), y de Pobre Negro (1937).
>
> Los cuentos de Los aventureros, correctamente escritos, encierran un conjunto de cuadros de costumbres muy en boga entonces en Venezuela. En aquellos ya despuntaba el novelista que no se concretaría a pintar una sóla región de su país. La primera de sus narraciones, la que da nombre al libro, se desarrolla en la sierra; otra de ellas, El apoyo, tiene por escenario el llano y es de fondo religioso; la que se dedica a la ciudad, de índole psicológica, se intitula La liberación; por último da fin al tomo una hermosa acuarela, de una aldea de pescadores, con sus intrigas, sus accidentes marítimos, sus perspectivas de luces y de sombras.
>
> El camino estaba, pues para ensayarse con una primera novela. Fue esta El último Solar con el genuino tipo de Reinaldo cuya aparición el competente crítico Jesús Semprúm celebrara con las siguientes frases alentadoras: 'En El último Solar -juzgo- encuéntrase el ambiente venezolano tal como lo hemos respirado desde la niñez. Más que los personajes mismos, es el ambiente el que nos da la impresión de exactitud. La atmósfera del libro es familiar para nosotros, y esto es ya un mérito de primer orden. El plan de la obra - concluye- se presta para producir tal impresión, pero es acaso demasiado vasto porque intenta abarcar en su ámbito muchos factores sociales.' Lo cierto es que desde el principio de su carrera, Gallegos preparaba los granded lienzos sobre los cuales pensaba provectar los vastos cuadros tomados

> en los diversos aspectos geográficos y sociales de la variada tierra venezolana.[1]

More than one critic has pointed out this important fact. Rafael Angarita Arvelo arrives at the same conclusion. "Por el camino del cuento ha llegado Rómulo Gallegos a la novela venezolana. En nuestra historia literaria el lapso del 1915 al 1920 es el de la multiplicación del cuento.... La revista Actualidades, en cada uno de sus numeros hebdomadarios, sirvió durante algún tiempo un cuento de Gallegos, inédito o tomado del volumen Los aventureros, publicado antes por el autor."[2]

In his prologue to the Novelas Escogidas, the Spaniard Federico Carlos Sáinz De Robles made note of the fact that the author first published in El Cojo Ilustrado the majority of the stories in this collection. In referring to Gallegos he says:

> que publicaba cuentos en una revista de título sumamente curioso: El Cop [sic] Ilustrado; que hacía política con moderación y con moderadas tendencias; que- desterrado voluntariamente- vivió en Madrid entre 1932 y 1936, escribiendo aquí Cantaclaro y Canaima.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Cuando Rómulo Gallegos publicó su primera novela, Reinaldo Solar- que primitivamente llevó el título de El último Solar-, no era un escritor desconocido en su patria. Antes había escrito y publicado Los aventureros

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[1]Hugo D. Barbagelata, La novela en hispanoamérica (Montevideo: 1947), p. 199.

[2]Rafael Angarita Arvelo, Historia y crítica de la novela en Venezuela (Berlín: Imprenta de August Pries, Leipzig, 1938), p. 115.

(cuentos) y El milagro del año (drama).

El drama no ha llegado a mis manos; pero Los aventureros, sí. Se trata, casi, de una rareza bibliográfica: un volumen que comprende siete, cuentos: Los aventureros, El apoyo, La liberación. Sol de antaño, Estrellas sobre el barranco, Las novias del mendigo y El milagro del año (que posiblemente es pariente muy próximo del drama anunciado entre sus obras en las contraportadas de éstas).

Los cuentos primeros de Rómulo Gallegos resultan sumamente interesantes por varias causas: determinan ya el criollismo fervoroso que moverá su maestría narrativa; delatan su poderoso don de síntesis, su sensibilidad exquisita de captador de paisajes y de ambientes; afirman la naturalidad y la eficacia con que sabe sacar los efectos más decisivos a la plasticidad del lenguaje; prueban inapelablemente su sagacidad para explicar los movimientos espirituales de las criaturas de su ficción.[1]

Sáinz De Robles continues his prologue, comparing the technique of Gallegos as a short story writer to the mastery of the Spanish Goya as a painter. "Nadie negará a Rómulo Gallegos la maestría para el dificilísimo género del cuento. Sabe llevar a la síntesis, absolutamente lograda, todos los valores narrativos con esa gracia de las cosas vistas con los prismáticos del revés. Sin embargo, es en los grandes cuadros, en las inmensas bóvedas y en los inacabables testeros donde, como Miguel Angel o nuestro Goya, Rómulo Gallegos logra dar la exacta medida de su talla."[2]

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[1]Rómulo Gallegos, Novelas escogidas (Madrid: Aguilar, 1953), prólogo de Federico Carlos Sáinz De Robles, pp. XVI-XVIII, hereafter cited as Sáinz de Robles.

[2]Sáinz De Robles, p. XX.

In Los aventureros, Gallegos states a national problem and suggests a solution - a typical solution based upon his profound faith in the efficacy of education. His interest here, as most always, is not in the mere portrayal of customs, but rather, ulititarian, humanitarian, and practical. Therefore, his method is not pictorial, but analytical. His realistic description contrasts markedly with the over-idealization of several of his other story types, the cruelty in regard to the super-human abilities of the revolutionist type, and his uncritical historical recounting of this type which he knew well at first hand.

In his brief mention of three of Gallegos' novels, José Sanz y Díaz commented that the author is "el mejor cuentista y novelista contemporáneo de Venezuela, autor de libros tan leídos como Los aventureros. El milagro del ano, Reinaldo Solar, Canaima, Pobre Negro, novelas de las que han agotado varias ediciones.

. . . . . .

"Gallegos, excelente narrador, esmalta su prosa de pintorescos criollismos venezolanos, arcaismos campesinos y vocablos de los llaneros que aún le dan mayor interés a sus relatos."[1]

As an essayist, Gallegos stirred up heated controversy, and wrote a type of fiction abstracted from time and space. They bear great theme resemblance to his short stories but almost totally free of the usual mechanics of fictions such as physical description of characters,

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[1]José Sanz Y Díaz, Narradores hispano americanos (Barcelona: 1942), p. 201.

background, or setting. The realism of his stories stems from the supreme awareness that his themes have of national anguish in his essays. For this reason, Alicia Nadal proves that his essays in dialogue form and his short story characters are both personified concepts.

> El empezó a comprenderla así ya en sus cuentos breves y firmes ensayos en los que la tierra venezolana y el joven escritor trabaron por vez primera amistad.
>
> Rómulo Gallegos está tan convencido de la sugestión de la tierra venezolana, que en el cuento "Los inmigrantes" hace regresar a ella a Abraham, el turco, que - herido en su dignidad por su mujer y sus hijos - creyó poder repatriarse definitivamente. Y Abraham confiesa a Domingo, el calabrés: "He vuelto. Qué sé yo lo que tiene esta tierra: pero la cosa es que trata mal y, sin embargo agarra."
>
> "Y, sin embargo, agarra." ¡Sí! ¡lo sabrá Rómulo Gallegos! El, que la ama a pesar de haberla visto tan trágica como en "Marina", tan desolada como en "Pegujal." No teme describir el sufrimiento ni intenta imaginarse alegría donde halla angustia. No es de los que separan la mirada del lugar del duelo para volverla hacia el lugar de la fiesta. Su obra tiene un mérito que el engañarse a sí mismo no le hubiera permitido adquirir: el profundo realismo que la caracteriza. Es humana, auténticamente humana, sobre todo en el concepto de los que conocen la vida del interior de los países sudamericanos. Gallegos no borra de su obra el sufrimiento, que "acelera y agundiza la vida espiritual."
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> De su amor a la tierra tenemos otra prueba en "Los Mengánez." Una pequeña prueba, disimulada en la acción del relato. Don Alberto, el marido de doña Suncha, la del "claro chorro de sangre azul", adquiere un día para su esposa, la casa que había pertenecido a un marqués. Amén de otras reformas efectuadas en la propiedad, la tierra para el jardín es recubierta por mosaicos. Y pareciera que el cuentista lamentara la prisión hasta de ese pequeño rectángulo de tierra.
>
> En "La Ciudad Muerta," como quizá en ningun otro cuento, se manifiesta su tendencia a personificar la tierra, a darle características humanas de sensiblidad. Y es en la siguiente frase: "el agua dorada del crepúsculo resbalaba suavemente ante sus ojos, como una lenta

> sangría que vaciase el herido corazón de la tierra."
>
> Luego "Pataruco": la historia de Pedro Carlos, el hijo del arpista aborigen que amenizaba con sus "joropos" las veladas de Mariches; del muchacho que tras haber estudiado música en Europa para no llegar a ser arpista como el padre, solo logró crear un "conglomerado de reminiscencias de los grandes maestros, mezcladas y fundidas con extravagancias de pésimo gusto que, pretendiendo dar la nota típica del colorido local, sólo daban la impresión de una mascarada de negros disfrazados de príncipes blondos."
>
> Y Pedro Carlos dejó de componer. Hasta que una noche, frente a la naturaleza, frente a los bailadores, punteó, como otrora su padre, el arpa. "Y reconoció en la rara música, nunca oída" - música que le venía de la sangre y del paisaje - "el aire de la tierra y la voz del alma propias."[1]

In his foreword to the Antología del cuento moderno venezolano, Arturo Uslar Pietri, in the "esquema de la evolución del cuento venezolano," commented in the same vein: "En los alrededores de 1910, ... surge Rómulo Gallegos con su inmenso aliento creador y su laboriosa virtud de buen artesano. Sus cuentos son apenas un episodio o un ensayo de herramientas de novelista nato. ...la penetración que lucirán en sus mayores obras están enteras en algunos de sus cuentos, como en esa estampa limpia y justa de la vida de barrio que es 'La rebelión.'"[2]

Modernism had reached its flowering in 1910. Gallegos

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[1]Alicia Nadal, "Rómulo Gallegos cuentista y el poema de la Tierra," Histonium, No. 134, (July 1950), pp. 53-54.

[2]Arturo Uslar Pietri, Antología del cuento moderno venezolano (Caracas: Escuela Técnica Industrial, Taller de Artes Gráficas, 1940), Tomo 1, (1895-1935), p. 10.

was among its exponents not only in Venezuela but also in Spanish America. His glittering modernist style, however, found itself in difficulties when it sought to tell a story, because of the essential conflict between the carefully turned phrase and the necessity of presenting the realistic development of an action. The balance between the two is not easily maintained in his short stories and when he devotes his efforts to one he generally neglects the other. Frequently he wrote short stories with high lyric tension and later embodied and employed them in his novels. However, Gallegos as the realistic and naturalistic storyteller and also as the folklorist was sensitive to the art of prose. His short stories must not be classified in his period as only modernistic, when the storyteller's inner self is supreme, or realistic, when the outer world is foremost in importance to him. On the one hand, his short stories are given to regional customs and landscape and indulge in criollismo, and on the other hand, many are attached to earthy, everyday reality often turned to abnormal themes and, in this direction, enter a rare area of fanatic fiction, and decadence. Gallegos, although nurtured on the aristocratic ideals of modernism, chose to place his art at the service of many themes typical of criollismo.

Jesús Semprúm, the Venezuelan critic who, like Gallegos, dedeveloped his style in the pages of El Cojo Ilustrado, wrote:

> Rómulo Gallegos es cuentista y novelista. Nunca ha tenido el afán del estilo pintiparado, hecho digno de nota allí donde impera el culto bizantino del párrafo oratoria y de las frases untadas de miel. Escribe con precisión, claridad y elegancia. En ocasiones cede a

la manía venezolana de la profusión descriptiva, manía tal vez propia de un pueblo que apenas empieza a tomar posesión espiritual de la tierra que habita. Más sus personajes no se le diluyen en el ambiente, no pierden los contornos hasta convertirse en sombras pálidas bajo el bravío paisaje imperioso: quedan en pie ante el lector, complicados, algo enigmáticos, ilógicos y apasionados: vivientes.[1]

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[1]Jesús Semprúm, Crítica literaria (Caracas: 1956), p. 207.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of Rómulo Gallegos' essays and short stories has been undertaken to prove that the ideas appearing in these early narratives are the result or natural outcome of his patriotic zeal. In this light, much has been done based on Gallegos' best known works, the novels, but his early narrative, which leads to the novel, was in need of further examination. Gallegos' early narrative constitutes in his essays the embodiment of his political and social philosophy utilized in most cases in the message of whatever plot there is to be found in the author's short stories.

As mentioned in his essays, considerable inspiration for many of the ideas came from Europe, specifically from France (Gustavo Le Bon, Jules Payot, Jacques Elisée Reclus, Emile Zola, Paul Verlaine, Jean Jacques Rosseau, and Joseph Ernest Renan), from Germany (Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Max Simon Nordau, and Ernst Heinrick Haeckel), from England (Charles Robert Darwin, and George Gordon Byron), from Norway (Henrik Ibsen), from Italy (Cesare Lombroso), and, naturally, also from Spain (Angel Ganivet, and Ramiro de Maeztu).

It is to be noticed that Gallegos' sources were not the great philosophers and writers who originated or propagated the ideas which have so greatly influenced Spanish American thought. For example, Compte, the father of Positivism, is not stressed in his essays. Taine,

the critic responsible for taking into account race, environment, and the immediate social, cultural, and philosophical pressures of an author, is mentioned only in passing. This can be explained if we bear in mind that by temperament the Spanish American writer is concerned with sociological motivations rather than metaphysical ones. He examines the causes from the effects, as observed in the conditions around him. If he offers little solution to the problems which he exposes in his writings, it is due perhaps to the fact that the solutions are out of his reach.

The most striking characteristic of Gallegos' first literary endeavor in the essays was his intent to stimulate political and social reform in his native country of Venezuela. This early narrative which appeared first in the journals El Cojo Ilustrado and La Alborada seemed to fluctuate between the description of customs, the invention of plot, and the creation of characters derived from direct observation and thus was first hand material. Gallegos' attitude was the same as that of the authors who wrote between 1889 and 1940 when Venezuela suffered the cruel blows of rival caudillos and dictatorships. Their literary efforts which also appear in distinguished periodicals such as La Revista and Bohemia, not only contained an intention to effect reform, but showed an equal interest in the traditions, circumstances, types, scenery, and local color of the Venezuelan people. Much of Gallegos' writings of this period, based on the realities of his country, denounced political evils and sought to overthrow dictators and caudillos such as Cipriano Castro

and Juan Vicente Gómez.

Gallegos wrote the popularized sketch of manners and customs which frequently has the structure of the short story. Therefore, an attempt has been made to further distinguish his sketches from his short stories. In the short story the author develops his characters, their surroundings and circumstances with more action and veils the climax to a larger extent than in the sketch. Its appeal as a sketch was assumed to be more artistic and literary. These sketches were more a short prose composition of a highly refined style derived from the school of romanticism and partaking of lyrical, idealistic, and poetical elements in a condition of idealized reality with the glittering style of the modernistic writers. Therefore, in spite of his patriotic zeal, Gallegos could not escape the influence of the literary schools then in vogue. Both his short stories and sketches contain abundant native Venezuelan elements with carefully turned phrases of lyric tension. With little exception, they are read in one sitting.

Gallegos needed a broader literary medium in which to examine the problems of his country and people, and work toward their solutions. The essay, perforce, limited him. At an early date, the short story hardly satisfied him due to its brevity. He needed to develop his characters, to explore deeply into their conflicts, and he needed above all, a scenery where "la ciudad" and "el campo" could play their roles, uncramped by the limitations of genre, type and space. The novel was to cradle all his aspirations. To it he gave his fullest measure as a

patriot and as an artist, to become one of the greatly recognized Spanish American novelist of the twentieth-century.

APPENDIX A

LETTER FROM DR. LOWELL DUNHAM TO RICHARD F. ALLEN

APPENDIX A

January 20, 1960

Mr. Richard F. Allen
Department of Foreign Languages
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

Dear Richard:

Here is a rough draft of the outline I told you about. I could not find the final draft. I doubt it will help you, but it may save you some digging. My reaction to it now is that I should have thrown it into the basket. De todos modos aquí va.

Thanks for the article and bibliographical notes on Eduardo Mallea.

The librarian who helped me so much at the Pan-American Union was Marian Foloreo or Forero (?).

Best regards to la Directora and Mrs. Rand.

Sincerely,

(signed) Lowell

APPENDIX B

UNPUBLISHED ARTICLE WRITTEN BY DR. LOWELL DUNHAM

APPENDIX B

To trace literary influences in the works of a writer is a difficult and risky task. So bold an undertaking is it that I suspect studies would show, as some of our colleagues say, that the majority of such attempts are made at the master's thesis level. A writer like Rómulo Gallegos is a complex personality, the result of a great cultural background which has been enriched by his experiences in the world of action as an editor, school teacher, school administrator, railway station master, bookkeeper, politician, and writer. Aside from the practical experience acquired in life and his own cultural heritage from the Hispanic world the writers and thinkers of three continents have contributed to make him what he is. It must also be mentioned that what Rómulo Gallegos is, thinks, and writes is also the result, in no little part, of what endowment creation was pleased to hand him. When one considers all these complexities from the viewpoint of race, milieu and epoch, or any other critical bases from which you might wish to approach the man, the problem of influence becomes indeed one that would give pause to most outside the academic world. It is with this in mind that I have entitled this paper The Literary Background of Rómulo Gallegos. I shall only prepare the way for those intrepid souls who have been assigned a thesis or dissertation topic in the influence category, for I have failed as yet, in what little work I have done on the man, to rig a graph that would indicate that Tolstoy shows 35 percent, Galdós 36 percent and Zola 10 percent influence.

Gallegos' initiation into the realm of books began seriously about the year 1905, for it was at this time that he met at the University of Caracas two young students who were to become his closest friends, Julio Planchart, the critic and Julio Horacio Rosales, the short story writer and novelist. In Caracas he had also met two other young friends who were to become associated with him, Planchart and Rosales. They were Henrique Soublette, the handsome, brilliant, but erratic young man and Salustio González Riviones. These five friends spent many hours together at the Soublette countryplace or hiking in the valleys of Caracas or on the sides of El Avila. They were five young men dissatisfied with their country and their age and looking for an answer to both. They were like most young people ready to remake the world in their own image, and young enough not to feel that valía la pena de vivir. Soublette was no doubt the most stimulating of the four companions. He was continually reading new books and conjuring up the wildest of schemes, all based on the latest reading and then abandoning each with the same enthusiasm that he started them.

What were these books Gallegos and his friends read and discussed? It is easy to find them mentioned in the pages of his first novel El Ultimo Solar whose title was later changed to Reinaldo Solar for three of Gallegos' four companions appear in the novel as the main characters with Henrique Soublette as Reinaldo Solar, the protagonist and many pages of the work transcribe the youthful sessions as Gallegos later recalled them and worked them into the plot. The authors and the works

mentioned are Tolstoy, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Darwin, Byron, Emerson, Ibsen, Verlaine, Pierre Loti, Max Nordan, Lombroso, Zola, Claude Farrere, Renan, and Haeckel -- The Imitation of Christ, Renan's The Life of Jesus, Haeckel, Riddle of the Universe, Tolstoy's The Kreutzer Sonata, Resurrection, Zola's La terre.

Some forty years later, Gallegos commenting upon this reading wrote:

> We nourished our youth on the marvelous sustenance of good literature.... It was all directed as he said toward the problem of the dolorosa alma venezolana.

In 1909, Gallegos published his first work in the short lived magazine entitled La Alborada. It was a short political essay entitled Hombres y principios. La Alborada was launched by Gallegos, Soublette, Planchart, Rosales, and González Riviones. It was closed by the order of Juan Vicente Gómez, Latin America's most picturesque and at the same time ferocious dictator. Fortunately, Gallegos managed to publish some fifteen essays before Alborada's doors were closed. And in these essays certain names keep reappearing, Jacques Elisée Reclus, Jules Payot, and Gustave Le Bon, all French thinkers of the positivistic school of thought. Gallegos' literary slip is showing as surely as the collegiate poets of the early thirties displayed their rattling the bleached and shiny bones of Elinor Wylie and mostly T. S. Elliot's straw men.

When La Alborada closed, Gallegos began to contribute to El Cojo Ilustrado, one of Latin America's most ambitious and elegant magazines.

In one essay alone published in El Cojo, he mentions these names: Angel Ganivet, Leopoldo Lugones, Ramiro de Maetzu, Sidney Webb, William James, Domingo F. Sarmiento, and by inference, Juan Bautista Alberdi. The list grows and a pattern begins to emerge.

But let us jump now from 1912, from the writer Gallegos as he first gets into print as a social and political essayist, to 1942, to the mature novelist with his three best works, Doña Bárbara, Canta Claro and Canaima now established as classics in Latin-American literature and recognized in international literary circles.

In an interview with our long time Books Abroad friend and contributor Rafael Heliodoro Valle, Gallegos is quoted as follows:

> ¿Cuáles son, para vd. los mejores novelistas, los que le han servido más?
>
> Los rusos. Por supuesto los rusos. Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Andreiev.
>
> ¡Son los maestros que novelistas!
>
> ¿Y los españoles?
>
> ¿Pues quiénes? Veía vd., Pérez Galdós. ¿No le parece? y Baroja y Pérez de Ayala.

With such an imposing and tiresome listing of names, I am beginning to have the uneasy feeling that I shall, in the end, defeat my own purpose and be forced to close the paper with a graph after all.

If, however, we examine the list we find that the literary background of Gallegos falls into three general categories. French and Latin-American positivists such as Payot, Le Bon, Reclus, Sarmiento,

and Alberdi. Writers from the generation of '98 of Peninsular Spain, Ganivet, Maetzu, Baroja, and Pérez de Ayala, and third, novelists with a definite social reform content such as Galdós, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Zola, and without any effort to force my point on the classification I am not forgetting the fringe benefits of Darwin, Haeckel, Nietzsche, and the others.

There was a definite reason why the writers whose names and works appear most often in Gallegos' works were his favorite literary authors. They were writers who gave him an answer to the problems inherent in a wretched, backward, chaotic social and political condition that existed in his country and still exists in a great segment of the population today. They were the men who influenced him in his way of thinking and developed in him a devotion to his people rarely found in men of his country. For as he stated in an interview for the press during his residence in Norman, all of his novels must grow out of a national problem confronting his people and each of his characters arises out of necessity from the same compulsion. Art for the sake of art, story telling for the sake of story telling, fiction for the sake of amusement have no meaning for Gallegos. The art and novel like the life of the novelist has a social responsibility to discharge in the society from which it springs. Hence his literary tastes as we have seen them.

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