Ignacio Aldecoa's View of Reality.

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IGNACIO ALDECOA'S VIEW OF REALITY

A Dissertation

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in

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by

Cheryl Whitworth Slater
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1968
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .................................................. 1

Chapter

I. ALDECOA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE ....................... 5
II. TYPES OF CHARACTERS ..................................... 9
III. THEMES IN THE NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES .............. 27
IV. REINFORCEMENT OF REALITY THROUGH NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES ........... 76

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .................................... 95

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ALDECOA'S WORKS ......................... 97

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ......................................... 99

VITA ........................................................... 103
The purpose of the dissertation is to study and define Ignacio Aldecoa's view of reality. Aldecoa, belonging to the group of Spanish realistically-oriented authors who began publishing around 1954, perceives reality on the basis of his personal attitude toward life. Three precepts make up his attitude or philosophy: 1) fear of death as an end of accomplishment, 2) desire to achieve positive actions in his lifetime, and 3) refusal to accept fatality or resignation.

His view of reality is discussed from three standpoints including the types of characters portrayed, the themes reflecting his attitude toward reality, and some narrative techniques which reinforce the reality he sees.

There are two general classifications of the author's characters: those who are employed and those who are not. Characters who work are classified according to the type of employment they have. There are four sub-groups of people without employment: 1) vagabonds who avoid work; 2) children; 3) lovers and sweethearts; and 4) elderly people. Aldecoa has a dual attitude toward his characters. To those who live in misery (who embody the themes of Chapter Three) he shows tenderness and compassion. He ridicules humorously the people who could lead satisfying lives but do not, and likewise he satirizes people whose actions are injurious to others.

Chapter Three considers the themes which define Aldecoa's reality. They are the following:
1. Death, often coming senselessly and without purpose, is frustrating because of the lack of personal accomplishments.

2. Monotony, boredom, and desperation are characteristics of the lives which many people lead due to the absence of personal satisfaction with one's life.

3. The novelist detects a sense of loneliness and lack of communication among the people he sees.

4. The characters are usually resigned to their lives. They make no attempt to escape their fate.

The majority of his characters are an embodiment of the above themes. In all of his fiction he shows only two people who have consciously decided how they will live their lives. They personify the author's theory that to be content, each person must develop a personal philosophy. The two characters are Cabeda and Roque in Con el viento solano.

The final chapter discusses techniques used by the author to reinforce his view of reality such as the repetition of words and phrases which stress the themes of Chapter Three, an emphasis upon weather conditions which add to the misery of the people, and the use of comparisons between human beings and animals.
INTRODUCTION

Ignacio Aldecoa's view of reality as expressed in his prose fiction is the subject of this dissertation. Aldecoa, one of Spain's outstanding novelists and cuentistas of the last two decades, was born in Vitoria on July 24, 1925. He studied Philosophy and Letters at the University of Madrid. His first literary endeavor was in the field of poetry. Soon he began to cultivate the novel and short story. In these two fields he was awarded such literary prizes as the Premio Juventud in 1953 for the short story "Seguir de pobres," and in 1957 the novel Gran Sol earned the Premio Nacional de la Crítica. Our novelist was a prolific writer. His bibliography includes four novels, nine collections of short stories (many of the stories were published separately in Spanish periodicals), two volumes of poetry, and two travel books. He died in Madrid on November 15, 1969.

The writer of this dissertation chose to study Aldecoa's prose fiction for two main reasons. Firstly, his works merit a detailed study. Because of them he is one of the more important members of his literary generation; he has even been called its leader, which indicates that his works are highly regarded. Secondly, too little detailed study has been done about his literary production which may partly be due to the lack of perspective to judge until now (he died in 1969). The bibliography of the dissertation will demonstrate this scarcity. It is evident that the author's novels and short stories need to be studied in depth because they are fundamental in the field of post—Civil War Spanish literature.
What does Aldecoa's "view of reality" signify? To understand the term properly it is necessary to see him in the place he holds in the post-Civil War Spanish novel.

Spanish literary critics are fond of dividing authors into "generaciones" or "promociones," which may or may not have common aesthetic values. The first group of writers who began publishing after the Civil War had nothing much in common aesthetically speaking.¹ Camilo José Cela (b. 1916), Carmen Laforet (b. 1917), Miguel Delibes (b. 1920), and José María Gironella (b. 1917) are examples. There is no bond to link them such as we find with the members of the "Generación de '98." Cela's novels develop tremendista episodes and language. Andrea in Nada experiences the mental and spiritual vacuum that characterized many young people after the chaotic Civil War. The tone of Delibes' works varies, from the bitterness of La sombra del ciprés es alargada to his air of optimism in the later works (El camino and the Diarios).² Gironella's novels are political and social in tone, concerning events taking place before the outbreak of the Civil War. Note that these writers were born within five years of each other, from Cela in 1916 to Laforet in 1921.

Our author belongs to the group of writers who began publishing their works around 1954 and 1955. Besides Aldecoa, the other members of the group are Juan Goytisolo (b. 1931), Jesús Fernández Santos (b. 1926), Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio (b. 1927), and Ana María Matute (b. 1926). Again, the birthdates of these novelists are significant.

The second group of writers has more in common than the relative closeness of their ages. They are linked, in the first place, by their orientation towards reality. Their novels become documentaries:

Se trata de un nuevo costumbrismo, que refleja una verdad más científica al haber abandonado los trazos pintorescos o las intenciones satíricas. La escuela ha aspirado nada menos que a aislar la vida de un pueblo o de una ciudad y transcribirla mecánicamente en algo que sigue siendo una obra de arte.  

Although the orientation is realistic, each author tends to interpret reality according to his own temperament:

Los novelistas de esta generación, aceptando la existencia humana, el fluir de la vida como materia novelable por excelencia, introdujeron ... una rectificación sensible en la visión de la misma ...; los nuevos novelistas encuentran en la existencia humana, conviviendo con las zonas sombrías y amargas, otras iluminadas por la luz de la ternura que brota principalmente en el corazón de las gentes humildes.  

Secondly, the preoccupation for Spain felt by authors of this generation makes them aware of Spanish social problems. As a result they will reflect in their novels a deep social concern. "La finalidad de la obra de arte es: el testimonio, con sus derivaciones, el alegato, la denuncia, la acusación."  

A third characteristic is the fact that the novelists accept the idea that conditions can be changed, that there is hope that the reality they describe can be transformed into a better one:


Su descripción del mundo, de la sociedad española actual, está hecha en función de la no aceptación, del rechazo absoluto de una realidad social determinada, por una parte, y de su esperanza de cambio, de transformación de esa realidad social, por otra.\(^6\)

The three characteristics given above show what Aldecoa's generation has in common. However, these bonds do not negate the individuality of each author and his works.

El novelista elige, en virtud de ciertos principios morales, una materia determinada; actúa como testigo de unos hechos cuya significación debe marchar de acuerdo con dichos principios, y, al mismo tiempo, tiene que mantener su personalidad apartada de los hechos y limitarse a su mera consignación objetiva.\(^7\)

Each author is concerned with social problems. Each author will see people and events in different ways because of his personal values and principles. This individual way of perceiving reality is what will be called "view of reality." It must be understood that the men and women of Aldecoa's generation do not transform what they see. Because they are unique beings, they perceive the same reality in their individual ways.

The purpose of this dissertation is to study and define Aldecoa's view of reality as he expresses it in his novels and short stories. The study will be centered on three standpoints: a) the types of characters he portrays in his prose fiction; b) the themes which reflect his attitude toward reality; and c) some narrative techniques to reinforce his view of reality.

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\(^7\)Torrente Ballester, *op. cit.*, p. 526.
CHAPTER I

ALDECOA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE

It was stated in the Introduction that each writer of the author's generation chooses from reality those elements which are in accord with his own individual temperament and set of values. In order to understand why Aldecoa selects the elements he does, one must understand his attitude toward life.

His attitude or philosophy is based upon three basic precepts. Awareness of death is the first precept. His attitude toward death may be deduced from the following reference taken from an interview with him. "Le volví a preguntar [a Aldecoa] y entonces me respondió que tenía miedo. ¿Miedo de qué? De la muerte me dijo."\(^1\) Death to Aldecoa signifies the end of all possibilities to accomplish concrete actions in life.

This fear of death as an end of achievement introduces the second aspect of the author's philosophy. He was driven by the desire to accomplish something positive and concrete during his life. "Aldecoa tiene un plan para una vida entera ... ."\(^2\) The plan for his life explains why he is constantly outlining series of novels such as the

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\(^1\) Jesús Fernández Santos, "Ignacio y yo," Insula, No. 280 (March, 1970), p. 11.

trilogies about the lives of fishermen or the iron-mining industry. In other words Aldecoa sets a goal for himself: "... Mi propósito es desarrollar novelísticamente ... la épica de los grandes oficios ... ."³

He must have a goal to accomplish; it becomes his raison d'être:

Estamos aquí para realizar una obra exigida por nuestros más profundas creencias y experiencias. El hecho de que no podamos llegar a realizarla, no impide que la veamos desde lejos. Por eso la programación de mi obra novelística es para mí una cuestión de ética profesional, o mejor vocacional. Digo, esto quiero hacer, esto necesito hacer. Y en lo que dependa de mí, lo haré ... .⁴

Our author is a person who must constantly be "en projet." He cannot depend on what he has already done: he needs to be creating something new.

The third facet of his philosophy is his refusal to accept the idea of fatality. He recognizes that "la fatalidad gravita sobre el hombre y el hombre es libre para aceptarla o no aceptarla ... ."⁵ He would not let fate rule his life; he did not resign himself to whatever came his way. He worked to achieve a goal, not allowing himself to rest on his previous accomplishments.

The three aspects of Aldecoa's philosophy had a direct bearing on the themes found in his art. "Es claro que mis libros responden a mi concepción de la vida y de la muerte ... ."⁶ His philosophy caused him to choose certain elements from reality which he feels characterize the

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³Juan Luis Alborg, op. cit., p. 278.
⁴Ibid., pp. 275-276.
⁶Ibid.
lives of the people he saw. These elements are death, monotony and boredom, loneliness, and resignation.

Death represents personally to the novelist the end of his attempts at accomplishment. The place which death holds in his view of reality is that of pointing out the lack of achievement or even attempts at achievement on the part of his characters.

Life is not monotonous to the author because he has a sense of purpose. The people he sees around him lead monotonous lives because they often lack a goal.

Aldecoa does not experience loneliness because he is deeply involved in the lives of the Spanish people. The characters he portrays from reality are lonely because too often they do not look beyond their personal miseries to see that this same misery links them with each other and binds them together.

He chose not to resign himself to whatever might come his way, yet as he views reality he sees too much resignation on the part of the Spanish people. Therefore the characters in his fiction usually have, to a greater or lesser degree, a spirit of resignation.

From the preceding four paragraphs it is evident that the author did not usually choose to take from reality characters who had a philosophy similar to his. Undoubtedly persons with an individual philosophy do exist. What he did select to show were the people who are the antithesis of his beliefs. It must be stated here that he did not transform these people; he portrayed them as he saw them. They are the people he sees when he observes the reality around him.

It is necessary to mention that of the existing levels and classes of Spanish society, he generally selected those of the lower
socio-economic group to portray in his fiction. His view of reality is focused on the working-class people. He does not deny the existence of other class groups, but he seldom chooses to portray them.

Finally, being a member of the realistically oriented generation of writers, he has to transcribe what he observes. That he is pleased with what he sees is not a corollary to the above statement. He and his contemporaries describe reality with the hope that it can be changed.  

Su descripción del mundo, de la sociedad española actual, está hecha en función de la no aceptación, del rechazo absoluto de una realidad social determinada por una parte, y de su esperanza de cambio ... por otra.

He recognized the sad plight of the Spanish people:

En este mundo en general, no solo en España, la gente lo pasa mal, muy mal. Unos, en espera consciente. Otros, los más, en espera inconsciente. Hace falta un largo proceso de educación para salvar a estos últimos. Ellos no pueden resolver nada individualmente porque no están preparados, viven al día, en continuo presente, sin ir más allá.

It seems that while Aldecoa describes what he sees, he is hoping that the people will understand that there is a way of life that is better than what they are leading at present.

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7 Castellet, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

8 Ibid.

CHAPTER II

TYPES OF CHARACTERS

The first aspect of Aldecoa's reality concerns the people he portrays. We will consider the characters of his fiction from 1) the types of people he selects as defined by their professions and 2) his attitude toward the characters.

The characters represent a variety of jobs and professions. This helps our author to establish a rapport with the reading public. He wants each reader to see himself. He believed that there exists a Spanish reality "cruda y tierna a la vez, que está casi inédita en nuestra novela ... \(^1\)"

The manner in which the author treats his characters reveals his attitude toward them. For some he shows great tenderness and compassion. He ridicules and satirizes others in a humorous way. A dual treatment of the characters is indicative of a sub-surface message he tries to communicate to the reader.

Classification of Characters

Anyone who studies Aldecoa's fiction is overwhelmed by the great variety of people he is acquainted with. Of the characters presented, those of the lower social and economic classes are predominant. Our author shows a preference for the humble, simple people.

\(^1\)Juan Luis Alborg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 278.
There are two broad classifications of characters. The largest group contains people who have jobs or professions which define and regulate their lives. The people of the second group have no jobs, or holding a job is of no importance in defining the type of persons they are. Four sub-groupings exist here: 1) vagabonds who deliberately avoid securing regular employment, 2) children, 3) lovers and sweethearts, and 4) the elderly people.

Characters with Professions

In general each of the novels and short stories contains a multitude of people. Therefore the principal occupations of the people involved in a story or novel is given below.

Businessmen and their families:
  "Fuera de juego"
  "El mercado"
  "Vísperas del silencio"

Manual Laborers:
  "El mercado" — garbage collectors
  "Hasta que llegan las doce" — construction worker
  "La urraca cruza la carretera" — road repair crew
  "Los hombres del amanecer" — hunters of laboratory animals
  "Vísperas del silencio" — sewer cleaners

Blue Collar Workers:
  "Al otro lado" — unemployed laborer
  "Balada del Manzanares" — railway employee
  "En el kilómetro 400" — truck drivers
  "Los atentados del Barrio de la Cal" — factory workers
  "Santa Olaja de Acero" — railway employees
"Solar de Paraíso" -- workers
"Quería dormir en paz" -- worker

Service Occupations:
"Aunque no haya visto el sol" -- lottery ticket vendors
"Crónica de los novios del ferial" -- entertainers
"El aprendiz de cobrador" -- bus fare collector
"El asesino" -- barber
"El diablo en el cuerpo" -- shop owner
"Hermana Candeles" -- palm reader and advisor
"La nostalgia de Lorenza Ríos" -- seamstresses
"Los vecinos del callejón de Andín" -- taxi driver, tavern and shop owners
"Muy de mañana" -- fruit vendor
"Un artista llamado Faisán" -- boot cleaner
"Un corazón humilde y fatigado" -- shop owner
"Un cuento de reyes" -- photographer

Farmers and Farm Workers:
"A ti no te enterramos"
"El corazón y otros frutos amargos"
"La despedida"
"Seguir de pobres"

Clerks and Government Employees:
"Camino del Limbo"
"EL autobús de las 7,40"

El fulgor y la sangre
"El porvenir no es tan negro"
"La espada encendida"
"Los bisoñes de don Ramón"

"Tras de la última parada"

Fishing Industry and Related Occupations:

"Entre el cielo y el mar"

Gran Sol

"La noche de los grandes peces"

Parte de una historia

"Rol del ocaso"

Soldiers:

"El autobús de las 7,40"

"La tierra de nadie"

"Patio de armas"

Sports-Related Occupations:

"Los pozos" -- bull fighting

Neutral Corner -- boxing

"Young Sánchez" -- boxing

Miscellaneous Occupations:

Authors -- "Los pájaros de Baden Baden," "El libelista Benito," and "La piel del verano"

Blackmarket Operator -- Con el viento solano

Prostitutes -- "Los vecinos del callejón de Andín," "El autobús de las 7,40," and "La chica de la glorieta"

Teachers -- "Para los restos," "Patio de armas," and "Aldecoa se burla"

Tourists -- "Al margen"
Characters without Professions

In this classification the characters have in common the lack of employment. There are four sub-groupings of these people.

The first contains those persons who deliberately avoid seeking employment. The men frequenting the tavern of "Esperando el otoño" are an example, along with Antonio of "La piel del verano." The three vagabonds in "Los bienaventurados" work at odd jobs long enough to keep themselves fed; otherwise they avoid employment. In "La humilde vida de Sebastián Zafra" Sebastián, like the men around him, seems to have no visible means of support. The bohemian or "beatnik" characters and the King's friends of "Ave del Paraíso" depend upon handouts.

Stories about children belong to the second sub-group. Several aspects of a child's world are explored. Juan in "Lluvia de domingo" cannot play outside because of the rain. "Patio de armas," "Aldecoa se burla," and "Maese Zaragosi y Aldecoa su huésped" treat school and student life. "Chico de Madrid" and the first part of "La humilde vida de Sebastián Zafra" concern the child's discovery of Nature. A youngster's encounter with death is found in "Y aquí un poco de humo."

The third sub-group concerns lovers or people in love, such as "Un buitre ha hecho su nido en el café," "Balada del Manzanares," and "Dos corazones y una sombra."

Elderly people and widows who do not make up part of the working force are in the final sub-group. We find them in "Las piedras del páramo," "Caballo de pica," "La vuelta al mundo," "Y aquí un poco de humo," "El caballero de la anécdota," "El silbo de la lechuza," "Para los restos," and "El figón de La Damiana."
We find a dual attitude held by Aldecoa regarding these persons. The majority of the people he treats with compassion and understanding. A few others he ridicules in a humorous way.

With the exception of the businessmen and their families, Aldecoa generally portrays the other characters with compassion. These are the humble people, "seres a los que trata con una grande y piadosa ternura ... ." These are the human beings whose lives are filled with poverty and misery, and they exemplify the themes to be discussed in the next chapter. They are people who do not know that there is a better way of living. There is no humor in his descriptions of these persons; nothing alleviates the grayness of their lives.

The businessmen and their families are some characters who are ridiculed. This group is economically affluent. They hold good social positions. But they are spiritually poor. They have as much misery in their lives as do the poor people, and they do not realize it. We find traces of humor in Aldecoa's portrayal of them precisely for this reason: they are capable of living satisfying, productive lives, yet they do not.

Now we understand the message the author is trying to communicate to the reader. The poor humble people he sees think that acquisition of money will solve their physical and spiritual discomfort. But consider the wealthy people. They are miserable even with their money. Only when a person has decided upon a goal for his life and has developed a personal philosophy will he be at peace with himself. Thus the author

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uses the wealthier people as a form of negative teaching.

The novelist limits his humor and satire to the businessmen and two other groups: those people who are misguidedly trying to accomplish a goal or those whose actions injure others.

Our author shows compassion to most of his characters because he sees life through their eyes; he lives "... desde dentro de sus miserias—encarnándose en ellos por amor ... ." He has used animal comparisons to describe sympathetically the lives of some people. These people do not lose their dignity through such comparisons because of the author's choice of vocabulary. Aldecoa describes Roque the fruit vendor's dog named Cartucho:

'Cartucho,' como todos los perros sin raza, desmedrados, hambrientos, mutilados. 'Cartucho' es el perro pelón del vagabundo, al que un buel dejó tuerto limpiamente con la punta de un cuerno en un camino, a trasmano de la carretera. 'Cartucho' es el perro fantasmal de las estaciones de ferrocarril, derengado de una pedrada, que disputa su comida, en las cajas de vagones arrumbados, a las ratas. 'Cartucho' es el perro de los vertederos, diversión cruel de muchachos, aullador eterno del invierno. 'Cartucho' fue el perro que las aguas del Manzanares ahogaron en un desbordamiento, bajo un puente.  

We learn that Roque has led the same kind of life too because "Roque y 'Cartucho' no son como amo y perro, son casi hermanos." (p. 90.)

Quite a few of Aldecoa's characters lead lives similar to that of Cartucho. Deaths come to people in a manner comparable to the death of Cartucho. In "Aunque no haya visto el sol" Teresa is drunk and falls

4Ignacio Aldecoa, Espera de tercera clase (Madrid: Puerta del Sol, 1955), pp. 91-92. All further quotes from Aldecoa's books have been taken from the editions listed in the General Bibliography section on page 97.
into a drainage ditch. Pepe el Trepa is the victim in "Caballo de pica":

Sentaron a Pepe el Trepa, extorero, enfermo de pecho, amigo de Juan Rodrigo.

—Abre la boca.

Obedeció inconscientemente. El comparsa Ramirín le metió el embudo en la boca y comenzó a echarle vino ... . Pepe el Trepa, de cincuenta y siete años, sin un clavel y sin amigos, se ahogaba. Daba patadas. Había risas. Daba patadas. (Caballo de pica, p. 189.)

In the novel El fulgor y la sangre another horrible death:

Los campesinos avanzaron más. Se oyó un grito terrible. Sacaron a un hombre con los pantalones chorreando sangre. Alguien se acercó con la navaja abierta y le dio un tajo en la boca. El labio inferior le quedó colgando. El hombre escupió un borbotón de sangre ... . Lo remataron a puñaladas y se alejaron. (p. 15.)

Aldecoa's compassionate description of the funeral of a prize fighter is one of his best:

Abrieron el ataúd antes de meterlo en el nicho. Las monjas del hospital no habían logrado cruzar piadosamente las manos del excampeón, que conservaba la guardia cambiada con el brazo derecho caído según su estilo. Eso le quedaba. Todo lo demás fue miseria hasta su muerte, y la Federación pagó el entierro. (Neutral Corner, Chapter 13.)

The fighter's position was grotesque, but in death it took on a dignity that he carried to his profession. To die like a fighter lend dignity to the end of a misery-filled life.

'Chico de Madrid' was a young, inquisitive child who had no other name except 'Chico'. The anonymity of the nickname gives the feeling that other boys are in the same situation. 'Chico' suffered a senseless death from typhoid. In an epitaph the writer implies that 'Chico' was an innocent boy, that there was no logical reason for him to die:
'Chico de Madrid' murió a consecuencia de su última cacería, en la que si no pudo cazar ratas ... cazó un tifus; el tifus que lo llevó a los cazaderos eternos, donde es difícil que entren los que no sean como él, buenos; como él, pobres, y como él, de alma incorruptible. (Espera de tercera clase, p. 43.)

Simón Orozco in the novel Gran Sol dies as a result of his job, suddenly and unexpectedly. He is crushed by the weight of a full net and dies later from his injuries.

The link between human beings and the eternally persecuted, abused dog is stated in "La humilde vida de Sebastián Zafra" in a description of the grandmother: "La abuela tenía mucho nervio y no demasiados años, pero, ¡ay! eran años de hambre, de frío que quema la sangre, de calor que afloja la carne y abre las varices. Años de perros perseguidos, largos, monótonos." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 20.)

Some people are like Cartucho because they are objects of ridicule and laughter. Our author does not laugh at them; other humans do. An example already seen was the death of Pepe el Trepa. Some characters do not die as a result of persecution; they have to live with it. Faisán of "Un artista llamado Faisán" is lamentable: "A Faisán le quedaba de su infancia una gran hambre de mal mamado y una tos triste, rugosa, que no le dejaba dormir en paz ... ." (Pájaros y espantapájaros, p. 108.) As a bootcleaner he has become the brunt of his clients' jokes:

Un dejo ... de degustador ... le llevaba a las tabernas, donde los clientes le gastaban bromas harto pesadas, que, con buen criterio benedictino, soportaba hasta la exasperación de los chanceros. Faisán nunca perdía su seriedad: ... ni siquiera cuando en una becerrada lo sacaron de banderillero con el único y exclusivo fin de que el torillo le moliera a golpes. (pp. 108-109.)

An eccentric character is ridiculed by people around him, never by
Aldecoa. In "Pájaros y espantapájaros" a character talks to his fingers. He admits that he likes to talk just to hear himself talk; no one listens to him. For that reason he began talking to his fingers. His loneliness and desire for companionship are mistaken for madness.

The mentally retarded man who dances and sings for money at the fair is taken advantage of because of his illness. He is treated as a backward child:

---Tú por un duro, ¿qué haces?
---Bailo y canto.
---¿Si yo te doy un duro bailas y cantas?
---Sí.
El dueño le corrige:
---Se dice: sí, señor, Casimiro.
El bobo repite:
---Sí, señor. (Con el viento solano, p. 192.)

The central character of Con el viento solano finds that his ridicule of another person leads to the murder of a member of the Guardia Civil. (The Guardia Civil is Spain's national police force whose jurisdiction covers the rural Spanish regions.) The character who receives the brunt of the ridicule cannot believe that someone would insult his dignity. He may only be a tavern owner, but he has a sense of self-respect.

Dogs like Cartucho not only are persecuted and sometimes die; they have to struggle just to have enough to eat. Some persons live in poverty. It is not described as something to be ashamed of; the author explains it with the attitude of one who understands the reason for such a life. Martín ("Al otro lado") and his family lead a life of poverty; "En la chabola huele a brea, a rechocado de ranchada, a un olor animal, violento, de suciedad y miseria." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 109.) A neighbor of his who, like Martín, can find no employment,
has had to beg. Martín, even in his poverty, has enough self-respect to say to his wife, "... no vamos a esperar a tener que pedir, a que nos echen por pedir." (p. 112.)

The black man in "Un cuento de reyes" seldom has money for food: "Comía en restaurantes baratos platos de lentejas y menestras extrañas. Pero días tuvo en que se alimentó con una naranja, enorme, eso sí, pero con una sola naranja. Y otros en que no se alimentó." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 100.)

In "Hasta que llegan las doce" there is little for the family to eat at the end of the week. The mother can barely make her husband's paycheck last.

Through all of the descriptions of misery in the examples given, our author never makes fun of the people involved. They are the victims of life who do not understand why they must live as they do. Some are unaware of the grayness of their lives. The instances in which Aldecoa satirizes characters are a clear contrast to his portrayal of the humble people. We do not find bitterness in his descriptions, but rather a sense of humor. These are the people who could live spiritually satisfying lives, or they are people whose actions cause injury to other human beings.

A sense of ridicule pervades the description of the wealthy family in "Fuera de juego" coming from the fact that the family refuses to recognize that one of their members could have a set of values different from theirs. They feel their lives should be totally consecrated to being successes in the business world; acquisition of money determines how successful they are. They are pompous and unattractive.
Los tres hombres hablaron de negocios. El padre masticaba aburridamente y las confidencias comerciales las hacía con la servilleta ante la boca, decoroso y reposado.

Paulino se atusó el bigote entrecano y moro. Estaba satisfecho: él no perdía tiempo, él no estaba acostumbrado a perder el tiempo, y para los negocios no había día de fiesta. (Caballo de pica, p. 166.)

Pablo, the son who cares nothing about business, is treated with contempt by his father and brother-in-law. His mother feels that he has no place in life; his sister considers him a "garbanzo negro," an outcast. Pablo's family is trying to stifle his attempts to find his own way of life. The reader, because of the author's attitude, sympathizes with the son.

Contrasts in Aldecoa's attitude toward his characters are apparent in "El mercado" and "Vísperas del silencio." The stories are divided between attention given to a low economic-class family, and a well-to-do family. The wealthier families lose the reader's respect; what is lost there is gained by the poor family. The poor father in "Vísperas del silencio" works in the sewers. Consider his reaction on coming up to street level again: "Respiró con libertad, profundamente." (Vísperas del silencio, p. 9.)

By contrast, don Orlando the businessman, is very self-important:

El padre de Rafael hacía la digestión tumbado en un sillón, fumándose un cigarrillo mentolado y oyendo la radio; el padre de Rafael, don Orlando Salvador de las Mazas, exmilitar, excautivo y comerciante al por mayor en vinos y derivados, según su magnífica, suntuosa, historiada tarjeta con un escudo en relieve en los medios.

His son-in-law is even worse:

Si Crisanto Hernández hubiera atendido las sensatas indicaciones de su mujer abandonando su desmedida y cazurra afición a pintar paisajes urbanos, la estética de la casa de don Orlando Salvador de las Mazas no se
hubiese resentido ... . Pero Crisanto Hernández, que como abogado era discreto; como persona, excelente, y como pintor aficionado, sencillamente abominable, tenía por norma no tomar en cuenta las opiniones del sexo femenino en materias artísticas. Norma que hacía extensiva a la Política, las Letras y las Finanzas. (pp. 17-18.)

Fresh air is a luxury for the sewer worker, while the members of the wealthy family waste time accomplishing very little.

The story "El mercado" uses the same type of contrast between a poor family and a wealthy one. The reader again sympathizes with the poor family. They have greater odds to fight. But it is the writer's description of the characters which influences the reader's opinion. The wealthy family is simply made to appear ridiculous.

The women in the poor family have led a hard life.

Tienen las mujeres los rostros terrosos, surcados rostros de grandes y desorbitados ojos, como testigos de algo cruel. Aparentan ser muy viejas, abrigadas en trapos y en toquillas negras y agujereadas. La más alta se delata por el habla como todavía joven, y la otra disimula su casi adolescencia en dos pechos enormes y en mucha suciedad. (Vísperas del silencio, p. 129.)

Compare the description of doña Leonor with the one given of the women above: "... Estaba todavía en lo mejor de su edad, rayando con los cincuenta y la menopausia, engordando a minutos, a pesar de los disimulos de un corsé casi de factura medieval y de un duro, exhaustivo, régimen alimenticio." (p. 133.)

The wealthier family is caricatured. The father of the family senses this distortion. "Siempre que doña Leonor se aprestaba para un combate oral y convocaba a su marido e hijos en el comedor, sentía don Matías, hombre con propensiones de humorista, que la familia se caricaturizaba." (p. 137.)
The one person in this family that Aldecoa does not ridicule is the mentally retarded younger son Pedrolas "que como llegó con retraso, tenía diecisiete de edad física y poco más de nueve de edad mental." (p. 133.) The last section of the story emphasizes the helplessness of Pedrolas. He almost realizes that he is incurable, yet the consequences have not yet penetrated his nine-year-old mind. The scene is after the daughter Leonorcita's wedding; Pedrolas speaks to his father.

--¿Tienes pena de que se haya marchado Leonorcita?
--Algun día tenía que ser.
--Pues no tengas pena. Yo me quedo, y te prometo que me quedaré siempre. (pp. 186-187.)

Our author's attitude of ridicule and caricature is extended to those people who injure and misguide others. Benito en "El libelista Benito" is an example. He is an author, and he wants to defend "los intereses de la Libertad." (Arqueología, p. 146.) He is a foe of tyranny and oppression. But Aldecoa satirizes Benito because the latter misuses any talent he may have. He does not take his vocation seriously. For this reason the writer's description makes Benito and his wife unattractive:

Benito era áspero, borrachín y algo calvo. Su señora tenía buen talante y manías espiritualistas. Ambos se lavaban muy de tarde en tarde, y por esto olían a cañería .... .

Y el loco Benito se levantó muy despacio, se desperezó como un gato y se sumergió por una puerta con cristales empapelados de colorines en el oscuro taller. Su mujer sonrió con su carota de ubre de vaca suiza. (Arqueología, pp. 139-140.)

The political bosses of "Los atentados del Barrio de la Cal" are ridiculed because they do not take advantage of their position to help the people of their barrio. The people are burdened with misery like the clouds of lime dust that pervade the atmosphere:
Un velo de polvo blanco tamiza la luz y parece que se enciende un arco iris aplastado. Las mujeres se sientan a las puertas de sus casas sobre unas piedras que están para eso. Charlan muy poco y se les van los ojos lejos, muy lejos, hacia tierras de mejor fortuna. (Espera de tercera clase, p. 68.)

The political bosses are humorous in comparison to the people of their area:

El jefe de los muchos subordinados es apacible y delgado, se duele a veces de la boca, que la tiene quemada, y hace gárgaras de coñac para desinfectarse. Le salen dos punzones en las rodillas y quirotea defendiendo ante el patron a sus compañeros. El jefe sin subordinados es necio, egoísta, envidioso de la gloria del otro y, ¡qué corpulencia tiene, Dios mío ... ! (pp. 68-69.)

These two men and their followers waste time calculating the best ways to catch the opposition and to give him a beating.

The author pokes fun at the mayor in "La espada encendida" because he is the over-zealous guardian of the town's morals. He is trying too hard to ease the loneliness of his life. The description of him is humorous: "El único botón de la chaqueta que podía abrochar era el primero. La cintura del pantalón le llegaba al pecho. El pantalón le hacía rodilleras ... ." (Caballo de pica, p. 120.)

Aldecoa's humorous, even whimsical attitude toward his characters is seen most clearly in the volume Los pájaros de Baden Baden where there is an apparent influence of Valle-Inclán's esperpento. The characters and their movements in three of the stories are described as if they were walking through a distorting hall of mirrors. Their actions are exaggerated and overdrawn. A foreword to the story "Ave del Paraíso" gives a clue to our author's intention in creating the

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characters of the collection. He distorts them deliberately: "Los
personajes de esta historia nada tienen que ver con personas de la vida
real. Pertenecen a un mundo alegre y siniestro, híbrido de opereta y
guiñol." (p. 117.) The author is warning us that the people here are
not real like the characters of his other stories. But the qualities
they possess belong to people the writer sees in the world around him.
Their actions show a disregard and a lack of respect for the lives of
others. They injure other people.

In "Un buitre ha hecho su nido en el café," structured around the
moves of a chess game, the alfil is a "woman chaser." He has no
respect for them as persons, so the description of him is repulsive:

Los ojos del alfil recorrían el espejo, bajo el que
estaba Encarnita. Los ojos del alfil dejaban una baba
negruzca por los salones hacia el infinito. Encarnita
sentía que la baba caía del espejo, cálida y viscosa,
y le alcanzaba la espalda y le fluía por la columna
vertebral hasta perderse bajo su vestido. (p. 19.)
The "knight" who is Encarnita's regular escort uses her to bolster his
already inflated vanity.

El percherón entró en el café tascando su veguero.
El párpado superior derecho se le derramaba sobre el
ojo congestionado, la calva le brillaba de digestión
y lociones y la ahita panza turgente le tironeaba la
braguita de alta pretina. Su estatura se acreció
marcial en la entrada convoyando a su dama. (p. 14.)
The brujas of "El silbo de la lechuza" are like birds of prey who
live by the unmasking of scandals and crimes that will lead to the
destruction of other people. An insight to their characters is given
in a description of them: "La rampante silueta de doña Lucía se recortó
en contraluz al encenderse el farol de la calle. Doña Matildita entró
a paso de minué balanceando un paquete por el cordón, como quien lleva
por estela un flotante pañuelo." (p. 44.) Doña Lucía is the strongest,
most forceful personality in the group. She instigates the investiga-
tions. Doña Matildita, like her description, is a flighty person of
little psychological complication. She enjoys uncovering scandals
because it is a diversion to ward off boredom. The old ladies of this
story have no occupations. To keep themselves entertained they use
their brilliant, perceptive minds in a misguided way. Their only desire
is to alleviate their boredom.

The characters of "Ave del Paraíso" are the most distorted of all
those portrayed. They seem to possess no redeeming qualities. Their
most noticeable defect is a lack of responsibility toward others, along
with a desire to go through life having a good time. Because these
qualities are so alien to the author's set of values, he makes the
characters here seem laughable. They are repulsive physically, as the
description of Barón Samedi indicates:

Tenía cabeza de mosca a miles de aumentos. Se atusó,
coqueta e impertinentemente, el lacio bigote mongolico
con los índices. La lividez de su piel parecía maqui-
llaje. Con un leve tacto en el arco de los anteojos de
verdosos cristales se dispuso a dictar el pedido. El
bello libador se le humedecía concupiscente. Chasqueó
su voz de mufeco de ventrílocuo precisa, pedante y
absurda. (p. 125.)

Samedi's interest in life is thwarting the successes of his enemy
"El Rey." He does not care what he does to other people as long as he
is triumphant.

Other characters seem unreal because they dress like extras on a
movie set. The names of these people—"Rey," "Marqués del Norte,"
"Marqués del Sur," "Vizconde de la Riviere," "Maestro," and "Prevari-
cador"—further divorce them from reality.

The "Rey" refuses to acknowledge all responsibilities which link
him to others. He wants to be in a position to come and go as he
pleases without having to respect any one. Such an attitude is un-
acceptable to Aldecoa; for this reason the "Rey" is treated
humorously. His followers are interested only in having a good time,
wasting their lives in search of diversion.

Although the author has shown two different attitudes concerning
the people of his fiction, he does not hold one group in more esteem
than another. He values human life too much. All the characters are
struggling to get through life as best they know how.

Aldecoa portrays all the characters well. The ones to whom he
shows compassion retain their dignity in the midst of misery. They are
victims of situations which they cannot understand nor master, but we
do not lose respect for them. The reader does not dislike the humorous
characters, either. They have problems, also.

The characters are not anonymous; each person has been imbued with
a personality of his own. They are treated as individuals and we see
them in this way. Of the scores of characters the author has portrayed,
they never become simply a mass of humanity.

One must respect our author for his portrayal of women. He shows
an understanding of their psychological complexity. The wives of the
guardias in El fulgor y la sangre are masterfully drawn and completely
believeable. The descriptions of Hermana Candelas, Elisa ("Los pájaros
de Baden Baden"), and Luisa ("Dos corazones y una sombra") are well done.
CHAPTER III

THEMES IN THE NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

Aldecoa's message to his readers is derived from his philosophy of life. He needs three elements to complete his life. He believes in establishing personal goals; a person needs to have something long-range to aim for. Not only must there be a goal, but there must be some accomplishments made toward its completion: the author would make plans to write novels, and he accomplished the writing of four of them. The establishment of one's personal goal implies a rejection of fatality. It indicates that such a person is not resigned to leaving no mark on life. The author stated that men are free to accept or reject their fate. Personal courage and education are needed to overcome the obstacles. Aldecoa feels that most people by themselves are incapable of rejecting their fate; they must be educated. Education, not necessarily that which comes from books, is the key to awaken people from their "espera inconsciente." They do not realize that they are accepting their fate and waiting for the next blow to fall.

Another facet of his philosophy can be deduced from the number of times views opposing his philosophy appear in the novels and short stories. Most of the characters are lonely; they have very little to link them to other human beings. Each person lives in his own shell of fate and misery. What is important to Aldecoa is the establishment of valid human relationships. His compassion toward his characters comes
from his attempt to establish a rapport with them. He makes himself walk around in their shoes in order to understand them. One has the feeling that if the characters would show to each other the tenderness he directs toward them, their misery would not be so great.

Aldecoa realized that death always was a possibility; he admitted his fear of it. Yet fear did not stop him from attempting to live up to his philosophy. Neither was he discouraged upon thinking that he might never complete his goal of making people aware of the choices in life. He would only feel a serenity, a peace with himself, for having tried to reach his goal.

Our author's fiction is based on the reality he saw. He chose to interpret it on the basis of his personal philosophy, to use his art to influence the people who need it. What the reader sees in his fiction are not the characters who have accepted his philosophy; they see what his conception of life is without having a goal and accomplishments, no rejection of fatality, and not having established human contacts. The view of reality as seen in his fiction has the following themes:

1. Death, seen as a natural end to life or as being senseless and without justice. It is made more frustrating by the lack of personal accomplishments.

2. Monotony, boredom, desperation. The lack of a goal in life gives the characters nothing to look forward to, except the same situations every day. The absence of personal satisfaction in one's life adds to the monotony and boredom. The only relief--a feeling of desperation or locura comes during periods of stress; the situation then reverts to the same routine of monotony again.

3. Loneliness, separation, persecution, lack of communication.
For the most part, the novelist detects loneliness in the lives of his characters. They do not often relate to other people because each lives in his own misery. Our author shows them as needing human contacts; whether these contacts come about because of love, a common need, or simple compassion for each other is not important. The important thing is not to be alone.

4. Monotony and boredom are accompanied generally by a feeling of resignation; the characters are largely "dolorosamente sumisas." The people make no attempt to escape their fate. They do not even realize they have a choice.

The author did not concentrate his attention on describing the people who have succeeded in developing a personal philosophy. It does not matter that this philosophy is different from his. The presence of those characters who have developed a philosophy is easily seen because they contrast so vividly with the other characters. They are the only characters who are at peace with themselves. They may not have been able to reach their goal but they have an inner serenity because they did try.

The four themes mentioned above are found throughout Aldecoa's fiction, but are developed at greater length in his novels, which deserve our immediate consideration.

DEATH

All of Aldecoa's characters live under the shadow of death. Death may come to his characters as a result of their work, and it is often unexpected, or as a natural process ending the life of an elderly character. Death is at times senseless; there is no logical reason for it to happen. The author has accepted that each person must face death.
What seems tragic to him is that the people often die without having accomplished anything during their lives. They spend a lifetime existing in misery, unconsciously waiting for the end of life.

In *El fulgor y la sangre* the death of the guardia came as a result of his job. Being a member of the Guardia Civil means that one's life could come to an end at any moment; this is what happened to Francisco Santos. But he did not hesitate to do his duty by searching for the drunken gypsy Sebastián.

The civil guards realize subconsciously that their jobs may cause their deaths. Our novelist describes a guard on duty. His rifle, which is an instrument of death, has almost become like a part of his body: "El fusil es el compañero íntimo y hostil. Las manos forman parte del fusil con el tiempo." (p. 11.)

Another example is of death caused by a person simply shrugging off life and hoping death will come. Sonsoles' mother, after seeing her husband killed by neighbors, did not make an effort to live. Sonsoles' old grandmother recognized the indifference to life and predicted that "... [ella] morirá antes del otoño." (p. 20.) The grandmother's death came as a result of old age. Her attitude is a contrast to her daughter's: "La agonía de la abuela fue lenta. Luchaba con la muerte como solamente puede luchar la ancianidad." (p. 29.)

Death in a senseless, illogical way comes to a priest during the Civil War as María remembers it in a flashback. Doroteo, who killed the priest, had had an argument with him while drunk. The outbreak of the war and the anticlerical feeling gave him a chance to express his hatred for the priest.
In *Con el viento solano*, the sequel to *El fulgor y la sangre*, the killing of the civil guard is shown as a senseless act done by a man under the influence of alcohol. Sebastián never planned to kill the guard. Several times he thinks about burying the gun or throwing it away. He seems to be unaware that everything he does is eventually leading to murder: "Inconscientemente atrajo hacia sí la pistola."

(p. 51.) Sebastián's hand holding the gun is independent from the rest of his body; he sees the result of his shot and he hears the discharge of the civil guard's gun, but he does not feel the recoil in his hands.

Aldecoa is stressing that Sebastián does not consciously choose his actions. Everything he has done leading to the murder has been performed on a subconscious level. These actions make Francisco's death seem very senseless. Sebastián had no legitimate reason for murder. He could not explain it to himself: "Tenía miedo de que lo cogieran y comenzasen a preguntarle: '¿Tú, por qué lo hiciste ... ?' " (p. 54.) Sebastián knows that he will die for what he did without having accomplished anything positive in his lifetime. Toward the end of his flight he understands that his life is aimless and without a goal: "No tiene meta, no tiene finalidad. Lo mismo da estar bajo los árboles que en el camino." (p. 252.)

The experience has made him realize that one is not free to do as he wishes; one's actions influence other people. He remembers his former life: "Aquella pelea sin sentido, sólo porque hay que probar, porque es como una tentación el cuello del Maño, y él nunca se ha resistido a las tentaciones." (p. 252.) He recognizes that shooting Francisco was the event which awakened him from his "espera inconsciente" to awareness that other people have their problems, too: "Si todo
hubiera seguido como antes del principio, estaría tal vez ciego para las cosas, ciego para la vida." (p. 248.) But his awareness that he could have accomplished something in his life came too late for him.

In Gran Sol the death of Simón, a fishing fleet captain, comes as a result of his work and of his attempt to save a friend's life. He expected death as a possible result of his work, but he could only hope that his luck would be good: "Suerte: unos duros para poder vivir, para que la mujer pagara en la tienda de comestibles, para que los hijos pudieran seguir yendo a la escuela." (p. 15.) Another type of luck has to do with making a safe voyage: "Habrá otra clase de suerte. Prefería no pensar en ella, prefería solamente confiar." (p. 15,) The tragic thing about his death is that he died without much accomplishment to his credit. True, he was good at his job. But he died not realizing that there is, in the author's opinion, more to life than working to earn money for material things.

Simón is an example of the character who lives in a continual present, just hoping he will stay ahead. He is the character to whom Aldecoa is speaking. That is why the author shows Simón and the members of his crew as being naive: "La sencillez de estas gentes no permite tampoco psicoásgas complicadas ni apenas diálogos que remonten por encima de sus problemas inmediatos." ¹ Through no fault of their own these people cannot see beyond earning money and solving their immediate physical problems.

Aldecoa showed in Parte de una historia a person who gave up living without attempting to fight against his problems. The character

¹Juan Luis Alborg, op. cit., p. 291.
is named Jerry. Nothing about his life previous to being shipwrecked on the island is known. The narrator feels that Jerry is like his shipwrecked yacht; he has probably traveled around the world and then ends up wrecked "debido al azar en sus distintas formas de ebriedad, incapacidad, locura y hasta situación geográfica ... ." (p. 72.)

Jerry has no goal to accomplish. He travels searching for something to add meaning to his life. The narrator thinks his search will not have a happy ending. Jerry drinks too much, and he makes no attempt to keep from driving his wife to paying attention to Boby, another member of the crew.

The climax of the novel comes the night the foreigners decide to go swimming even though the water is too cold. Jerry swims as far away as he can. No one is worried at first because "... [él] es un fantástico nadador ... ." (p. 173.) His death brings an end to the hysteria of the foreigners. Jerry did not try to fight against his problems. Like Sonsoles' mother in El fulgor y la sangre, it was easier to take death than to struggle to accomplish a positive life. Jerry's death was useless in that he, with all of his money, would have had more opportunities to rid himself of the lethargy in which he lived.

MONOTONY, BOREDOM, DESPERATION, AND MADNESS

Most of the characters feel that their lives are boring and monotonous. They do not enjoy life. Yet they make no attempt to change their lives; the characters just manage to get through life as best they can. Very little ever happens to relieve the tediousness. Life is a monotonous cycle which is alleviated by a period of desperation, followed by a return to the same monotony as before.

El fulgor y la sangre is perhaps Aldecoa's best treatment of the
cycle. The technique of flashbacks emphasizes the idea of waiting and the dénouement is delayed. But when the novel has ended, no basic change has occurred to relieve the monotony. The characters are still sheltered in their castle waiting for some other event that will take them away from the present life.

The novelist first establishes the monotony of life in the reconverted castle. Life is tedious because there is no foreseeable end to the waiting: "Un servicio en un puesto que se sabe cuando ha comenzado y no se cree que se va a terminar alguna vez es un extraño purgatorio hecho de hastío, un derrumbamiento de horizontes ... ." (p. 10.) The people in the castle have nothing more to look forward to than a possible transfer.

Into this atmosphere Aldecoa carefully introduces the theme of desperation and madness: "La locura está adormecida de paredes adentro. La locura que algún día surgirá tras una crisis de alguien, como una tormenta seca del bochorno." (p. 12.) The death of one of the guards causes the madness to break loose.

Along with the knowledge that someone has died comes the hope of a transfer, which means a change from the boredom. The people in the castle live in the present; their only hope for the future is to move from the castle. "Este es un destierro ... . Cuando nos trasladen será otra cosa." (p. 143.)

They and even María who was better educated than the other wives do not realize that life elsewhere could be worse. María had experienced it before while teaching in a village. The speaker is a country boy who wants to move to the city: "¿... usted cree que la vida aquí es mejor? Pues aquí uno se aburre lo suyo ... . En la ciudad se está
divirtiéndose hasta que se acaba." (p. 144.) María had urged her husband to ask for a transfer to a small town. When she saw the castle for the first time, her attitude is like the boy's—she is going to have a good time there: "María contempló el castillo largamente: —Vamos a vivir como señores feudales ... Va a ser divertido. No fue divertido." (p. 199.)

María found that telling stories to the women helped pass time and take their minds off the boredom of the castle. Felisa understands that the stories are simply a way to pass the time: "... Eran simples palabras, sonidos, no más, que rellenaban el tiempo pero que nada explicaban y a nada conducían." (p. 82.) María explains to Carmen why she tells the stories: "Si yo no las divirtiese podían caer en esa melancolía que tú por ejemplo sufres, que las haría desesperarse a veces." (p. 184.)

The death of the guard Francisco did not change the situation at the castle. He received the transfer. The four remaining families would stay at the castle living in the same monotony until they receive a transfer or a husband be killed in the line of duty.

Sebastián en Con el viento solano experiences a different reaction to boredom. His life seems to be centered around trying to find a way to amuse himself without caring what it does to other people. He drinks a lot, and his friends have accepted the fact that he is difficult to get along with. He is irritable and rude to his girlfriend. He is compared to a child because of the fact that he wants things to go his way and for not understanding that other people have responsibilities to fulfill.

Sebastián needs something to fill the emptiness of his life. Living
is boring to him even though he has money. Not until after he kills the guard does he realize how empty his life is. The killing is the desperate moment of madness in his life. His flight from justice lasts one week, a week which ended the monotony of his former life. When he can finally run no longer, he reverts to the old life of drinking, trying to find enough courage to surrender.

The theme of monotony is found in the life of a minor character in the same novel. She sells a potion which supposedly cures all physical infirmities. The woman asks her customers to accept the promise of a cure: "... La fe, caballero, es la que nos salvará ... ." (p. 181.) She, however, does not possess enough faith in herself to think that her life will change. She expects to keep on making the same speech each day; only the faces of her audience will change.

A major theme of Gran Sol is the monotony of life spent on a fishing vessel. Little occurs to relieve the boredom, and what does happen usually leads to tragedy. Each crew member at one time or another is affected by the monotony of routine. Part of the boredom derives from the lack of psychological complications of the characters. Their thought processes are not complex. The only things they talk about concern their jobs; once these have been discussed, the characters "habían agotado los temas de conversación." (p. 35.)

The crew members may be compared to the wives of the guards in the castle. Both are largely isolated from contact with other people. The situations are conducive to a growing monotony of routine.

Boredom for the fishermen comes as a result of the job. While they

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are not casting or taking up their nets, they have little to do. 
Looking at the sea permits a man to think or not to think. The crew usually does little thinking: "José Afá tenía en los ojos la picazón del sueño de contemplar la mar sin objeto y un sosiego interior de dulce aburrimiento." (p. 55.)

Simón Orozco considers the many voyages he has made. They were remarkably all the same: "Fortunas breves de buenas mareas, desesperación de las malas. La rutina, el aburrimiento, el miedo." (p. 64.)

Desperation and madness occur at rare intervals. A feeling of desperation arises when a rumor begins that their ship will be sold. Aldecoa describes vividly the effects of such a rumor:

En cada marea hay una patraña. La patraña cóletea rabiosamente todo el viaje en la imaginación marínera hasta que, llegando a la vista del puerto, se va a la mar por los agujeros imbornales, por los escapes de las puertas de trancanil, cuando se arrancha de llegada. Cada marea tiene su patraña. Alegre o triste, siempre desasosegante. (p. 77.)

Another moment of desperation arrives, and Simón Orozco seems to be the only person truly aware of the situation. The incident occurs when the two ships are taking up a full net; it ends with the injury to Simón.

The theme of desperation appears two ways in Parte de una historia. The backdrop for its appearance is a small island in the Canaries inhabited by people whose livelihood depends upon fishing. The introduction of the outside world is symbolic.³

Desperation is shown by the contrast of the outside world to the peaceful, relatively uncomplicated island life. The narrator is the

first character from the outside world to appear. He is a city-dweller, 
the city being the place of unrest from which he has escaped. By 
contrast, the island is a calm place where time does not exist: "Todo 
me ha sido familiar después de cuatro años largos, así que he saludado a 
los amigos como siempre, como si no me hubiese ido ...." (p. 64.) The 
quality of life on the island is such that little happens to change the 
routine; "tal vez ha ocurrido hace unas semanas, aunque pueden haber 
pasado meses o años, porque el tiempo es muy difícil de contar en la 
isla y dan por consabidos sucesos que yo ignoro y que creen que 
viví." (p. 9.)

The second outside element introduced to the island are the 
foreigners. Two English tourists were already staying on the island. 
The Americans—"americanos locos"—shipwrecked their vessel while on a 
drinking bout. The narrator mentally divides the inhabitants of the 
island, including the newcomers: " ... divido dos mundos: uno a mis 
espaldas, el del pueblo, y otro frente a mí, el del barco." (p. 65.) 
The two worlds have contrasting ideologies. The first is monotonous and 
full of routine. The reader is rarely exposed to this life from the 
islanders' viewpoint. To the narrator, however, it is a symbol of 
peace.

The second world, represented by the wrecked ship, symbolizes the 
outside world full of agony and desperation that the narrator is 
fleeing. The contrast is described by the narrator:

Estas dos consecuencias no son únicamente imágenes 
proyectadas de lo organizado, firme, vital, y de lo 
desorganizado, anárquico y mortuorio, sino símbolos 
contrapuestos y enemigos, entre los que está mi 
debate. (pp. 64-65.)

For a very short while the two worlds converge symbolically:
"Las conversaciones se mezclan y tan pronto se habla de la cuantía de la pesca como del naufragio de los americanos como de la dudosa virtud de la mujer del yate." (p. 67.) They are too different to remain together. The islanders do not understand what the foreigners are searching for: "Los ricos como éstos no saben dónde van. Son todos naufragos." (p. 202.) But they feel that Jerry did find what he was looking for:

---Era un loco.
---No más que los otros, Maestro.
---No se salvan los locos.
---O sí se salvan. La locura es una infelicidad; cuando encuentran la felicidad se salvan. (pp. 202-203.)

The English and Americans soon seek means of entertaining themselves. They fear the routine life. The islanders can take no part in the search; they sit back and watch. The frenzy for amusement reaches a climax with Jerry's death. The islanders unite to find his body. From this point the two worlds separate completely, each to go their own way.

The narrator is the last foreign element to leave the island. He understood that he could not remain there forever. The island is only a place of refuge to which he escapes from time to time, the most distant place he can find from his city life.

One must assume that with the departure of the narrator the island returns to normal. Aldecoa has deliberately left the novel without a conclusion; it is only "parte de una historia." The foreigners, especially the Americans, will probably continue their search for amusement, terrified of being bored. The narrator will return to whatever kind of life it is that he leads in the city.

LONELINESS, LACK OF COMMUNICATION

The loneliness of Man in the midst of other human beings is an important theme in Aldecoa's fiction. There is a lack of communication
among people. Each person is submerged in his own world of loneliness; little spiritual contact between people can be found. To a large extent only a person's occupation links him to other people. Yet each different occupation further separates men from each other. Aldecoa emphasizes that "la profesión conforma demasiado ... " Once a man has a certain occupation, he cannot change his lifestyle. "Cuando uno está preso por su necesidad o por su falta de energía, está muerto." (El fulgor y la sangre, p. 12.)

For the novelist an occupation gives one a bond to others in the same field because they share the same problems:

... Cuando más tarde leímos al gran prosista Saint-Exupery, supimos de verdad que todas aquellas vagas intuiciones alimentadas por nuestras lecturas habían llegado a la diana verdadera de la existencia humana. 'La grandeza de un oficio está acaso, ante todo, en unir hombres; no hay más que un lujo verdadero y es el de las relaciones humanas.'

As he presents them, Aldecoa's characters are united to each other only by an occupation. They usually have no spiritual bond with other people; their human relationships are indeed a luxury because what they have in common often goes no deeper than their immediate physical needs—more money, an easier job, the desire to give their children a better future.

Our author's novels portray a variety of situations in which loneliness occurs. The castle in El fulgor y la sangre represents the separation and lack of communication between its inhabitants and the

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world. Having been sent to the castle by chance, the characters seldom mix with people in the village. The castle walls are like a jail because "en el verano de cielo azul y ajeno, encarcelan y aplastan." (p. 11.)

Much of the loneliness in _El fulgor y la sangre_ is due to the occupation of the husbands. Aldecoa is emphasizing that one's job affects not only the person engaged in it but his family as well. Personal feelings are subservient to duty:

Sabía que donde comenzaba la guerrera comenzaba la blancura de su cuerpo, embutido en el uniforme ... . Pensó que no tenfa tiempo para ser del todo blanco o estar del todo moreno. Pensó que le hubiera gustado estar siempre vagando por el campo en mangas de camisa y que le gustaría, si no, vivir en la ciudad. (p. 6.)

The separation from others even within the framework of a job is illustrated: "Cambiaron una seña. Luego cada uno volvió a sí mismo, a su encarcelamiento personal." (p. 11.)

The lives of these characters are not lacking warmth and love; the latter have been overshadowed by the more pressing problems of existence. An example of the closeness which has developed between two people is Felisa and Ruíperez: "... Las palabras para explicarse sus vidas no eran necesarias ... . Vivían y amaban en silencio." (p. 115.) Their relationship points out the lack of communication which afflicts other of Aldecoa's characters.

Sonsoles, the wife of a guard, is a rare example of a person who deliberately sought separation from the world. While a young girl, she was sent to a convent for a practical education. Her attitude toward the seclusion was one of pure joy. She wanted to belong to a small group cut off from the world. She found herself there: "No había habido desligamiento y adaptación, sino encuentro y ajustamiento." (p. 27.)
Contrasting with the monotony of life for her in the castle, which was a "desligamiento y adaptación," life for her at the convent was not monotonous: "Se deslizó el año por su cotidiana sencillez, casi sin poderlo limitar a hechos, sin poderlo segmentar en acciones diferentes." (pp. 27-28.) She left the convent to visit her dying grandmother. She felt no sense of loss on the death: "Encontró separación, consciente separación." (p. 32.) All that she looks forward to is her return to the convent, "porque el convento no era 'el mundo,' sino algo que entre el cielo y la tierra se sostenía, como una nube o como una ave planeando, donde se encontraaban y giraban unidas soledad y compañía." (p. 32.) Sonsoles as a girl knew what she wanted for her life. But Aldecoa shows that one does not always manage to keep what he has. As Sonsoles was preparing to return to the convent she was raped by her cousin. Because of her physical violation she felt that she could not become a part of the convent again. She would have to adapt herself to living in a world with other people, no longer separated from them. Forced to give up her solitude to become a part of the world, she found that what had once seemed happy daily activities had turned into monotonous routine: "En la cabeza de Sonsoles aparecieron las primeras canas. El trabajo cotidiano, monótono, igual, la desgastaba suave, paulatinamente ... ." (pp. 48-49.)

Sebastián in Con el viento solano experiences separation because he murdered a civil guard. The action puts him outside the normal life, for he is persecuted by them.

Sebastian before the murder had a false sense of the security that companionship can offer. He treated his girlfriend cruelly, he made fun of his friends, and he caused his family to seek support from other
relatives. The pistol gave him a feeling of security; he felt certain he did not need human companionship except when it suited him.

He becomes anguished during his flight to observe that life continues normally. He cannot be a part of it, and it takes no notice of him. The very act of fleeing causes him to fear being alone: "En la huida se tenía miedo a la soledad." (p. 58.) This new fear makes his old ones disappear. "La colectividad se distribuía el miedo, que era como una ración, y tocaban a menos. Pero ahora solamente era él, ... sin poder hacer partícipe a nadie de su miedo." (p. 59.) Other people's lives seem now to be blessedly normal, and the normalcy affects him: "Aquella tranquilidad de lo cotidiano le inquietó. El estaba fuera de aquello ... ." (p. 75.)

The knowledge that he will always have his family to turn to keeps his courage from failing completely. "En esto, pensó Sebastián, los gitanos les llevamos ventaja. El tiempo no cuenta para nosotros. Tenemos más facilidad para salirnos del garfio; tenemos la familia, los amigos ... ." (p. 155.) But his friends and family reject him because they fear retaliation from the guards. At the end of his flight he realizes that his illusions concerning the bonds of relationship were false.

The only person to help Sebastián during the flight is an old man. Sebastián loses awareness of his flight in the other's presence and even tells the man his correct name. He finds a sense of peace in Cabeda's presence. With him, Sebastián has the feeling of belonging, of the collectivity that dilutes fear and loneliness.

Because Cabeda values friendship he makes a request of Sebastián: "Llámeme compañero. Será volver a lo que sólo es recuerdo." (p. 147.)
From his past experiences he has learned that the memory of friendship keeps a person company through life. Sebastián must leave Cabeda in Madrid and continue fleeing. He is alone again, but he takes with him the memory of their brief time of companionship.

As one critic has stated, in *Gran Sol*, "a diferencia de *Con el viento solano*, es la soledad del hombre en compañía en medio de la inmensidad del Océano Atlántico." Simón Orozco best represents the loneliness. He largely keeps to himself, not associating with the crew members. He has a strong sense of duty toward his job which prevents him from being overly friendly with the crew. He only has in common with them the tasks demanded for their work. Simón feels a responsibility to the crew through his job in that he wants all the crew to make money from the voyages. "Es el sentido del deber social encarnado en el trabajo de cada día lo que llena el vacío de la soledad del hombre y le da una sensación de solidaridad social."

The crew feels that Simón does not treat them as human beings. They do not understand that he wants them to do their jobs well because he wants the trip to be profitable. They never learn his thoughts because he holds himself aloof from them. His position of separateness creates an atmosphere of hostility. The crew does not know that he demands a lot of himself, too, denying himself things he would like to do but cannot due to his sense of responsibility.

The occupation of fishing causes changes in human relationships. The closeness that once characterized a married couple becomes loneliness.

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7 Ibid.
as they are no longer able to communicate with each other. José Afá and his wife experience this change because of the drowning of one of their children while Afá is at sea. The meeting at the wharf is not happy:

Con la distancia se había roto el hilo que los enlazaba en el amor, en la vida, en el recuerdo. Ni en el amor, ni en la vida, ni en el recuerdo iban acompasadamente ... . Solamente a veces brotaba no se sabía cómo ni por qué la palabra del cauce común. Ocurría muy de tarde en tarde y en seguida se perdía en lo cotidiano. (p. 132.)

Loneliness in the midst of people is the theme of Parte de una historia. Selecting a small island as a backdrop for the action augments the loneliness. The island has "arena, falta de agua, vegetación de desierto, incommunicación, soledad de supervivientes." (p. 95.)

Aldecoa uses a visit to the lighthouse keeper to further emphasize separation. Felix says of the lighthouse keeper that "tanta soledad no es buena," but Roque states that the man is not lonely because he has companionship and dreams only of making money. Roque gives his philosophy about being alone: "¿Quién no sabe estar solo? Un hombre como él lo sabe y muy bien que lo sabe. Como cualquiera," (p. 89.) Only when loneliness becomes like an illness eating away at a person does it become destructive. For the most part people are like the keeper in that they do not realize their loneliness. The islanders are separate from the world but have learned to live with their loneliness.

The foreigners perhaps best demonstrate loneliness in the novel. Laurel and David and Beatrice and Jerry are the two couples who ideally should have found companionship in each other's company. There was a lack of communication between them because they gave up their old companions and sought new ones. David and Jerry became the lonely outsiders.
From the beginning of his stay on the island Jerry is a lonely figure. His wife Beatrice is openly flirting with another man. He becomes more of an outsider when his friends accuse him of the wreck of the yacht; he had been assigned the role of the guilty man: "... Jerry, como dueño y patrón, cumplía así su destino y era de esperar que interpretase bien su papel hasta el fin, como ya comenzaba a hacerlo."
(p. 75.)

Laurel, the English girl, begins to flirt with Gary, a member of the yacht. The new pairing off leaves David lonely. The islanders do not understand the foreigners' reactions. The men do nothing to stop the women: "Y los dos viéndolo todo y callando como ahogados. Los chonis son así, lo sienten pero mudos." (p. 109.)

The separation and loneliness of these two characters continues until Jerry's death. The islanders who have observed the state of affairs among the foreigners feel deeply about Jerry's death because of its very loneliness. His loneliness became a sickness which destroyed him. As for David, the death of Jerry brings the others back to a state of normalcy. He and Laurel seem to have reconciled. One is left with the feeling that should a similar situation occur again, David would be left alone once more.

RESIGNATION

The final theme in the novels is the resignation of the characters. The author feels that the characters could improve the quality of their lives if they were not so resigned to their condition. One of the characters of Gran Sol unconsciously expressed what the novelist feels about his characters: "... No somos como las amuras: sólo recibir golpes y no pensar." (Gran Sol, p. 78.) Most people are not aware that they
live as if they were objects resigned to the blows which come. A goal of Aldecoa is making people aware that they can accept their fate or not.

The author's point of view has been described: "... Ve la vida como un sufrido y callado quehacer o una tarea que el hombre lleva a cabo con resignación." As our novelist sees them, people usually accept their role in life—"las pobres gentes angustiadas por los embates de una vida injusta, y sin embargo, dolorosamente sumisas." Our author has expressed the submission and resignation of people in Parte de una historia:

Sucede a veces que cada uno toma su papel sin demasiada reflexión y ha de pasar algún tiempo hasta que se encuentra incómodo en él, y luego pasa de la incomodidad a un estado de desasosiego producido por el hecho, sacrificado pero injusto, de haber tomado sobre sí una responsabilidad que no le pertenecía enteramente. (p. 77.)

Resignation is expressed in El fulgor y la sangre in two ways. The first is from the standpoint of the women who did not choose life as they are living it. The second is from the male viewpoint: the guards chose their particular occupation.

Aldecoa accepts the fact that most women seek to be married. Marriage is vital, "hasta que un hombre te sea tan necesario como respirar." (p. 20.) María's mother tells her that "una mujer como mejor está es casada, porque las mujeres somos muy listas para estas cosas ... ." (p. 197.)

If marriage is the goal for women, then they must be resigned to

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8González López, _op. cit._, p. 113.
9Marra López, _op. cit._, p. 5.
the pain and suffering it entails. Sonsoles' grandmother urges that she go "preparándote para el dolor." (p. 23.) The woman who marries must be willing to accept the kind of life the husband plans to lead. Marriage is not "un juego. No es una comodidad. ... El ocio, la ira, hasta la repulsión forman parte de él y, sin embargo, todo se va transformando en querer al otro, en estar en el otro, en creer que te debe doler la carne si al otro le duele." (p. 23.) As Aldecoa describes, marriage is the best form of companionship and communication.

The men chose the type of job they wanted. They may not be satisfied with them now, but they wanted that line of work. Sonsoles' husband was enthusiastic: "Después de la guerra, una posibilidad y una alegría de empezar lo no comenzado." (pp. 12-13.) Ruipérez, Felisa's husband, was aware that he did not have to remain with the Guardia Civil: "O acaso se podría pedir la separación del Cuerpo por encontrar algo mejor ... ." (p. 103.) Carmen's husband actively sought a position with the Civil Guard. "No me voy a quedar en el Ejército; voy a pasar a la Guardia Civil. Como soy sargento provisional en el Ejército, no tengo porvenir, se me pasarían los años sin ascender." (pp. 271-272.)

The men's restlessness now derives from the fact that the job did not provide all the possibilities they had hoped for. Ruipérez expresses his disillusionment: "Aquel antaño que en el recuerdo de Ruipérez se nublaba tras la desesperanza, porque entonces había esperanza de mejorar y ahora no había más que deseo de seguir." (pp. 114-115.)

Their uneasiness is held in check by their sense of duty. They can accept not having been transferred because it is all a part of the job. One of the civil guards feels that "nadie se separaba del deber; todos estaban atados al deber." (p. 233.) He is resigned to his life now.
The wives lack the sense of duty to a job. They have their functions as wives and mothers which does not occupy all their time. Boredom sets in. Without being able to do anything about it, all they can hope for is that they will be transferred. They are not rebellious—they have accepted the inevitability of the fact that they can do nothing to make a transfer come: "Había más de voz de socorro en ellos que de indignación o rebeldía cuando se debatía el tema del traslado." (p. 10.) Because the women feel helpless in their situation they are becoming resigned to it. Sonsoles accepts fate in the form of God's will. Her acceptance of Francisco's death is typical of her attitude: "Dios lo ha querido." (p. 76.) Again and again it is stressed that life is going to continue as always. Maria expresses her resigned attitude when she says "las cosas que ocurren siempre." (p. 109.)

The reader of El fulgor y la sangre is aware that Aldecoa has stressed that these people are always waiting for something. The structure of the novel with its flashbacks delays the passing of time. Time on the clock is emphasized. The characters are accepting that they may wait forever and nothing will change for them. The novelist shows this by the arrival of a transfer for Francisco. Not only had he spent less time at the castle than the others, but he had no family to be affected by his way of life. It is ironical that he was the murdered guard.

Resignation is treated differently in Con el viento solano. Sebastián finds that after murdering the guard his old way of life changed. He did not know that during his old life he was living resigned to what might happen to him. He lived by instinct. He realized that he also led a passive life: "Lo demás había sido dejarse llevar de las oportunidades." (p. 103.)
The crime changes his former life style of resignation for another in which he becomes resigned to being persecuted. Because of this persecution he begins to envy the lives of other people, never realizing that they lead the same type of resigned lives as he once did. Sebastián is most disturbed because his death will in no way affect others' lives. They live in such deep resignation that another's death is just accepted. "Aquella vida familiar le producía el espanto del porvenir. Faltaría él y todo seguiría igual." (p. 240.)

Aldecoa expresses one philosophy towards resignation in the words of the old man who befriended Sebastian. For this man resignation is the only way a person can protect himself against injustices and blows of fate. Life depends on chance and luck: "La mala suerte suele ser compañera del hombre; fiel compañera. Luego lo deja a uno. Llega la buena suerte, que no existe, que es solamente la ausencia de la mala." (p. 144.) He feels that only the resigned and humble people, those who do not fight their assigned role in life, will survive: "Lo mejor para pervivir es ser débil. Las moscas no desaparecerán. Las moscas son moscas desde el principio del mundo. Seguirán siendo moscas hasta que desaparezca el mundo. En cambio, los dinosaurios son piezas de museos." (p. 146.)

As in El fulgor y la sangre, Con el viento solano also expresses the idea of waiting for something to happen. There is the same emphasis on time, but drawn out over a period of one week in order to lengthen the anguish Sebastián must suffer. "Clock time and life are linked: "El reloj tiene como una alma paralela con su dueño, es como el corazón." (p. 64.) Sebastián began making this comparison when he noticed that his wrist watch stopped, symbolizing that his life was to end. The waiting, the
persecution, and the loneliness made Sebastián desperate enough to surrender. He was resigned to his fate in the end.

The theme of resignation in *Gran Sol* is generally connected with one's occupation. The characters are resigned to their lives as they lead them; they expect no change in the poverty and possible tragedy hanging over them.

Some of the men are not satisfied with the demands that fishing makes upon them. Simón Orozco fulfills the responsibilities of his job, yet he does not really like that type of life. "Yo a la mar ni a mi peor enemigo; que se busque la vida en la tierra." (p. 18.) Macario Martín, an experienced fisherman, knows that working as a fisherman rapidly changes one's outlook: "A los veintinueve años toda la mar es azul; hasta que no la veas negra, jurarás que es azul ... ." (p. 19.)

Other crew members are saddened by the fact that their children will know no better life than their parents. They are destined to live by the sea. "Soñar con que los hijos dejarán la mar" is foolish. (p. 128.)

The responsibility of supporting one's family keeps the men tied to their present occupation. They fear trying to begin a new life, for the family may have to do without necessities.

The men are afraid of the unknown. José Afá expresses his doubts about life on land: "Si no fuera por lo que hay en tierra me había desembarcado." (p. 60.) The implication is that any change would be for the worse.

Toward the end of the novel the crew expresses the fatality of their lives; they will never accomplish anything in a lifetime.

—Hay que saber retirarse a tiempo.
—Usted podrá—dijo Juan Quiroga—. Nosotros hasta que nos desguacen en el muelle. ¡Y contentos!
—No, hombre; se pueden hacer otras cosas.
—Usted—en la voz de Juan Quiroga había un punto de rabia—. Usted gana lo suyo que es bastante. Nosotros, ¿qué fortuna! Uno acaba donde empieza. ¡Y contento! (p. 198.)

The resignation felt by the islanders of Parte de una historia is overshadowed by the arrival of the Americans. The attempts by the Americans to amuse themselves take the islanders out of their normal life style. The life that the people on the island are resigned to is one of hard work, little money, and little joy. They possess very little to show for their hard work, and they leave no trace behind them to show that they ever existed. "Ahí abajo la vida de los hombres se enciende y apaga como en otra edad. En esa isla, que yo llamo nuestra isla, nada existe que sea mío y muy poco que sea de ellos: los pescadores viejos, las mujeres viejas y jóvenes, los niños." (p. 132.) Aldecoa further states that "ni siquiera están con ellos los muertos." (p. 132.)

Life on the island revolves around the sea. The years of poverty are many. People become accustomed to denying any possible good fortune which they may have; not only does this provide a cushion against disappointments but it represents their attempts to squeeze a few more material benefits from life.

Life also revolves around customs, and the people are resigned to tradition. Life is a continuous flow from birth to death following the dictates that "custom" allows:

Se va a casar y ha dejado por una temporada las pesquerías del sur para construir su casa. Es la costumbre. El hombre hace el hogar con cenizas de volcán prensadas en grandes bloques, ayudado por sus parientes o por sus amigos. La mujer prepara las telas domésticas para toda la vida, y para la muerte. Porque hay lienzos destinados a ser sudarios en los cajones aromados de almucena de las cómodas del ajuar. (p. 29.)
The link between birth and death is stressed again. A passive resignation is felt toward them. Enedina feels that she has fulfilled her mission in life:

Enedina me habla luego de los hijos: de Roque el primogénito, de José, de Antica, de Francisca y de Luisita. Es su entrega al mundo y es su satisfacción. Está preparada para vivir unos pocos años más y darse resignadamente a la muerte. Lo que tenía que hacer está hecho. (pp. 43-44.)

THE DEATH THEME IN THE SHORT STORIES

The death theme has been recognized as a common one in Aldecoa's short stories as well as in the novels. As one critic states, "todas las criaturas de sus relatos de hoy ... están en vísperas del gran silencio de la muerte." While his novels allow him to explore the death theme more deeply, the short stories permit him to show it in a variety of ways because of the large number of characters he introduces.

The death theme may take one of two forms. Death may be 1) physical: it is the end of life and is brought about by old age, sickness, accidents, wars, or even murder; death is 2) symbolic: people do not die physically; a situation in which they find themselves is symbolic of death.

Each death represents the end of an individual to the author. Every death he shows is tragic. He has compassion for these individuals who never knew anything better than the misery of their lives.

Physical Death

Death which seems the most tragic and unjust is that affecting children. They never have a chance to live and to find out what life is.

In one story Aldecoa uses a child's short life to illustrate the inevitability of death. The reader sees through a child's eyes the personification of death in "Y aquí un poco de humo."

Andrés, the child in the story, is introduced to death through the conversations of a lonely old woman. Listening to Doña Ricarda, Andrés' imagination creates a picture (and a personification) of Death: "... La muerte es una señora muy alta, muy alta, y muy delgada, muy delgada, vestida de negro y apoyada en un bastón con puño de muletilla, que le sirve para llamar a las puertas." (Arqueología, p. 45.) Andrés is not capable, because of his youth, of conceiving of death as an abstract concept; he must humanize it.

Andrés learns from Doña Ricarda that Death is arbitrary in selecting her victims; Death is also persistent. Andrés is terrified. In his effort to escape Death he looks for a way to deny her entrance to the house: "¿Y si los que viven en la casa no la quieren recibir, cierran las puertas y ventanas y no abren a nadie aunque llamen?" (p. 47.) Ultimately he realizes the inevitability: "Inútil. La muerte se metería como una carta por debajo de la puerta." (p. 47.)

Andrés becomes ill, and Doña Ricarda visits him. The child fuses together the Doña Ricarda that he sees and the image of Death he constructed in his imagination: "Vio entrar a doña Ricarda, alta, erguida, vestida de negro, apoyada en su bastón con puño de muletilla." (p. 50.) Death, which has lived in Andrés' imagination, becomes real at the story's conclusion: he dies.

The volume Espera de tercera clase contains three stories about the death of children. The first is "La humilde vida de Sebastián Zafra." As a child Sebastián was inquisitive and intelligent. He observed all
that was around him in Nature. As a grown man Sebastián refuses to accept the responsibilities that come with age and marriage. He is still a child in his outlook. Like children, he and his cousin Prudencio go to the artillery range to collect shells. The moment before he dies his childlike interest in Nature rises to the surface and causes his death. "Sebastián se acercó a la granada e intentó con las manos ahondar en torno de ella. Sebastián miró las nubes viajeras y su mano tropezó ... ." (p. 27.) Aldecoa links Sebastián the man to Sebastián the innocent child in the final paragraph: "Hacia los altos nidos de las nieves, en las montañas lejanas seguían las nubes, y con ellas el humilde, vago y tierno Sebastián Zafra." (p. 31.)

The child in "Chico de Madrid" was, like Sebastián, inquisitive and active. His adventures hurt no one because he was a loner. He took care of himself; he had no adult supervision, which in a way lead to his death. One of his favorite occupations was hunting rats. He went exploring in an unused sewer. As a result he caught typhoid fever. The death was entirely unnecessary. If someone had cared for him as much as they might have, the child would not have died so needlessly.

The reader knows nothing of the child who dies in "Quería dormir en paz," except that he was loved by his family. Not only was the death tragic simply because the victim was a child, but death seemed to deal unjustly with the family by taking from them a loved one. Aldecoa shows in this way that his characters are often the victims of unjust acts without their knowing why. The money given to the father by the policeman who had kept him away from his dying child's bedside seems ironic—money is no substitute for human love.

In another story the death of a child emphasizes the misery of a
family. The technique used is a contrast between a poor family and a wealthy one. The youngest son of the poor family was very ill. The head of the wealthy family, don Orlando, had a sickly grandson on whom he spent money lavishly to cure him, yet "el nietecito no podía vivir bien pese a todos los esfuerzos de don Orlando y de la ciencia ... ." (Vísperas del silencio, p. 11.) While the poor father does not have money to spend to cure his son, the latter does receive all the love his family can offer.

These two children are contrasted. The poor child is delighted to receive some crayons. Don Orlando's grandson naturally has more expensive toys, but he treats them carelessly. "El niño, incorporado, con las espaldas apoyadas en una montaña de almohadas, destrozaba concienzudamente una diminuta locomotora eléctrica." (p. 18.)

The poor child dies. The parents feel that the child's death was unjust. They cannot find a reason for it so they accept the fact that it was God's will. To the wife the death was tragic because the boy never had a chance to grow and contribute to the world; "hubiese podido llegar a ser algo importante. Con la inteligencia que tenía." (p. 25.)

As Aldecoa did in his novels, he sometimes portrays death arriving as the result of a person's occupation. The victim in the story is usually unsuspecting but the reader is not. The author creates a feeling of the inevitability of death as strong as that expressed by Doña Ricarda. The story "En el kilómetro 400" shows a night in the lives of some truck drivers. From the beginning Aldecoa prepares the reader for the truck crash at the end of the story. The night was described as having "una luna que construía tintados escenarios para la catástrofe." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 15.) One of the drivers is ill,
but the job demands that one work, whether he is physically able to or not. The truck driven by the sick Imaquí and his relief driver wrecked. Imaquí probably dies as a result of the accident. The attitude of the spectators is that the crash—and death—were inevitable. "Son cosas que tienen que ocurrir ... ." (p. 26.)

"Hasta que llegan las doce" deals with the family of a construction worker who dies. The father has little money and several people to support. The responsibilities have mounted rapidly in ten years. Each day brings its own form of misery—even the child Juan recognizes this fact. "... Es viernes, y los viernes ni hay vino para su padre ni mucha comida para ellos." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 51.) To a troubled family an even greater catastrophe comes; the father is badly hurt or even killed on the job. The irony of the situation, as the writer points out, is that the accident occurred at 11:45. The father's lunch hour was at twelve. Fifteen minutes made the difference between life and death.

The story "Patio de armas" partly concerns the death of a soldier during war. The story does not treat death as it affected the soldier, but rather its affects on young school boys. The dead soldier was the father of one of the boys. All that the funeral means to the boys is a respite from the boredom of the classroom. They have no emotion about death. They are merely curious to see what a dead person looks like. The son of the dead man is one of the least affected by the death.

"Miguel Vázquez saludaba a los amigos, y no volvió a su apariencia contrita y aburrida hasta que no pasó el último de ellos." (Caballo de pica, p. 48.) The war and death which upset the lives of others means to the boys that they would be excused from classes. "Si vienen aviones
"a bombardear, no habrá clase ... ." (p. 51.) The children are almost completely untouched emotionally by the deaths of soldiers engaged in a war which the young people do not understand.

In other stories death appears to be an inescapable element of adult life. For the old it is very close. Different people react in different ways. The old man in "Las piedras del páramo" wants only to be left in peace until he dies. Because of physical infirmities he is not an active part of life around him. He cannot have the peace he desires. Things which he does not understand change his life. The Civil War breaks out, and the town priest was taken away. The old man feels a need to go to the church, but for reasons he does not comprehend the church is closed. To die without a priest is unthinkable: "La mansedumbre del rumor conocido era ahora una ira desbordada. Y una vez y otra las palabras llegaban, hendían e impactaban en su corazón. 'No merezco esto--pensó--y es demasiado para mí.' " (Caballo de pica, p. 103.)

To another old couple death means the beginning of a lonely life without the mate. In "La despedida" an old woman says goodbye to her husband at the train station. For the first time in their life they will be apart. The woman tries to hide her distress from her husband. Yet at the last moment her voice betrays her. "--Siéntate, Juan--dijo la mujer, confundida por sus lágrimas--. Siéntate, Juan--y en los queibros de su voz había ternura, amor, miedo y soledad." (Caballo de pica, p. 29.) Juan is leaving for the city to have an operation. Death could be a very real consequence of the operation.

In Aldecoa's fiction death often marks the beginning of loneliness for the person left behind. A good example is the story of Teresa and
her husband the blind guitarist in "Aunque no haya visto el sol."

Their life together is full of arguments and physical blows. Yet they have managed to get along. "Se acostumbró a su mujer como se había acostumbrado a su guitarra." (Caballo de pica, p. 95.) With Teresa in his life, the man "no estaba solo." (p. 96.) His loneliness begins with Teresa's death:

    Pero la soledad nunca compensa, y lo sabía mejor que cualquier hombre pudiera saberlo. Y en su casa acariciaba cosas que no eran ella, pero que le acompañaban desde ella solamente un poco, nada más un poco, como sus propios ojos. (p. 100.)

In "Muy de mañana" Roque and his dog keep each other company. They were like brothers; they ate the same food. When the dog was happy, Roque was happy. Roque said of Cartucho that "no podría vivir sin él." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 94.) After Cartucho is killed, Roque's loneliness begins. "La llaga de Roque, la llaga de la soledad de Roque necesitaba de 'Cartucho'." (p. 95.)

Aldecoa shows that death can also come as a result of murder. The death of Pepe el Trepa in the story "Caballo de pica" was described in Chapter II. The men who were pouring wine down his throat did not intentionally kill Pepe. He died as a result of their inhumane treatment. Aldecoa stresses the cruel treatment by comparing Pepe's death to that of the horse in the bull ring—"como los caballos de la pica." (Caballo de pica, p. 189.)

Anthony the barber in "El asesino" has homicidal tendencies. About a client he does not like he says, "dentro de una semana, cuando baje de nuevo a afeitarse, le haré un artístico rasguño en la mejilla derecha." (Arqueología, p. 63.) A friend of Anthony makes a less subtle statement concerning the possibility of Anthony killing someone. "El día que puedas
Our author constructs the story so that it leads to a discussion of what causes a man to murder. One opinion is that "un crimen es algo que puede hacer cualquier hombre." (p. 65.) Another man says that "un crimen, crimen, pues está al alcance de cualquiera." (p. 66.) From the conversations it is learned that Anthony killed someone, although he states that it was unintentional. "Yo tengo que decir que si la maté no fue porque yo tuviese esa intención, porque lo que yo quería era dejarla malherida y confié demasiado en mi pulso y me falló." (p. 66.)

Another murder is found in "El silbo de la lechuza." The old ladies who seek out scandal are convinced by his actions that Juan Alegre murdered his wife. The "conversation" he carries on with his wife at her grave shows his precarious mental condition. Juan acts very much like Sebastián in Con el viento solano in that conscience and persecution drive both to surrender in desperation.

**Symbolic Death**

Aldecoa at times treats death symbolically. Physical death of a person is not involved. The symbolic death portrayed concerns people who are merely existing, waiting for the end of their lives. As he shows them, nothing ever changes for them. They perhaps make feeble attempts to change a particular situation. But being uneducated, they fail in their attempts because they do not know how to go about making changes nor what should be changed.

An example is the story "Los vecinos del callejón de Andín" in Vísperas del silencio. The fact that the street is a dead-end one serves to intensify the fact that these people have no way out of their situation. The street is isolated from outside contacts and ideas. It
is a microcosmos and a separate world. It is miserable and unattractive.

Andín pertenecía al invierno: a las lluvias, a las nieves, y a los fríos intensos. En el verano parecía una fosa común, con gordos gusanos de vecindad en alboroz; en la primavera, conmovía la angustia su soledad, y en el otoño, sucio, de luz sinistra, de penumbras, de crimen alevoso y dreycciones, repugnaba. (p. 86.)

Aldecoa as a "realistic" writer observed such a street in some city. He chose to write about it for a purpose, as he states in a foreword—"jácara de poca, pero buena intención." (p. 83.)

He compares the people of this street to two of the most unattractive creatures of the animal world: "gusanos" and "ratas." The people, the human beings of the street, become animals living in a sordid environment.

The people living here are not aware that they are objects of jokes:

El callejón de Andín olía mal. En su entrada avisaba el celo municipal al transeúnte, por medio de un cartelón, que estaba prohibido, bajo multa de cinco pesetas, hacer aguas .... Todos los borrachos de la ciudad orinaban creyendo molestar a los vecinos, pero ellos ni se enteraban. (pp. 85 and 86.)

The only time these neighbors work together to accomplish a goal is on New Year's Eve. Their spirit of cooperation transformed the dead-end street into something lovely. Compare the following descriptions, the first one on an ordinary night:

Llovía pausadamente: llovía del mismo modo que anda un concejal jalándose la barriga. En el callejón se adensaba en tinieblas. El reflejo de la luz de la taberna, reflejo azul, valoraba todavía más que la oscuridad. La fruta podrida de una bombilla amarillenta de portal también colaboraba en la negrura del callejón. La imaginación hacia nacer monstruosos que terrorificaban aquellos andurrias. De la tierra mojada de las huertas llegaba, esparciéndose, un olor acre y vegetal de capilla ardiente. La sombra de una rata se distinguía veloz en la pobre claridad que arrojaba la taberna. (p. 95.)
Then on New Year's Eve:

The people on the street had been before this night living dead people not caring about the world beyond their street. They did not work together. The result of the spirit of cooperation for one night's amusement was that something positive was accomplished, even though in a small way:

Another example of symbolic death is the story "Los atentados del Barrio de la Cal." The area is inhabited by hard-working people who lead difficult lives. Lime dust coats everything, adding more grayness to their lives. The people who could bring about social change are the two political bosses of the district. Aldecoa ridicules them because they do not take their civic responsibilities seriously.

A spirit of cooperation exists among the followers of one of the bosses, but it is misdirected. The followers plan how to surprise Muñoz, the other boss, and beat him. Their cooperation almost has fatal consequences since Muñoz is seriously injured following an attack. Aldecoa said about the situation, "todas las cosas acaban en este mundo ... ." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 73.) The attacks ended, and nothing changed for the people.
The bohemians or "beatniks" of "Ave del Paraiso" are a last example of persons who are dead symbolically. They are dead to the outside world, and anything that has nothing to do with their world.

"Los beatniks estaban solos y en su liturgia. Nadie esperaban."
(Pájaros de Baden Baden, p. 124.) Nothing brings a reaction from them.

"Los beatniks, impasibles, escuchaban su jazz con los ojos perdidos.
En el bar olía a marihuana." (p. 186.)

MONOTONY, BOREDOM, DESPERATION

Aldecoa's short stories treat the theme of monotony in four ways:

1) Monotony toward one's employment.
2) Monotony derived from not having anything to do.
3) Monotony of life.
4) Desperation in life.

Monotony toward one's job is the most prevalent form. It is found in "Los pájaros de Baden Baden," "Balada del Manzanares," "Entre el cielo y el mar," "Santa Olaja de acero," "En el kilómetro 400," "Patio de armas," and "Camino del Limbo." Except for "Patio de armas," each story has characters who must have a means of supporting themselves, making a job necessary to them. Their attitude toward the job is one of dissatisfaction which leads to monotony and boredom.

Elisa of "Los pájaros de Baden Baden" expresses her attitude saying, "Estoy escribiendo un texto que necesita consultas y eso ... Algo bastante pesado." (Pájaros de Baden Baden, p. 254.) She reacts to the boredom of her job by becoming an abúlica. She is incapable of accomplishing any kind of action. She says about her progress on the book, "Voy muy lenta. Hago muy poco." (p. 254.) Her dissatisfaction with her work is derived from the monotony of her life. She sees
herself growing old. She desires male companionship but does not find it.

The monotony felt by the inhabitants of a fishing community comes from their jobs. The sea is their livelihood, and Aldecoa describes the sea as being monotonous: "Unos segundos de silencio y la monótona repetición como un grunido o como un estertor ... ." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 117.) The last part of the quote makes the sea take on the characteristics of a human being who is bored. Nothing in their lives changes; as one character is told, "te quedará tiempo para trabajar durante toda la vida." (p. 122.)

In "Santa Olaja de acero" Aldecoa shows the monotony of a man's employment exaggerated to the point that although Higinio is almost killed one day, he says to his wife that the day went as usual. He is a train conductor and is good at his job. He simply has reached the point in his life that dangers have become monotonous.

The lives of Spanish truck drivers are also boring. A trip is made up of a succession of little towns, bad weather, and bad roads. The danger of a wreck always exists. The job is a miserable one: "Frio, calor, daba igual. Dormir o no dormir, daba igual." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 20.) The only future one expects from the job is to be cast off like a worn-out motor.

Miguel in "Camino del Limbo" knows that he has to have a job. The work he does becomes monotonous because he was forced into it to make his mother happy. Working as a clerk does not seem to him to be a fit occupation for a man; he wants to work "en un trabajo de hombres." (Pájaros y espantapájaros, p. 45.)

The children of "Patio de armas" do not have jobs; they are
students. They react to their studies like the above people reacted to their jobs—by becoming bored. A description of the school boys shows how they are trapped: "... Ronroneaban marcando el paso como prisioneros, vagamente rebeldes, nebulosamente masoquistas." (Caballo de pica, p. 35.)

The second type of boredom is derived from not having anything to do. The men who frequent the bar in "Esperando el otoño" deliberately avoid finding employment even though they have no money. Their boredom results from the daily futile attempts to amuse themselves.

The boredom which Valentín ("A tí no te enterramos") experiences comes from the loss of his ability to work at what he knew best—farming. Before his illness he was a hard worker. Thus he becomes bored with his inactivity. Like the men of "Esperando el otoño" he has nothing to do but amuse himself.

The ladies of "El silbo de la lechuza" have no duties to take up their time. As a result they become "armchair" detectives. With only a few outside contacts they manage to solve a murder and an embezzlement. However, scandals are not numerous. When they find themselves without anything to do, they are bored. Aldoia emphasizes the inevitability of the monotony when he says "así un invierno y otro invierno y otro ..." (Pájaros de Baden Baden, p. 110.)

A third type of monotony affects one's view toward life; life itself is monotonous to some people. An example is the newspaper seller in "Balada del Manzanares" who contemplates life in a bored fashion.

In the same volume the old man of "La despedida" looks back at his life and finds that "sus años se sucedían monótonos como un traqueteo." (Caballo de pica, p. 30.) César Yustas of "Vísperas del silencio" feels that life is monotonous. He has learned that things will not change, for he asks
his wife, "¿Quieres más?" (Vísperas del silencio, p. 16.) It is too much to expect more from life.

The "Rey" in "Ave del Paraíso" finds himself becoming bored with his life on the island. His favorite pastimes no longer interest him. When he sees life becoming boring, he is the only character to change his situation. He plans to leave the island. The "Rey" does not have responsibilities which link him to other people. It is easier for him to decide to change his life. He has avoided responsibilities which close human relationships entail.

The unchanging nature of life or employment in some cases leads to desperation in the lives of people. In "El porvenir no es tan negro" there is boredom caused by one's job. The pay is poor and there is an unending battle to pay the bills and have a few luxuries. Waiting for something to cause a change in life leads to desperation. The only way the characters can alleviate their desperation is to drink.

Hermana Candelas in the story of the same name has reached a point of desperation in life. She has no money to pay bills. She earns a living by advising other people how to solve their problems. The irony of the situation is that she has no one to help her in her own moment of crisis.

The road repair crew in "La urraca cruza la tierra" reaches a point of desperation motivated by the appearance of an expensive car which passes while they are working. The car represents wealth and a mode of living the crew can only dream about. Their poverty seems all the more wretched by comparison. One man expresses his desperation, saying "como comen brea hirviendo ... o aun peor." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 34.)
In "Los bisoñes de don Ramón," Ramón was a dedicated student while young. It seemed that he had a good future ahead of him as a government employee. Life did not turn out as he expected. He became stuck in a job with no future. His attitude is one of desperation: "Si desesperación: porque yo ya no tengo porvenir, porque yo ya no puedo llegar a más." (Pájaros y espantapájaros, p. 78.)

LONELINESS

The theme of loneliness in the short stories is expressed as the following:

1) The individual as a solitary figure, standing alone.
2) Loneliness deriving from lack of communication between people.
3) Loneliness resulting from being deprived of someone or something that a character loves.

The loneliness of the individual is the most prevalent in the stories. Examples are Chico ("Chico de Madrid"), Enrique ("Lluvia de domingo"), "El Quinto" ("Seguir de pobres"), Valentín ("A ti no te enterramos"), Doña Ricarda ("Y aquí un poco de humo"), María and Juan ("La despedida"), Luisa ("Dos corazones y una sombra"), Hermana Candelas ("Hermana Candelas"), Elisa ("Los pájaros de Baden Baden"), Paco ("Young Sánchez"), and the boxer ("El boxeador que perdió su sombra").

The characters above have in common the fact that they stand alone in facing the problems they have. "Chico de Madrid" chose to be alone because his one venture into friendship almost got him into trouble with the police. Enrique, without the presence of his friend Juan, is a solitary figure. To fill his lonesomeness he writes fictitious accounts of adventures. "El Quinto" is a solitary figure. He makes friends while on a job, but an illness sets him apart from them. They cannot stay
behind with him to care for him because they have families to support. They know that the money they give him is a poor substitute for companionship.

Valentín is lonely in the city while looking for a job. He had to leave his family when he could not work on the farm. He is not accepted by the city people. Among them he is an outcast with no job to unite him to others.

Doña Ricarda has no one to talk to until she finds Andrés. He relieves her loneliness. But she speaks to him of things he cannot understand, so there is no real communication.

Luisa and Elisa experience a common loneliness: they need male companionship. This lack is made more vivid when the women see other women enjoying the masculine friendship they desire. Luisa's sister has a male friend who pays court to her. Elisa's best friend is happily caring for her husband and family.

María and Juan in "La despedida" see a period of loneliness beginning for them when Juan leaves to have an operation. They had shared many years of companionship. For this reason the lack of it will be difficult to endure.

Hermana Candelas lives a lonely life. She recognizes the loneliness of her client because she shares it, too. She consoles her own loneliness by inventing companionship: "Oirás las voces amigas que te traerán consuelo." (Caballo de pica, pp. 85-86.)

Aldecoa became interested in professional boxing and the men in the ring. The impression he gives of the men in Neutral Corner and "Young Sánchez" is that they are solitary figures. They have admirers, but these stay only as long as the fighter is a champion. The lonely figure
of the fighter is shown symbolically by a training exercise—sparring with one's own shadow. Sometimes even the shadow disappears, leaving the man alone. Paco ("Young Sánchez") has just begun his fighting career. He is already being isolated from others because of the training necessary to become successful and by the attitude toward him as being a possible champion. He will be exploited and will rarely experience true friendship. He can see this beginning in the relationship between himself and his father. The father uses Paco as a means of building his own ego and self-esteem. Paco cannot help experiencing an alienation from his father through a relationship like this one.

The second type of loneliness is shown as the lack of communication between people—their inability to talk with each other. Higinio in "Santa Olaja de acero" leaves home before his wife awakens in the morning. It is late at night before he returns home, and his wife is already asleep. The two do not communicate to each other concerning the day's events.

The lack of communication between Crisanto and his wife Mercedes in "Vísperas del silencio" is more obvious because the two have ample occasions to discuss their problems, but do not take advantage of them. They deliberately seek to avoid each other, to find their own pastimes. An attempt to talk ends in an argument. It is to Crisanto's credit that he soon realizes that their marriage is in danger, but he is too weak a person to change the situation.

"El autobús de las 7,40" and "Balada del Manzanares" show symbolically loneliness coming from inability to communicate. The soldier on the bus is a timid person who finds it difficult to speak to others. But he wants to communicate: "Se percató de que con aquel niño
sería agradable tener una conversación interesante y amigable."

(Vísperas del silencio, p. 197.) His attempts are thwarted, and he appears an even more lonely figure when he is forced to sit by himself at the rear of the bus. He is frustrated again when he tries to speak to the two girls on the bus. As the story closes one has the impression that the soldier with his inability to communicate is superfluous to the world: "El soldado recibió un empujón ... ." —¡Eh, tú que estorbas ... !" (p. 203.)

The young sweethearts in "Balada del Manzanares" illustrate symbolically by means of a quarrel that people lack true communication when they mask their emotions. In the case of Pilar and Manuel there is a playing of roles because it is the accepted way of courtship. The writer states that " ... [Los amantes] tienen que reír un poco, deben reír un poco." (Caballo de pica, p. 16.) As is usual in such instances, the quarrel begins over nothing important. The argument is only a game, but it demonstrates how communication is sometimes frustrated by this "role-playing." Aldecoa makes it obvious that his two characters are acting out parts. The underlined words are mine.

1. "Manuel se pone flamenco, porque es parte del juego."
2. "Pilar se desespera falsamente, porque sabe que debe hacerlo."
3. "Manuel se pasa de la raya."
4. "Pilar reacciona. Se vergue orgullosa, digna, superior."
5. "Pilar taconea, fingiéndose distraída ... ."
6. "Manuel procura ser irónico."
7. "Manuel se somete poco a poco."
8. "Pilar concede ... ." (pp. 10-17.)

The third type of loneliness people suffer comes from being left alone because of the death of a friend or companion. Two examples of this were discussed in relation to the death theme: "Muy de mañana" and "Aunque no haya visto el sol."
The town mayor of "La espada encendida" tries to alleviate his loneliness (caused by his wife's death) by becoming the zealous guardian of the town's morals. As our author constructs the mayor's character he appears tyrannical and demanding. The only hint given as a possible cause for his disposition is that he wears a mourning band on his sleeve. Not until the end of the story is the reader told that the mayor is reacting to the loneliness caused by his wife's death.

The loneliness of Pío in "Solar del Paraiso" comes from having to leave the home he loves. To him the solán is a real Paradise. Aldecoa compares Pío's sense of loss to that of Adam upon being driven from his Paradise in the Bible story. Not even the modern home to which the family is moving can take the place of the solán in Pío's heart.

RESIGNATION

It is fitting to discuss the theme of resignation last because it illustrates the principal reaction that Aldecoa's characters have toward death, their boredom and desperation, and their loneliness. Doña Ricarda expresses the characters' general attitude: "Hablabá de la resignación que hay que tener..." (Arqueología, p. 45.) This is a defeatist attitude. The author's characters seldom attempt to take a positive stand by refusing to accept what happens to them.

The old grandmother of "La humilde vida de Sebastián Zafra" has seen and experienced much. Her spirit of resignation comes from knowing that things will never change. She suggests that "es preferible reventar de una vez." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 20.)

Antonia of "Hasta que llegan las doce" is resigned to the relative poverty of her family's life. Because she has no alternative, her purpose in life has become that of working to support her family.
The migrant workers of "Seguir de pobres" are accustomed to their poverty, also. They have developed techniques to help alleviate their hunger: "Con ... un cinturón ancho de cueras de becerría ahogada o una faja de estambre viejo, bien apretados, no hay hambre que rasque en el estómago." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 80.)

A resignation toward the responsibilities of life is seen in the life of Leocadio ("El aprendiz de cobrador"). Leocadio is in love but is not yet aware of the responsibilities it will bring. Thus he has pleasant day dreams about marrying and having children. His light-heartedness is seen in the frequency with which he smiles. The realization of his future responsibilities and resignation toward them come after a meeting with his girlfriend. Aldecoa implies a seduction of the girl by Leocadio. The event forces him to think about his future. As a result he no longer smiles and has a preoccupied air.

Resignation to the dangers inherent in being part of a fishing crew is found in "La nostalgia de Lorenza Ríos." The women who see their husbands off are unaware of their acceptance of the dangers because they are happy to have them employed. The dangers make them sad but are a part of their lives.

The title "El porvenir no es tan negro" suggests an acceptance of the fact that life will not be any better. The alcohol the characters consume helps to ease their desperation and to make their resignation easier.

"En el kilómetro 400," "La urracá cruza la carretera," "Tras de la última parada," "Santa Olaja de acero," and "Vísperas del silencio" contain people who are resigned to their employment and the dangers it may bring, yet they are uncomfortable in the roles they have to play.
In "Entre el cielo y el mar" Aldecoa denies that these characters are resigned to earning little money for their hard work: "Estaban acostumbrados, aunque no resignados ... ." (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 118.) Custom can eventually become so established in a person's life that he accepts it resignedly. Custom also destroys in a person the incentive to change a habit even if the person does not like it.

The story "Al otro lado" contrasts resignation with the desire to succeed and reach a goal. Martín is an unemployed worker who seeks employment in the city. Some of his neighbors are in the same position. One of them becomes resigned to begging when he cannot find a job. Martín's pride or self-respect will not permit him to become resigned. As the story closes he and his family are preparing to move to another town in search of something better.

POSITIVE CHARACTERS

The majority of Aldecoa's characters are dissatisfied with their lives. The themes of death, monotony, loneliness, and resignation describe the kind of existence they have. One would think that the author had never observed in reality people who were satisfied with life because they had developed a personal philosophy and had chosen to live a specific way.

On the contrary, our novelist does describe two characters who have a positive attitude toward life. Their values do not coincide with the author's, but they are like him in that they chose to live a certain way. Both of these characters are found in Con el viento solano.

The first is Señor Cabeda, the old man who helps Sebastián in Madrid. His personal philosophy is characterized primarily by a spirit
of resignation: "Es mi costumbre ceder. Es mi filosofía," (p. 125.)

He is different from Aldecoa's other characters because he is aware of the choices available to him, choosing to resign himself.

The second aspect of his philosophy is that of living for the present. Thus he only works enough to earn sufficient money to pay for his daily room and board. He considers work to be a curse sent from God but it is a necessary evil in order to keep on living. Cabeda summarizes this fact of his philosophy by saying "hoy es lo importante. Lo que sobra hay que dejarlo pudrirse y no preocuparse." (p. 131.)

Sebastián intuitively feels that something about Cabeda is different. "Parecía que el viejo fuese la clave de la existencia ...." (p. 126.) Sebastián does not recognize that he has met a man who knows the choices life has to offer him and he chooses a certain path to take.

The second character with a personal philosophy is the fakir with the traveling show. From the first Sebastián sees something special about him: "Los ojos del faquir son tristes. Pero no tienen la tristeza de los ojos de Sebastián. Los ojos del faquir tienen la tristeza de la libertad." (p. 190.)

The word libertad is the key expression. Sebastián defines it as:
1. Freedom from persecution by the Guardia Civil, the end of his flight from justice.
2. His belief in the solidarity of his family ties which will give him comfort.
3. The possession of money so that he can have material things.

The fakir defines freedom in his own way. It means that he is living by a personal philosophy, with a goal in life—to make other people content by amusing them with his special gift of eating glass.
Roque is happy when he has made others happy: "Argensola iba silbando. Roque estaba satisfecho." (p. 221.)

Roque's philosophy then, contains the following:

1. Freedom to travel and meet people. Roque has a need to move from place to place.

2. He finds that faith in God enables him to endure the hard times in his life.

3. Money is not the key to a happy life. Like Cabeda, Roque wants to earn just enough to live each day.

Aldecoa has shown in Cabeda and Roque people who choose the course they want to take. Their lives are not free from suffering and physical hardships (for example, Cabeda is basically a lonely person), but they have an inner satisfaction of knowing they have done what they wanted to do.
CHAPTER IV

REINFORCEMENT OF REALITY
THROUGH NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

To this point Aldecoa's vision of reality has been seen from the characters and themes he uses. This chapter will show how he stresses and reinforces his view of reality by means of the only medium the writer has—the written word.

The author accomplishes his reinforcement of reality in three ways:

1) By repetition of specific words and phrases in the novels and short stories.

2) By emphasis upon weather conditions.

3) By the use of comparisons between human beings and animals.

This chapter is not a study of Aldecoa's style of writing. He was known for his masterful use of vocabulary and for his skill in employing it to express himself. His personal style of writing would merit a study of its own. Only that part of his style which has a direct bearing upon his view of reality is concerned here.

Repetition of Words and Phrases

A study of our author's fiction reveals the recurrence of words and phrases which impress upon the reader the way he sees the world and the lives of people in it. These words and phrases stress his vision of reality in two ways:

1) He uses them in descriptions of reality to show how he sees that reality.
2) The characters in the fiction also use the same recurring vocabulary. But this means the author is demonstrating how his characters are typical of the reality he sees.

The words and phrases are given in the order of the frequency of their appearance.

The word which appears most frequently is the verb esperar, or, in another form, the noun espera. Almost all the English meanings of the word are utilized, for it may be translated as "to hope," "to expect," "to wait for," "to await," or "to fear." Whatever the translation of esperar in a particular sentence may be, it indicates a passive attitude on the part of the person involved. The person may hope, expect, await, wait for, or fear something in a passive manner, but he does not accomplish a positive action. The intensity of the action denoted by the word may vary greatly. For example, it may be a simple matter of waiting for another person's arrival. "A las dos y media te espero frente al mercado ... ." (Vísperas del silencio, p. 10.) Or it may be intensified by its use to convey the anxiety the wives of the guards have until they know who was killed. "Prefería el vacío de la espera en soledad a la común angustia." (El fulgor y la sangre, p. 76.)

Many forms of the verb esperar are common. Generally negative attitudes and values are indicated by desesperación, desesperadamente, desesperanza, desesperado, inesperado, or desesperar. A more positive attitude—yet still a passive one—is indicated by the noun esperanza.

The words which appear in second place refer to some form of drinking. For example beber, emborracharse, borracho, borrachera, vino, "ponnos otras copas," and so on. The words just given are usually connected with the consumption of intoxicating beverages. The drinking
of such beverages is generally done by the characters in a social way among friends. An example is Pío in "Solar del Paraíso" who wanted to celebrate his birthday by buying his friends a round of drinks at the neighborhood tavern.

However, there is another side to the coin. Aldecoa sometimes indicates that his characters drink because they want to escape from the reality around them. Nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the story "El porvenir no es tan negro." The characters feel that their lives are limited because of low-paying jobs. It is one of the character's belief that "... [si] te tomas cuatro vermuts ... el porvenir no es tan negro." (Caballo de pica, p. 66.)

Sebastián in Con el viento solano depended upon drinking to disguise the emptiness of his life. After he had killed the guard he drank little during his week of flight. The days of fleeing wore him down; he wanted to be recaptured. Being sober he lacked courage to turn himself in. As a result he began drinking heavily until he finally could surrender.

In the third place are words which refer to death. They may be openly associated with death—morir, muerte, muerto, matar, matado. Or they may refer to death more obliquely—cementerio, ahogar, "se lo comieron las piranas," and so on. It can be deduced from the previous discussion of the death motif that each volume published by the author deals with death in one form or another. The frequent references to death emphasize how much it is a part of Aldecoa's reality. The use of words openly associated with death ("a mediodía murió Simón Orozco," on page 193 of Gran Sol) are reinforced by references which may not be related to physical death: "La calle está muerta ... ." (Espera de tercera clase, p. 94.)
Words related to the emotion of fear are found in fourth place. They may be *miedo*, *tener miedo*, *temer*, *temeroso*. As with the three groups of words given above, these words vary greatly in their intensity. As examples: "Roque no quiere esperar. Teme al tiempo ... ." (Parte de una historia, p. 194.) Roque is enough of a fisherman to realize how dangerous an enemy the weather can be. He knows that weather conditions will often determine what a person can or cannot accomplish. In this case he understands that the dead American Jerry must be buried before the rains come again.

The fear which Sebastián feels when told to surrender before he killed the guard is much more intense. Aldecoa describes it: "Tuvo miedo, un miedo aniquilador." (Con el viento solano, p. 52.)

The characters usually come from the lower economic class. For this reason the word *dinero* appears the fifth most frequently. The people who do not have a lot of money seem to feel that having it would solve their problems. The possession of money cannot make a person content. Aldecoa has shown how two different groups of people (wealthy and poor) feel about money in "Vísperas del silencio" and "El mercado." Thus the word *dinero* means different things to different people, yet it is important to all of them.

The five groups of words given previously occur with a high degree of regularity. The words and phrases which follow are not as numerous. However they do consistently appear, making one consider them important as an emphasis of Aldecoa's view of reality.

*Aburrir*, *aburrimiento*, *aburrido*. These words occur generally in relation to one's job or occupation, as in Gran Sol for example. As a contrast they are used to describe people who have no job or
occupation also. Examples of this usage are found in "El silbo de la lechuza" and "Esperando el otoño."

_Acostumbrarse_ and _costumbre_. The use of _acostumbrarse_ indicates the passive attitude of the characters. If they do not like a situation they are in or the lives they lead, their reaction is that of Sonsoles: "Ya te acostumbrarás." (_El fulgor y la sangre,_ p. 25.) She even repeats the statement three times trying to convince Ernesta that her only solution is to become accustomed to her life as it is.

_Costumbre_ also appears. It shows that the characters have already accepted a certain situation to the extent that it has become a custom. The custom is usually an integral part of a person. For example, a client tries to tell Don Marcelino that smoking _tabaco rubio_ causes cancer. All that he can reply is "Sí ..., pero la costumbre. Ya sabe usted ... ." (_Pájaros de Baden Baden,_ p. 74.) Even life, the act of living, has become a routine, a habit. An indication of this is the reference to the stops which the truck drivers make as they travel. Aldecoa simply says that "era la costumbre." (_El corazón y otros frutos amargos,_ p. 11.)

_Suerte_. It would appear that Aldecoa's characters believe luck or fate to play a large role in their lives. To a character like Simón Orozco, luck is a vital part of his life. To another person luck is something which can take the blame for personal failures. The boxers in _Neutral Corner_ are an example. The defeat of one fighter was blamed on a "golpe de suerte." (_Neutral Corner,_ Chapter 10.) Aldecoa offers a third side to the part which luck plays in a person's life. Through José Cabeda he says that "... la buena suerte, que no existe, ... es solamente la ausencia de la mala." (_Con el viento solano,_ p. 144.)
No haber remedio, no tener remedio, no poderlo remediar, and irremediable. These expressions, like esperar and acostumbrarse, indicate a passive acceptance of what life brings. They are used to indicate the passivity of characters in varied situations, ranging from the abulía of Rafael in "La piel del verano" to Sebastián's acceptance of the fact that his murder of the guard is a deed that cannot be reversed, to the acceptance of the inevitability of Simón Orozco's death: "No tiene remedio, ... morirá hoy." (Gran Sol, p. 188.)

Sucio, suciedad, podrido, pútrido, asco, asqueroso, basura, mierda, nauseabundo, and soez. These words describe the environment of the characters. They emphasize the poverty of the characters and show that suciedad is a very definite part of reality as Aldecoa sees it. The words may refer to a physical, tangible object such as "sucios cristales" (Chapter Four of Neutral Corner), but to something intangible as well: "Mañana era una palabra grata y sucia para la señora Luisa." (Caballo de pica, p. 136.)

Soledad, separación, solo. These words emphasize the basic loneliness felt by some characters. This is especially true of three people—Sebastián, Simón Orozco, and Jerry. It will be remembered from Chapter Three that Sonsoles actively seeks to be separate in her early years.

Divertirse, divertido. Some of the author's characters seek to relieve the tedium of their lives by some form of amusement. To some characters amusement keeps boredom away: "... Lo que yo quiero es divertirme, y ahora me aburro." (Pájaros de Baden Baden, p. 173.) Aldecoa shows in another story that the attempt to amuse one's self cannot solve the personal problems plaguing a married couple. "Todo el mundo
se cree en la obligación de divertirse y como no lo logra se emborracha." (Visperas del silencio, p. 38.)

Resignar, resignado, resignación, and "estaba de Dios." These expressions appear often enough to indicate once more the passive nature of the characters. The death of a child whose life could probably have been saved is accepted with "estaba de Dios." (Visperas del silencio, p. 25.) The parents' attitude can perhaps be explained by the statement the author makes about resignation: "Hablaba de la resignación que hay que tener si a uno le salen mal las cosas o nunca le toca la Lotería o pierde un ser muy querido." (Arqueología, p. 45.)

The last expression to occur frequently is "como siempre," an indication of the monotony of the lives which the characters lead. Very little happens to them, and when it does it is usually bad. The uses of "como siempre" vary from an indication of simple routine: "¿A qué hora quieres la cena? --Como siempre" (El corazón y otros frutos amargos, p. 72); to the monotony of a job: "La guardia transcurría como siempre" (El fulgor y la sangre, p. 6); to the deep irony expressed by the use of "sin novedad" in the captain's log of Gran Sol. In the latter case the fishermen experience such bad weather and sailing conditions that it all has become commonplace.

Weather Conditions

An emphasis upon the natural environment is very much a part of Aldecoa's view of reality. The weather conditions influence or reflect the events in persons' lives. At times the environment is stressed to such a point that it almost becomes another character which adds to the misery of the characters.

A study of the thirteen novels and volumes of short stories reveals
that the primary elements of Nature which recur are lluvia, calor, frío, and tormenta. The seasons which predominate (those in which the action generally occurs) are otoño, invierno, and verano.

This writer understands that the Iberian Peninsula is subject to extreme heat and cold. Our novelist is not exaggerating the hotness of the summers nor the coldness of the winters. What he has done is to make it a constantly emphasized, inescapable factor in the lives of his characters.

For example in the novel El fulgor y la sangre the heat of the summer day on which the action took place is stressed time and again. It makes the waiting harder for the women. They suffer physically from the heat as it drains them of energy and shortens their tempers.

Con el viento solano, being a sequel to El fulgor y la sangre, has the same emphasis upon heat. The solano, a hot wind that comes from the east, is an extra element. It is with the coming of the solano that Sebastián commits his murder. Aldecoa has made the solano a subtle force which is unavoidably linked to the murder.

Weather conditions are important to the fishermen of Gran Sol. They are dependent upon the weather; it often decides whether or not they can cast their nets or take them up. Their fishing grounds are in the North Atlantic which at times has very bad weather. In Gran Sol the weather varies from a few hot, sunny days to more days of rain, coldness and high seas. Physical discomfort resulting from the weather is added to the mental anguish of knowing that bad weather deprives the men of their meager income.

The climate of Parte de una historia is milder because of the geographical location. Bad weather, however, accompanies some of the
The highpoints of the novel. The Americans arrived by accident when a storm left them shipwrecked. The burial of Jerry occurred during a time when the falling rain had become a drizzle. Other aspects of nature which are frequent on the island are the winds and the clouds of dust it raises.

In the short stories the action is accompanied by varied weather conditions, generally heat, cold, and rain. Following are examples of how the natural environment appears.

The main elements of Nature which appear in Vesperas del silencio are the coldness of winter and rain. Incidences of good weather are rare, and this makes them stand out. A good example is the one beautiful night in "Los vecinos del callejón de Andín."

El corazón y otros frutos amargos contains stories in which the weather plays a significant part. The action of "En el kilómetro 400" concerns truck drivers who find their employment made more difficult because of the rain. At times natural conditions (page 15) hint that the story will end tragically.

The extreme heat and the bright sun of "La urraca cruza la carretera" add to the bitter tone in the conversations of the road crew.

Omicrón of "Un cuento de Reyes" regulates his life according to the seasons. With his lack of clothes he must depend upon the sun's warmth in the winter.

The thunderstorms which precede the coming of fall are emphasized in "Esperando el otoño." For the men in the story it marks the end of another season. The change in seasons with its monotonous regularity is an indication of the monotony of the lives of the characters.
"Patio de armas." The dreariness of the school is emphasized by the cold rain which seems to fall continuously. It makes the schoolboys restless because it limits the number of games they can play.

Rain again is important to the action of "Aunque no haya visto el sol." Here the death of Teresa occurs on a rainy night, making the situation more pathetic.

The action of "La piel del verano" takes place in the summer. The heat of the day is linked to Rafael's abulia. He has lost all will to do what he wants.

"El silbo de la lechuza." In this story winter is coming. To the old ladies it means a period of boredom because they cannot continue their "investigations" into the lives of other people.

"Ave del Paraíso." To the characters here the coming of summer will be the beginning of their boredom. The winter passed agreeably for them because of the presence of "El Rey," but he is leaving.

The heat of the summer has made Elena an abulica in "Los pájaros de Baden Baden." The summer when she is left alone in Madrid causes her to realize that she is growing older and more lonely. It emphasizes her lack of a meaningful relationship with a man.

"La humilde vida de Sebastián Zafra." The curiousity of seven-year-old Sebastián is linked to the coming of spring. He becomes aware of the beauties to be found in Nature. The stages of his life are shown in relation to the seasons. His life comes to an end as winter is about to turn to spring.
"Hasta que llegan las doce." The death of a father occurs in the winter—a time when life will already be harder for the family.

"El aprendiz de cobrador." The summer season is stressed because of the contrast it shows in the characters. Leocadio at the beginning of the story is a young man in love who fantasizes about what his married life will be like. Now he has no responsibilities. As the story ends, one can read between the lines to perceive that the two young people made love. The act makes Leocadio aware of his responsibilities, and he has become as grave and unsmiling as the veteran collectors.

"Los atentados del Barrio de la Cal." Summertime brings fights between supporters of rival political factions. The blame for the fights is placed on the extreme heat. This would be true for in the winter "hay treguas ... porque a todos se les complica la vida ... ." (p. 71.)

"Solar del Paraíso." The rain from a thunderstorm washes away the family's house, and the family is forced to leave their "paradise."

"Seguir de pobres." The coming of spring means the migration of the men who work as farm laborers. Their poverty becomes apparent.

"Muy de mañana." The coming of winter with its cold becomes a time for death. Roque's dog is killed, leaving Roque to face the winter alone.

Arqueología

"La vuelta al mundo." An old man's love of imagining himself in adventurous situations is emphasized by the cold, rainy November day. He can experience his adventures in comfort protected from Nature.

"Los bienaventurados." The vagabond heroes of this story regulate
their lives by the seasons. During the winter it is customary for some of them to pass days in the relative comfort of the jail serving time for vagrancy or petty crimes.

"Y aquí un poco de humo." Doña Ricarda states explicitly what Aldecoa has implied throughout his works: death comes twice a year, in the autumn and in the winter. In this story a child dies after Christmas.

"La nostalgia de Lorenza Ríos." Lorenza, who had been forced to leave her beloved Yucatán and come to Spain, plans to return to her home in the spring. The use of spring is good because it matches the feeling of joy in her heart.

"Crónica de los novios del ferial." The heat of the day is a suitable accompaniment for the jealousy of a new husband when he thinks his wife is flirting with other men.

Pájaros y espantapájaros

"Al margen." The warmth of the July sun and a visit to the beach should be an enjoyable experience, but for Ruth it is not. She drinks too much and has headaches.

"Camino del Limbo." Miguel is waiting for a train to take him to the city. The rain and October cold match his mood of depression. The cold of November finds him working at a job he does not like. He is so depressed that he asks "¿Hay primavera?" (p. 47.)

"El diablo en el cuerpo." Don Eladio is committed to an asylum in the autumn. There is a hint of winter in the air. The coldness it will bring seems to deny hope for him.

"Lluvia de domingo." The rainy afternoon is the cause of the loneliness of the boy because his friend cannot come to accompany him on
a trip to the country. The rain is a symbol of his loneliness.

**Neutral Corner**

In Chapter Thirteen the funeral of a boxer whose life was a series of misfortunes is accompanied by storm and thunder clouds.

The examples given show to what extent Aldecoa uses the natural environment to accompany the misery his characters already have in their lives. Harsh weather and bad luck emphasize their hopeless situation.

**Comparisons between Human Beings and Animals**

The use of references to animals places man on an almost equal footing with the animals. Aldecoa does not employ the man-animal comparisons and descriptions in order to take away man's dignity. He has too much compassion to do that. Instead, the use of animal references seems to show the author's belief that at times man lives like an animal, very probably through no fault of his own. One can note from the following quotations the variety of animals referred to.

**El fulgor y la sangre**

"La abuela tenía ojos de comadreja y unas manos largas ... como dos alacranes." (p. 18.)

"El campo era un zumbido y un aroma. El hombre abrazó a la mujer. El juego desemboca en lucha. Medio ahogada, con el rostro salivado, se debatía la hembra contra el macho." (p. 33.)

María Ruiz "tiene una lengua de víbora." (p. 51.)

In an affectionate way a mother calls her son a "niño gorrino." (p. 54.)

"No la vamos a enterrar como un puerco podrido." (p. 65.)

The fear that a child will become animal-like is expressed:

"... A mí niño, para que no se haga una cabra, lo voy a enviar donde
mis padres ... ." (p. 79.)

"Y el crimen cometido con una herramienta tiene siempre un sofocado sabor a algo barbaro y horroroso, mezcla de bíblico pecado y de angustiosa reacción animal." (p. 107.)

Con el viento solano

"Una nube de sueño le hizo imaginarse como una araña enorme ... ." (p. 45.)

"... Sabía que lloraría, que se desesperaría sin ninguna vergüenza pidiendo la libertad. Aquella no era más que la legítima defensa de la animalidad." (p. 104.)

Sebastián after murdering the guard: "Un profundo pozo lleno de chispas, de resoldos deslumbrantes en la oscuridad, de algo también animal y blando como el cuerpo de una babosa se revolvía dentro de él ... ." (p. 102.)

Sebastián "bebe lentamente y el nuevo, violento movimiento, en la aparente desgana, muestra algo felino y escurridizo." (p. 107.)

"Había que sentir la tranquilidad de los demás para saber que el propio corazón es un animalillo rebelde que muerde en el pecho sin descanso." (p. 235.)

Gran Sol

"Los demás están como las merluzas, con un ojo en la superficie y el otro en el fondo." (p. 40.)

"Con vosotros no se puede hablar porque sois unos burros ... ." (p. 42.)

Parte de una historia

"Es como un perro, no otra cosa ... los ojos brillantes, mira que te mira, pero fiel y quieto, por si lo paran o le mandan un toletazo." (p. 165.)
Espera de tercera clase

"... La criatura se enfrió, cogió moquillo y murió como un gatito ... ." (p. 10.)

"Sebastián era como un pájaro sin refugio perseguido por el azor."
(p. 14.)

"Las fachadas de las casas, pequeñas como guaridas de lobos, se amoratan ... ." (p. 68.)

"Roque y 'Cartucho' no son como amo y perro, son casi como hermanos. Se parecen." (p. 92.)

"Roque tiene una mirada perruna, triste casi siempre, alguna vez feroz." (p. 92.)

Pájaros y espantapájaros

"... [La playa] es peor que un hormiguero ... ." (p. 32.)

"En un banco dormían tumbaros dos soldados envueltos en sus capotes; grandes capotes militares que los asemejan, cuando están de pie, a pájaros bobos." (p. 37.)

La Damiana, thinking about his two friends: "... No hizo nada por despertarlos; eran los dos únicos animales fieles que le quedaban ... ." (p. 90.)

"Chico sustitúa a un muchacho de cara ratonil ... ." (p. 95.)

"Don Ulpiano se sumergió en el sillón y empezó a mirar, con ojillos de perro en celo, a una señora ... ." (p. 99.)

The description of Faisán, a bootcleaner: "Pajarreaba en el verano por las ferias del Ebro ... ." (p. 107.)

"Aquellos cuatro hombres parecían gusanos gigantes nacidos de la tumba de 'Faisán'." (p. 114.)
"Pedro no se atrevió a abrir la boca por temor de que le saltasen los dientecillos, ratoneros y careados ... ." (p. 24.)

"... Los soldados absorbían como animales los perfumes de alcoba sin ventilación y de droguería mareante." (pp. 127-128.)

"Su mujer sonrió con su carota de ubre de vaca suiza." (p. 140.)

"El jefe de la estación se paseaba por el andén; dominaba y tutelaba como un gallo, y su quepis rojo era una cresta irritada ... ." (p. 27.)

"El corazón, hija mía, que busca como un pájaro." (p. 84.)

"Andas como un sapo ... ." (p. 96.)

"Los extranjeros son más civilizados que nosotros y no andan como los perros." (p. 123.)

"El torero tenía la boca abierta y los dientes grandes y amarillos, como los caballos de la pica." (p. 190.)

"El futuro campeón apoya sus puños, como dos águilas, sobre las alcándaras de las cuerdas." (Chapter One.)

"... Movía la cabeza, pendulada e hipnóticamente, como una culebra." (Chapter Ten.)

"'El ala derecha,' pensó el estratega, 'siempre es definitiva.' " (Chapter Ten.)

"El viejo camarero ... iba de mesa en mesa, frágil, doméstico, temblante y arácnido." (p. 11.)

"Me hacen echar las tripas esos viejos cerdos." (p. 14.)
In reference to men: "Son como buitres ... ." (p. 16.)

"El oído zorrino del alfíl había captado la petición." (p. 27.)

"El moscardón ese ha recibido su merecido." (p. 28.)

"Se necesita ser zorrón ... ." (p. 36.)

"A las siete de la tarde novios nictálopes encontraban acomodo en las últimas filas de los cines mientras en las primeras tosían y expectoraban sólidos burgueses en compañía de sus elefantas." (p. 43.)

"Sus largas manos rapaces se cerraron un instante."

"... Si paseamos por el parque nos vamos a transformar en ranas." (p. 66.)

"Su mirada de cánido los estudió con detenimiento." (p. 69.)

Don Juan's wife treated him "como a algo que está entre el animal y el hombre, que no es del todo hombre ni del todo animal." (p. 87.)

"Allí me encuentro como un león enjaulado entre los barrotes del papeleo ... ." (p. 96.)

"Si no me hubieras tratado siempre como a un perro ... ." (p. 98.)

"Don Luis Arrilucea ... con las mangas de la camisa ligeramente recogidas mostrando el vello jabalino de los brazos ... ." (p. 101.)

"El Gran Barbudo movía la testa, como un asno de noria." (p. 122.)

"Tenía cabeza de mosca a miles de aumentos." (p. 125.)

"... El Rey avanzó hacia su alimáña preferida." (p. 129.)

"Sin gafas parecía un gorrión frito." (p. 153.)

"Era una muchacha de rostro vulgar, ... vestida de cazador." (p. 156.)

A description of the jail in which "El Rey" was held: "Porque esto parece el zoológico. Todo el mundo viene a ver al raro animal capturado." (p. 187.)
"... Yo de Rodríguez, como un perro sin amo." (p. 201.)

"Los camareros, igual que las hormigas, se encontraban, transmitíanse algo y continuaban su camino ... ." (p. 238.)

"El tabernero tenía derramadas las mejillas sobre la quijada y parecía un perro, feo y enfermo." (p. 252.)

El corazón y otros frutos amargos

"Prestaba la misma sumisión a los camioneros que el perro suelto, que el perro cien padres al que le da el pan." (p. 16.)

"Salvador se había casado con su criada, que era un medio esperpento resignado, a la que galantemente llamaba 'la yegua'." (p. 17.)

"Ese barco es una taberna. Es un caserío con mucho animal dentro." (p. 40.)

"Ignacio se estaría mirando con ojos de pez la caída del mineral." (p. 49.)

In one case Aldecoa brings an animal up to the human level:

"Escuchó a su madre riéndose al gato, humanizando al gato." (p. 70.)

"Husmeó sorprendido como un animalillo." (pp. 82-83.)

"A las once de la mañana se esponja, como una mosca gigante, en la acera donde el sol pasea ... ." (p. 99.)

"... Un chiquillo panzudo se mueve con torpeza de cachorro ... ." (p. 107.)

"En la chabola huele a brea, a recocido de ranchada, a un olor animal, violento, de suciedad y miseria." (p. 109.)

"Martín Jurado hizo alto con su familia a la orilla del río, frente a la ciudad, en un pueblo como un pájaro negro, pronto a levantar el vuelo ... ." (pp. 110-111.)

"Luego se metió en la taberna a beberse unos vasos de vino mientras
miraba con sus ojillos de pájaro miedoso la fuente de cerveza y el vermut ... ." (p. 128.)

"Acaso tiene perfil de ave; acaso sus manos se mueven como alas cuando explica a Juan donde vive ... ." (p. 162.)

"El hombre ... siente tras de sí su propia sombra arrastrada, fiel, cautelosa como un perro golpeado y amigo." (p. 162.)

"El viejo es el más culpable y el más cerdo." (p. 170.)

Vísperas del silencio

"La gente chungona llamaba al callejón, en vez de Andén, de las ratas." (p. 86.)

"... Les llamaban ratas, ratas nauseabundas de cloaca." (p. 125.)

"Lo malo es que los cerdos, alimentados de desperdicios encontrados en la basura, suelen acabar de golpe y sin aviso, como los chulos de antaño." (p. 131.)

"Doña Leonor García de Del Cerro, traza de elefanta, era de Valladolid ... ." (p. 133.)

"Pedrolas se mordía las uñas, acentuando su cara de ratón, donde únicamente los ojos no eran de ratón, sino de rata." (p. 140.)

La tierra de nadie y otros relatos

"Temía la visita o el cliente de última hora, fiel como una moscarda al cristal ... ." (p. 139.)
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Ignacio Aldecoa was a man with a personal philosophy of life. Fear of death, desire for accomplishment, and rejection of fate were the forces motivating his selection of the reality found in his prose fiction. He saw the people around him wasting their lives in an endless maze; they had no direction or purpose. They were simply getting through life without taking advantage of it.

This latter attitude was unacceptable to the author. Yet he did not condemn the people for their reaction to life; they did not know that there could be a better life for them. Motivated, then, by a desire to accomplish something concrete before death, Aldecoa used his novels and short stories as a means of revealing to his audience the kind of life the latter were leading.

In order to communicate with them, he portrayed characters like themselves. Thus the man of the working class, the humble, the persecuted, the troubled man abound in his fiction. To make more complete the reality he described, the author added the presence of wealthier people. His opinion of the people he characterized is evident: he favors the weak, poor ones because they have so many more obstacles in their lives. The difference in his attitude toward the characters is seen by the compassion for the poorer people and the humorous ridicule of the well-to-do.

Aldecoa chose from the lives of his characters the aspects he felt would best show the futility of their existence. These aspects (death,
montony, loneliness, resignation) become the major themes of his fiction. Physical death could not be overcome, but the last three could have been alleviated or eliminated.

Only two characters in Aldecoa's fiction establish their individual philosophy. Their peace of mind comes from knowing what their purpose is. They are by no means free of problems, but they do have a direction for their lives.

The author's prose style reflects his attempts to stress the themes. The descriptions of characters discussed in Chapter Two reveal his attitude toward the characters. In Chapter Four it is shown that Aldecoa reinforces reality by repetition of words and phrases, emphasis on weather conditions, and by comparisons between human beings and animals. These narrative techniques describe the environment of the characters as well as emphasize the themes.

The conclusions arrived at concerning Ignacio Aldecoa and his works are the following:

1. Each person's life should have a purpose and a philosophy.

2. The philosophy must be individual. The philosophies of the two characters who develop them have little in common with Aldecoa's.

3. Before one can develop his code of living, he must be aware that there are choices to be made in life. In other words, a person must choose whether or not to resign himself.

4. There is a dual purpose for the author's fiction. It reflects his personal philosophy of accomplishment before death, as well as a rejection of fatality. Secondly, it is also an attempt to make his fellow men aware that life is more than something to be endured.
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