

October 25, 1961.

Mr. John P. Harrison
Associate Director
The Humanities
The Rockefeller Foundation
111 West 50th. Street
New York 20, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Harrison:

Here is the report I promised you on our Taller de Escritores.

Thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation's grant awarded to the University of Concepcion to help the financing of the Taller, we have been able to function nine months this year, instead of the four we did in 1960.

Out of 64 applications sent to us, ten writers were selected: novelists Luis Vulliamy, Luis Dominguez, Andres Pizarro, and Guillermo Atias; poets Efrain Barquero and Edmundo Herrera; playwrights Raul Ruiz and Juan Guzman; and essayists Pedro Lastra and Jaime Valdivieso. The University of Concepcion provided one more fellowship to Mrs. Veronica Cereceda, who, then, took part in the Taller as a visiting member.

Weekly meetings are being held at the University of Concepcion. In these meetings manuscripts are read and discussed by members of the Taller, their advisers - Sergio Vodanovic, Braulio Arenas, Hernan del Solar, Gonzalo Rojas and Juan Loveluck - and occasional guests.

In addition to these meetings, the Taller has held public sessions in Chillan, Santiago and Valparaiso. The meeting in Chillan was of particular interest since it took the form of a dialogue between writers and public. In Santiago we had the opportunity to do a Television show on the University of Chile Educational Channel. On this occasion a short play by Raul Ruiz was performed and discussed by members of the Taller.

Regarding the work of each one of the becarios, I should like to report the following:

LUIS VULLIAMY is writing what I would call a Chilean contribution to the Latin American indianist novel. As other novelists have already done - Icaza, Alegria, Fuentes, Asturias, etc. - Vulliamy makes a symbol out of a small indian village which disintegrates under the impact of modern, ruthless, industrialist civilization. Juan del Agua, the main character, and his descendents, are primitive people struggling to survive in a world which is no longer their own. Vulliamy is a powerful realistic novelist.

ANDRES PIZARRO, as a writer stands at the opposite end of Vulliamy. Pizarro writes in the first person and his monologue is the confession of an adolescent who sees the world growing around him as a trap, and as a complex of personal relations he does not fully understand, but in which he finds a secret significance. He reacts with an angry sense of justice and truth that reminds me of Salinger, Mailer and Kerouac. He has

imagination and a great power of synthesis. His style is highly personal in a dynamic way. In my opinion he is the most promising young novelist we have had in the Taller.

GUILLERMO ATIAS, the oldest writer in the group, is working on a novel about the so-called Generacion del Cuarenta. Atias is interested in the psychological content of common day routines. He analyzes meticulously. His characters are melancholy people, always on the verge of individual destruction.

LUIS DOMINGUEZ, is a short story writer, very young, looking for the essential truth through the eyes of children. He has already finished a book of short-stories and is in the process of revising it.

EFRAIN BARQUERO, is without any doubt writing some of the best poetry in Chile today. A true primitive, he works with myths which he doesn't seem to recognize and which come out of his hands as hallucinating human beings. His poem "El regreso" tells about the transfiguration involved in the father and son relationship. His characters are of the most pure Chilean extraction. Although his language is typical, his images are universal.

EDMUNDO HERRERA, is a pantheist who writes about southern Chile, its forests, lakes, mountains, and lonely settlers.

RAUL RUIZ, is an amazing young playwright. He has an incredible facility to develop plots out of short, clear cut aphorisms. After seeing one of his plays I thought he was imitating Ionesco or Becket. I found out afterwards he had never read either one of them... I believe Ruiz should be given an opportunity to study theatre in the United States. What he can do with the few elements he has on hand is remarkable.

JUAN GUZMAN writes a play about young hoodlums who make their living by smuggling merchandise through Arica. Their world swirls around a Wuritzer phonorola. Guzman has great ear for Chilean slang and a sharp, ironical humor.

PEDRO LASTRA prepares a monograph about the short-story as a genre in Hispanic American letters.

JAIME VALDIVIESO writes an essay on Carlos Sepulveda Leyton, a Chilean novelist of the thirties who has been neglected by professional critics.

VERONICA CERECEDA is working on a drama about social conditions in the coal mines of Lota.

In regard to my participation in this Taller, I should like to report that I spent June, July, and August in Concepcion, and have kept in permanent contact with Advisers and writers. I shall be back in Concepcion in January for the closing of this Taller and for a Summer Session cycle of round-table discussions.

My plans for working part-time in California and spending several months in

Chile did not work out due to the opposition of my Chairman, Mr. Torres-Rioseco, who expressed his views to all concerned in a negative report. Therefore, I will have to limit myself to work in the Taller during the months of June, July, August and two weeks of September every year, hoping that at a later date I may have the opportunity to divide my time in the way originally planned.

Rector Stitchkin has promised me that the Taller will continue next year. Our hope is that the Rockefeller Foundation may help us again with another grant. It seems to me that this year we have proved that the Taller can be directed jointly by two or three individuals permanently stationed in Chile and whose work I constantly supervise. In this team, as you know, Sergio Vodanovic holds the position of Sub-Director. We intend to send the Rockefeller Foundation a memoir of the 1961 Taller with an account of all the work completed during the year. A special issue of ATENEA will publish a selection of the writing done by the becarios. On the basis of this record we sincerely hope the Rockefeller Foundation will see fit to continue its generous help to our Taller.

Cordially yours,

Fernando Alegria.

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