City, Chronicle, Chronotope: Re-Constructing and Writing Old Quito

Ernesto B. Capello, Macalester College

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/ernesto_capello/1/
City, Chronicle, Chronotope: Re-Constructing and Writing Old Quito

Ernesto Capello*

In 1906, the liberal journalist Manuel J. Calle penned a tale of heroism set during the battle of Pichincha that liberated Ecuador's capital city of Quito from the Spanish in 1822. Abdón Calderón was a captain in the republican army who died from dysentery in the San Juan de Dios hospital in the days following the battle. In Calle's account, however, his story was transformed into a melodramatic example of fiery patriotism. As the republican forces encountered the Spanish garrison, Calle related that the captain ran to the fore of the charging army. Holding the national standard in his hands while shouting "¡Patria! ¡Patria! ¡Libertad! ¡Libertad! ¡Y adelante!" Calderón soon met with Spanish bullets. Receiving wounds first in one arm, then the other, he rushed forward with his sword in his teeth, until a cannonball took his legs and he fell on the blade. While Calle's main purpose in relating the legend was to heal the partisan divide amongst liberal factions, his theatrical rendering of the heroic death inspired an ongoing cult to the young captain, which would thereafter be included in official commemorative events, including a monumental centerpiece at the 1922 celebration of the battle's centennial. Even today, the legend is still told to school children, for it awakens patriotic fervor.

Calle's retelling of the Calderón legend illustrates the power of a chronicle of the past to advance a political agenda. In the 1920s and 1930s, a group of more conservative writers embraced the same format to challenge the result of the modernization advocated by Calle and other liberals in the early 20th century. Centered in Quito, writers like Cristóbal Gangotena y Jijón, Alejandro Andrade Coello and Alfonso García Muñoz advanced a vision of a city that coexisted harmoniously with its pre-modern past. This article will analyze the depiction of time, space and social relations in these works while interrogating the function of nostalgia in modern urban culture. In so doing, it will locate their work within the intellectual currents of early 20th-century Ecuador, arguing that the developing notion of Quito as a city of memory provided a form of social grounding during the radical upheaval of modernization.
During the 1920s and 1930s, Quito was coming to terms with the extensive and rapid transformation of the previous three decades. The triumph of the liberal revolution in 1895 propelled startling development of a once stagnant capital long known as the “cloister of the Andes.” The liberal impetus to modernize Quito largely stemmed from the regionalism endemic to the 19th-century political map, with conservatives centered in the Andes and liberals dominant on the coast. The revolution thus represented a victory not only of a political philosophy but also of costa over sierra. Transforming Quito became a crucial battle in the liberal modernization campaign, and a flurry of activity under new president Eloy Alfaro provided electric light, indoor marketplaces and a series of public buildings. Industry began to concentratethe south side after the 1908 completion of a railroad connecting Quito with Guayaquil, Ecuador’s main port. This accelerated an influx of workers, mostly indigenous migrants from the countryside, whose settlement near the train station initiated spatial class segregation that continues to the present. It also contributed to rapid demographic and geographic growth as the population doubled between 1906 and 1936 while the city’s area ballooned from 174 hectares to 813 hectares. Increasing political turmoil arising from an extended economic slump after the decline of Ecuador’s cacao exports in the 1920s paralleled these developments, further contributing to a sense of chaos. The 1930s continued this trend, as not a single government managed to survive a full term in office.

The shifting sociopolitical landscape and growing disquiet about the uneven results of modernization led many Quiñeños intellectuals to embrace an idealized vision of the capital’s past. This discourse developed in two main avenues. The first manifested in elaborate celebrations of region-specific national holidays, particularly the centennial celebrations of Quito’s declaration of independence in 1809 or its liberation from the Spanish in 1822. The second concerned a boom in historical studies, particularly after the creation of the Academia Nacional de Historia (ANH) in 1920. Dominated by conservatives, this body’s work denied liberal and indigenous accomplishments through a myopic focus on the pillars of Hispanic society, especially the capital city and the Catholic Church. Among the historians who crafted this “official” history were Archbishop Federico González Suárez and his student Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño, a conservative politician and several times mayor of Quito.

The city’s chroniclers belong to this broader tradition that reconstructed the city’s past during an epoch of modernization. However, unlike the commemorations of the great centennials or historical writing, their work expresses an intimate affection for local culture and traditions marked by a telescopic focus on the “trivial” matters of everyday life. A second feature that distinguishes their work is an implicit attention to contemporary social problems, echoing the literary renaissance of their day. They did not embrace socialism, however, as did better-known writers like Jorge Icaza or Pablo Palacio. Instead, they favored the restoration of values typical of pre-modern society. This agenda reveals itself in the representation of time and space in their writings, or what the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin has termed the chronotope.

Bakhtin conceives of the chronotope as a particular intersection of time and space that determines the genre of a literary work. In his 1938 essay, “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics” he provides a general definition:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.

Bakhtin continues by illustrating the interconnectedness of the chronotopical elements of time and space in various forms of literature, ranging from Greek romances to 19th-century novels. For the purposes of this article, the most relevant are those corresponding to the idyll (in which a space is imbued with perfection stretching through generations of unchanged traditions) and the folkloric world featuring the figures of the rogue, clown and fool. Each of these chronotopes can be found in abundance in the writings of Quito’s chroniclers, and will be used to provide a framework of analysis to illuminate their peculiar critique of contemporary society.

The chronicle developed in Quito through the fusing of two earlier trends in 19th-century Spanish American literature. The first is the tradición, an ironic slice of historical time developed by the Peruvian writer Ricardo Palma in the 19th century, characterized by the use of popular idiom broken by historical asides. Penned between 1872 and 1915, Palma’s Tradiciones Peruanas consist of vignettes
depicting a colorful episode of Peru's past, most often set during the colonial era but leading up to the mid-19th century. These historical events and figures, which are often painted in a satirical light, reflecting the author's political liberalism. Although a major influence on Quito's chroniclers, particularly Cristóbal Gangotena y Jijón, Palma's use of chronological, historical time differentiates his work from theirs. Many of his tradições contain a paragraph or section giving detailed historical references to support the authority of his narrative voice and placing the tale within an ordered sequence of events. This is often bolstered through the use of chronological organization to his collections as a whole. Palma thus sought to link his tradiciones directly with history, even as his ironic tone differed from that of the historian.7

Quito's chroniclers, on the other hand, shy away from the use of direct historical references except in brief notes that do not break the thread of the tale while avoiding chronological organization and thus historical time. As such, they echo the notion of this figure put forth by the Czech writer Karel Capek. Unlike the historian's penchant for a synthetic, chronological approach to storytelling, Capek contended that, "...the chronicler sees only the individual cases and even finds them pleasing in themselves."8 As a result of this attention to the incident and the isolated, non-temporal detail, literary chronicles of Quito leave historical time behind. In its place they insert the chronotopic characteristics of the idyll where the past coexisted in space and time with the present.9

The existence of an idyllic chronotope stems from the peculiar format of 19th-century Ecuadorian costumbrismo, the second major component of the Quito chronicle. Unlike the focus on national identity typical of a collection of tradiciones, costumbriistas portrayed colorful customs of a specific locality, often through the exaggeration of local stereotypes. For instance, costumbriista depictions of Quito such as those written by José Modesto Espinosa beginning in the 1860s lampooned Quito’s cloistered, provincial traits. Similarly, José Antonio Campos depicted Guayaquil and its hinterland as characterized by rough brashness.10 Given the regional nature of local politics, however, costumbriista depictions often took on political overtones. Following the liberal revolution, Manuel Calle and the novelist Roberto Andrade used costumbriista writings to advance their support of Alfaro’s reform agenda through vicious censuring of Quito’s provincialism. This critique naturally latched on to Quito’s decidedly “un-modern” ways as epitomized in its extreme Catholicism, its historic isolation and vast collection of colonial architecture.11 In the 1920s, however, chroniclers like Cristóbal Gangotena y Jijón, Alejandro Andrade Coello, and Alfonso García Muñoz inverted the liberal discourse of the early part of the century through lauding those very characteristics of a provincial idyll.12 In so doing, they created a new genre within Quito chronicles determined by the fusing of idyllic time with a folkloric sensibility.

Some general trends can be identified in the work of these three chroniclers. First, each focuses on the activities of the ordinary inhabitants of the city's streets, breaking with the “great events” approach typical of the González Suárez historical school or even the early indígenistas.13 Secondly, they often present an essential definition of Quitero identity, which is generally identified with a slow pace of life and the presence of a wily charía or prototypical merchant of the city streets. Third, they are moralists. Lastly, they reject the class distinctions of modern times in favor of an idealized vision of earlier forms of social organization.

The classic work of this period is Cristóbal Gangotena y Jijón's collection of Quito legends, Al margen de la historia: leyendas de picaros, frailes y caballeros (1924). Gangotena y Jijón was a member of one of Quito's oldest families, the head librarian of the Municipal Library during the 1920s, and well known for his genealogical studies of some of Quito's oldest families such as the Borjas and the Izáezas. As a result, much of his work resembles that of the ANH, of which he was also a member.14

Of the writings under discussion, Al margen de la historia represents a group chronicles that most closely resembles Palma's tradición. It consists of a group of unconnected fables designed to amuse the reader through a focus on matters “desechadas por los historiadores graves.”15 As the subtitle suggests, the stories are mostly quaint adventures involving the elites of Quito's colonial society: priests and aristocrats. The focus on the colonial era implicitly denounces any modern quality to the city by locating its essential character in the remote past. In addition, the work is dominated by the presence of two chronotopes described in detail by Bakhtin: the idyllic provincial town and the folkloric figures of the rogue and fool.

Bakhtin conceives of the idyll as any space characterized by humdrum life with cyclical continuity over generations, thus expanding it from its usual pastoral associations. Gangotena’s Quito is home to a courteous and pious people living a simple and
monotonous existence, exemplified best by the setting of several adventures in churches and convenuts. However, as Bakhtin notes, this cyclical time can only be used, "...as an ancillary time, one that may be interwoven with other noncyclical temporal sequences or used merely to intersperse such sequences that are more charged with energy and event." Gangotena similarly is prone to breaking the monotony through the sudden appearance of a rogue, such as a thief, adulterer, or buffoon, who breaks this everyday quietude and gives the tale an ironic and picareseque tone. Besides incorporating a chronotope with its roots in medieval literature, his characterization of Quito as a haven for jokers conforms to the notion of sal quijeta, a stereotype developed in the late 19th century, especially in Modesto Espinosa’s costumbria articles mentioned above. The myth of sal quijeta depicts the native of the city as a savvy trickster able to emerge unscathed, if not for the better, from any situation. In Gangotena’s fables, examples of this sal abound as a mocking counterpart to the manners of the honored past.

For example, in “La virgen de la empanada” Gangotena relates the story of Don Cristobal de Cevallos, a colonial official with a mania for the occult. Eating an empanada one morning, Cevallos discovers an image of the Virgin Mary in a spot of lard on the empanada’s wrapping. The paper is then venerated for several days until a local prankster finally burns it, destroying a local treasure while censuring Cevallos’ ridiculousness. Another chronicle, “Prestigio de los calzones,” narrates the tale of the first hot-air balloon ride over the city. The traveler lands in a nursery, a visit that impresses the nuns so much that years later the youngest whimsically wonders if a man came attached to a miniature balloon that landed in the courtyard during a festival. Independence itself receives a similar treatment. In “El Te Deum del Señor Santander,” Gangotena describes the post-Pichincha humiliation of the royalist bishop Leonardo Santander by a patriotic priest demonstrating his sal by reading from the same psalm the royalist had referred to in the cathedral the day before while praying for royal victory.

While the main character is the city of centuries before, Gangotena’s tales satirize contemporary urban life and criticize the ruling liberal party. Cevallos’ passion for the occult, for instance, echoes Eloy Alfaro’s well-known mysticism. The balloon story parodies liberal discourse praising technology’s transformation of the “cloister of the Andes” as well as the recent hubbub surrounding the first airplane journey between Guayaquil and Quito. The depiction of the priest as an ironic patriot criticizes liberal anti-clericalism. This criticism at times takes a more direct approach through lambasting the sterility of contemporary life. For example, in “La virgen de la empanada,” Gangotena bemoans that “...en tiempos del Rey, hasta los habitantes del otro mundo eran más sociales que en la época minguada que alcanzamos.” A similar consideration of the past as answer to an overly sanitized present can be seen in the reminiscences of our second chronicler, Alejandro Andrade Coello.

Born in 1881, Andrade was a moderate liberal and a prolific writer. Besides literary criticism, his main focus was educational reform and matters of hygiene. In the late 1920s, however, he began a column in the Quito newspaper “El Comercio” entitled “Crónicas quiteñas.” He continued similar writings in the 1930s, which were collected in his works Recuerdos de Quito (1934) and Del Quito antiguo (1935). Andrade’s depiction of the traditional city as a center of art and memory condemned the bustle and chaos of modernity—instead musing on the lost tranquility of his childhood Quito. Unlike Gangotena, Andrade’s portraits of the city’s past conjured up the ordinary people he remembered. Through these portraits, he reimagined the disappearing city as quieter and gentler than its present.

In “Crónicas quiteñas,” Andrade presents himself as a pedestrian observing the city’s homes and streets in the manner of Calle and Modesto Espinosa. Instead of denigrating the city, these guided tours serve as starting points for digressions into the realm of memory: documenting a building’s historical importance, a local legend, or a personal memory inspired by his surroundings. Simultaneously, he defines Quito as an artistic center due to its colonial architecture and statuary and advocates embracing its past glories rejecting the uneven development of the present. For Andrade, the city’s legendary artistry provides a fulcrum for overcoming shortcomings of its contemporary progressive model. However, he realistically admits that the old city is vanishing quickly and thus seeks to document life in “el viejo Quito, que se va para no volver...”

Two later volumes of reminiscences, Recuerdos de Quito, published in 1934 to commemorate the fourth centennial of the city’s founding, and Del Quito antiguo (1935), perpetuate Andrade’s enthusiasm, which stems from his belief in the power of progress to disrupt and destroy and his stubborn clinging to the customs of a bygone era. Virtually every vignette from Recuerdos de Quito
begins with a lamentation for the passage of the old days followed by a colorful illustration of disappearing customs, such as Saturday festivals and gas lanterns. In Del Quito antiguo, he expands this vision by portraying various fools and rogues of the old city. These include a one-man band, a blind aguador (water-carrier) who answered insults in verse, a rich man who always went barefoot, and a cross-dressing mestizo who deceived the city’s well to do into entrusting their daughters to his care. He explicitly contrasts the presence of these folkloric characters to a chronotope of the modern city, characterized by improved services and new buildings. This is expressed most succinctly in the tale of the aguador:

A medida que las costumbres se modifican y los años transcurren, trasformando, como castillo de naipes, la dulce y vieja ingenuidad, dejamos de ver, en la querida y tradicional Quito, ciertos tipos familiares y pintorescos que van desapareciendo... y que hasta resultaban decorativos para la ciudad... [y quienes]... convierten, tal vez inconscientemente, en ludibrio hasta lo que es digno de lástima.4

This nostalgic passage illustrates not only the lament that Andrade has for the passing of an age, but also the value of the colorful characters of the past. Not only do they decorate city streets, but they provide a crucial social function through helping overcome sorrows through laughter. In contrast, the modern age is presented as a destructive force that knocks down sweet tradition like a house of cards.

Besides humor, the other ideals stressed in his writing include honor and courtesy, echoing the idyllic city depicted by Gangotena a decade earlier. Andrade’s largest contribution to the Quito chronicle derives from his ability to capture the decency of ordinary people, thus expanding the social community identified in the city’s idyllic past. He contrasts the sensibility of his characters with those of the present, characterized as vulgar, overly melancholy and alienated from human contact.26 To restore these values, Andrade fabricated an idealized Quito.

Our third chronicler is Alfonso García Muñoz, who in 1935 began publishing a long-running column in El Comercio titled “Estampas de mi ciudad.” García Muñoz later developed the series into comic theatre starring the actor Ernesto Alborn who popularized the genre, which remains a staple of Ecuadorian dramatic arts today. More than any other writer of the era, García’s tales approximate Priscilla Ferguson’s notion of the “literary guidebook” to the city: a work that simultaneously maps the city’s streets, buildings and hidden pockets while ruminating on its everyday atmosphere.27 He presents a spatially oriented tableau of city life, determined by the satirical criticism of chullas engaging with life in the modern city often with only sal quiruña to protect them.

While García Muñoz’s primary attention was to the city of the present, there are two ways in which his depictions make an original contribution to the chronicles of the city of memory. The first stems from the exclusively public and “typical” nature of his portrayals of the contemporary city, which closely correlate to the ethos of the folkloric rogues that Bakhtin describes. Besides breaking the humdrum nature of everyday life, Bakhtin’s rogues “create around themselves their own special little world, their own chronotope,” which is characterized as belonging exclusively to the public square, while simultaneously standing apart from conventional society. As such, the rogues are able to critique the culture, poking fun and laughing, and getting their contemporaries to see the humor and irony around them.28 In García Muñoz’s “Estampas” the main chulla, Evaristo Corral y Chandela, serves this function precisely as he tramps through the city, whimsically commenting on the trappings of modern life, such as buses and unemployment. His companions are also typical figures of the modern public square, from chapitas (policemen) to traperos (street vendors). Evaristo traverses local traditions with the flair of a wandering flaneur, from an afternoon at the cockfights to throwing water at carnival, always moving within his own unique space-time.

The second aspect of García Muñoz’s attention to the city of memory concerns the interaction of his characters with the traditional areas of the city. While much of his column discusses the picareque adventures of his heroes, there are several instances where the chulla comes to a particular place within the city and engages with its historical or memorial significance.29 There are three basic types of memory sites that García Muñoz identifies: colonial architecture, contemporary monuments, and longstanding customs. The latter two give rise to mischief in his stories as his heroes scoff at the seriousness of monumental statuary or mock the city’s traditions. For example, in “Hablando con Don Simón,” Evaristo asks the recently erected statue of Simon Bolivar if he is bored by constantly sitting in the same position astride his brisado corcel, gazing to the south of Quito.31 In “El juego de Carnaval” Evaristo and his friend the gringo arrive in the middle of a customary carnival water fight. Forced to join the mayhem, they
end up mastering the neighborhood battle. Not only did carnival inspire a sense of play, but it also enabled the gringo, who had hitherto been portrayed as a butt of jokes and a good mark for chulla’s skills as an amateur pickpocket, to gain the upper hand over those who usually ridiculed him.  

The third and most common way in which García Muñoz’s characters interact with the sites of memory concerns what one might call obvious landmarks, such as natural edifices (mountains, gorges) or colonial monuments (churches, plazas). In several stories, his hero suddenly encounters an anachronistic remnant of the past, leading him to wax upon the disappearing city. Only then do the chullas overtly compare the past and present, leading to the inevitable negative judgment of contemporary modernization already seen in the writings of Gangotena and Andrade. In “Sabado Inglés,” for example, Evaristo passes underneath the Arco de la Reina, a monumental arch on García Moreno street built in 1682. Arrested by its majesty, he meditates upon its past.

Hubiera deseado contemplar ese Arco antiguamente, antes del advenimiento de la luz electrica. Figurame que habia sido sitio especial para citas amorosas, emboscadas de “ganster” y puñaladas a mansalva. Ahora, la civilizacion, con sus “osram” potentes, desflora la oscuridad impidiendo que en las sombras se ame, se robe y se asesine.  

The musing upon the Arco de la Reina illustrates several aspects of García Muñoz’s engagement with the past. The desire to see the arch before it was illuminated by electric light highlights both the degree to which Quito has physically altered, as well as a nostalgic desire to encounter a time lost to the younger generation. Secondly, the scene criticizes the sterilizing effects of progress, which has destroyed the flavor of an urban nook in by eliminating the possibility for both love and crime. Again, this critique echoes the lamentations of the other chroniclers. However, it would be a mistake to label any of these writers as simply romantic nostalgists, for their adoption of various chronotopes can be shown to be pragmatic rhetorical purpose. This can be illustrated through an analysis of various facets of Bakhtin’s chronotopes and by drawing in the relevance of Quito’s social history.

One of the key facets of the chronotope consists in the existence of pragmatic reasons for its use. This is partly connected with an author’s desire to write a work belonging to a particular genre, whose chronotope must likewise be adopted. However, Bakhtin reminds us that “these generic forms, at first productive, were then reinforced by tradition...” That is to say, the chronotope was initially used because of its practical, or “productive” purposes related to the social conditions of a given era. By extension, one can also argue that the use of a particular chronotope may continue to hold practical associations, a fact noted by Bakhtin even as he criticized those who adopt a chronotope not “adequate to later historical situations.”

What then, are the pragmatic functions behind the adoption of the folkloric or idyllic chronotopes that we have so far identified in the work of Gangotena, Andrade, and García Muñoz? The answer to this lies in the relationship of these chronotopes to generic time, i.e., the present, past and future. In the case of folkloric literature, Bakhtin argues that a form of “historical inversion” is applied to time wherein the ideal is situated somewhere in the remote past. This leads to a devaluation of the future and the “enriching” of the present and past. Within the idyll, time is presented as inherently cyclical so that a present generation’s valorization stems from uninterrupted continuity with the lives of their ancestors, both in terms of the temporal organization of everyday life as well as the spatial location of the idyll.  

In both the folkloric and idyllic chronotopes, then, there is a function related to temporality. By combining the two, Quito’s chroniclers were at once employing a historical inversion extolling the city’s past at the expense of the present while also drawing a desired line of uninterrupted connection between the present and the past. Tied to these actions was the use of the rogue that conforms to the old stereotype of sal quirina and rhetorically proclaimed the city as a folkloric idyll. The key to understanding the importance of such an idyll stems from the basis of the folkloric chronotope in pre-modern society, one in which class distinctions have yet to be drawn and society can be viewed as holistic, even if not completely harmonious. The refracted portrait of contemporary life seen in Gangotena’s critique of the liberal agenda, Andrade’s conception of progress as sanitation, and García Muñoz’s use of the public square thus posits a vision of Quito as a city with a pre-modern sensibility and, in the case of García Muñoz, even a folkloric pace. Although these are warped perceptions of the historic past of the city, the use of these chronotopes responded to the upheaval Quito experienced during the early 20th century as it embarked on an age of industrialization, rural-urban migration and heightened class tension and segregation.

The three chroniclers studied can be understood as developing a
genre and discourse in which Quito could be defined as a simultaneously folkloric and idyllic space, in which the socioeconomic stratification peculiar to the modern city could be denied, or overcome. In Gangotena’s writings, this corresponded to a total repudiation of a modernizing ethos and an embracing of the splendors of a mythical colonial past. For Andrade, the modern represented an un consummated attack on a city where traces of its folkloric and idyllic past still existed. Most interesting is García Muñoz, who detailed contemporary life through the lens of a folkloric chronotope, both in his use of pre-modern pacing and humor as well as the direct interaction of his rogue chulla with sites of memory. Each of these approaches can be read as attempts to answer the challenges of the modern city by identifying and asserting the relevance of older chronotopes. Although these writings distorted the historical record, they succeeded in fabricating an idealized vision of the past that could inform and instruct their contemporaries.  

Consequently, Quito’s chroniclers were writing works that were more than simple nostalgic studies of trivial phenomena – rather, they were creating complex, refracted portraits of their own era. The success of this tweaking of the past to inform the present can be highlighted by considering the perpetuation of their folkloric, idyllic chronotope today, in the great number of chronicles that continue to be published in Quito.  

To conclude, this essay should address the broader value of this form of analysis when considering the onset of modernization in an urban setting, but particularly in Latin America in the past 150 years. As is well known, alongside the search for progress and modernity in cities from Buenos Aires to Paris to New York to Istanbul, detractors sought to contrast the chaos of the modern with an idyll. This was often given a spatial referent in the countryside, such as the provincial town in France, the cauchó of the Argentine pampas in Güiraldes’ Don Segundo Sombra, or in Turner’s frontier. The case of Quito’s chroniclers, however, illustrates how an attention to chronotope can exhibit the possibility of locating a folkloric idyll in an urban setting itself.

As such, the oft-depicted moral opposition of urban-rural shifts to one charged with temporal elements, where the opposition on the macro level is less about space than about pace. Simultaneously, on the micro-level, individual locations become referents to earlier eras. The image of the city thus becomes as important as a limit to modernity as it is a stimulant.

*Ernesto Capello of the University of Texas at Austin is currently writing a dissertation analyzing spatial representation in fin-de-siécle Quito.

Endnotes
1 Manuel J. Calle, Leyendas del tiempo heroico: hombres de la revuelta (Quito: Círculo de Lectores, 1984), 159-60.
2 Growing up in Ecuador, it was impossible to escape the legend of Abdón Calderón. Calle’s version had some relation to fact – in his first account of the battle, Marshall Antonio José de Sucre did note that Calderón was wounded multiple times yet refused to leave the battleground. Of course, the story has become more fantastical over the years. I recall being told in fifth grade how first one cannonball then another completely blew off each of Calderón’s arms until he held the Ecuadorian flag in first his legs (also dismembered) and then finally in his teeth. Naturally, the gruesome tale ended with yet another cannonball separating the head from the body. A far cry from dysentery indeed.
3 A good exposition of the bases of the liberal praise of modernity and criticism of Andean backwardness can be found in A. Kim Clark, The Redemptive Work: Railway and Nation in Ecuador, 1895-1930 (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1998).
5 Many of these commemorations also shored up the strength of the liberal state, particularly the 1909 exhibition, which was one of Eloy Alfaro’s chief projects after the termination of the railroad. This represents a common feature of such activities throughout the Western world. See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), especially 1-14. See also Ernesto Capello, The City as Anachronism: Remembering Quito in the Liberal Era (M.A. Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2001).
6 Ayala Mora has commented on the irony of the dominance of conservative history during the liberal epoch. As he points out, this phenomenon was greatly due to the relative laxity of González Suárez’s politics as compared to other clerics, the highly professional nature of conservative historiography, and the relative freedom to write enjoyed by the mostly wealthy landowners of the school. See Enrique Ayala Mora, “Estudio introductorio” in La historia del Ecuador: ensayos de interpretación, ed. Enrique Ayala Mora (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional, 1985), 21-22. For a good summary of the historiography of early 20th century Ecuador, see Adam

The 1920s and 1930s saw the onset of a literary renaissance in Ecuador, characterized by attention to social problems and the embrace of new artistic forms. Icaza and Palacio represent two of its best-known authors. Icaza, particularly, is famous for the power of his indigenista criticism as seen in such works as Huasiipunga (1934) and En las calles (1935). For a good introduction to Ecuadorian literature, see Michael Handelsman, Incursiones en el mundo literario del Ecuador (Guayaquil, Editorial Universidad de Guayaquil, 1987). For a summary of the 1930s, see Jorge Enrique Adoum, La gran literatura Ecuatoriana del 30 (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1984). There have also been several studies of the avant-garde during this time period. For example, see Humberto E. Robles, "Lecturación de vanguardia en el Ecuador: recepción – trayectoria – documentos. 1918-1934 (Guayaquil: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana "Benjamín Carrión," Núcleo del Guayas, 1989) and María del Carmen Fernández, El discurso abierto de Pablo Palacio en la encurtijada de los 30 (Quito: Ediciones Libro Mundi-Enrique Grosse – Luemern, 1991).


9 Taunz Castellanos has commented on Palma's use of historicism in his approach to chronicle, although most critics accept his oft-proclaimed divorce of the tradition from historical writing. For more on Palma, see one of the many collections of his tradiciones as well as Isabelle Taunz Castellanos, Las tradiciones peruanas de Ricardo Palma: claves de una coherencia (Lima: Universidad Ricardo Palma, 1999) and Estuardo Núñez, Ricardo Palma escritor continental: Tras las huellas de Palma en Hispanoamérica (Lima: Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, 1998).

10 The context of Capek's remark illuminates the non-temporality of his view of a chronicle. His novel, The Absolute at Large, is divided into two sections discussing the effects of a machine that transforms matter into energy while giving off divine forces as a residue. The first section introduces the main plot and then recounts several isolated miracles resulting from the presence of the absolute. The second section turns from these chronicles to a faux historical account of the ensuing conflicts, wars, and near destruction of humanity. See Karel Capek, The Absolute at Large (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1974), 106-108.

11 Although Quito's chroniclers shifted their use of the tradición, chroniclers of Guayaquil's past, such as Modesto Chávez Franco and Gabriel Pino Roca tended to employ the tradición format much more vigorously than in Quito, even incorporating similar tales of pirates in a chronological order. See J. Gabriel Pino Roca, Leyendas, tradiciones, y páginas de la historia de Guayaquil (Guayaquil: Editorial Jovin, 1930) and Modesto Chávez Franco, Crónicas del Guayaquil antiguo (Guayaquil: Publicaciones Educativas Ariel, n.d.).

12 See José Modesto Espinosa, Obras Completas, vol. I, Artículos de Costumbres. (Freiburg: B. Herder, 1899). See also José Antonio Campos, Casas de mi tierra (Guayaquil, Quito: Ariel, n.d.) and Linternia mágica (Guayaquil, Quito: Ariel, n.d.).

13 A good place to begin looking at Calle's journalistic take on Quito is in the collected volumes of “Revista de Quito” which he printed in 1898 after his move to the capital in the wake of Alfaro's victory. See Manuel J. Calle, ed. Revista de Quito: seminario de política, literatura, noticias y variedades (Quito: Imprenta El Pichincha, 1898). Andrade's novel Pacho Villamar (1900) focuses on the Garcían era, when Ecuador lay under the thumb of the conservative caudillo Gabriel García Moreno. Quito's scenery and customs are beautifully illustrated, but the liberal activist strongly condemns the regressive effects of its provincialism. See Roberto Andrade, Pacho Villamar (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1960).

14 There were several other chroniclers who were also writing at this time and whose work would be interesting to compare to these three. Two writers are of special relevance: Ramiro de Silva, who wrote in the humor weekly "Caricatura" in the early 1920s, and Augusto Arias, a biographer and chronicler writing mostly in the Quito daily "El Comercio" during the 1930s. De Silva's work bears noting because it perpetuates a stereotype of Quito's provincialism while denying the extensive changes that had already become a central feature of the city by the beginning of the decade. Arias' chronicles are perhaps the most virulent in their criticism of modernization; however, his writing is largely derivative of earlier work, particularly that of Alejandro Andrade Coello.

15 Besides the work of the ANH, a secondary historiography developed in the 1920s that tended to locate the center of the national spirit within its indigenous past. However, even work such as Pio Jaramillo Alvarado's El indio Ecuatoriano, which set the standards for indigenista historiography in Ecuador following its publication in 1922, perpetuates the focus on official or heroic memory prevalent in the scholarship of more conservative historians, merely substituting the figure of Atahualpa (the last Inca) for those of the Hispanic church and state. See Pio Jaramillo Alvarado, El indio ecuatoriano, 3rd ed. (Quito: talleres Gráficos del Estado, 1936).

16 It is tempting to consider Gangotena's work as a mere side-
note to his writings with the Academia Nacional de Historia, considering the almost exclusive focus on the Hispanic past, rejecting any post-independence depictions. However, as will be argued below, the chronotopical use of everyday situations and irony formulates a vision of society generically distinct from the focus on heroism and the state found in the works of his historian colleagues.

17 Cristóbal Gangotena y Jijón, Al margen de la historia: leyendas de picaros, frailes y caballeros (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1924), vi-vi.
19 Gangotena y Jijón, Al margen de la historia, 201-08.
20 Ibid., 223-30.
21 Ibid., 149.
22 The first trans-Andean flight in Ecuador took place in 1919.
24 Andrade’s article, “La tradición artística del pueblo de Quito,” elaborates this position: “Quito, no es ciudad de millones de habitantes ni goza de todas las modernas comodidades materiales; pero fulge como un relicario del arte. Por esto, aspira a la perpetuidad de su nombre.” Alejandro Andrade Coello, “La tradición artística del pueblo de Quito,” in Motivos nacionales (Crónicas quitéñas), vol. 2 (Quito: Imprenta de la Escuela de Artes y Oficios, 1927), 213.
25 Andrade Coello, Motivos nacionales, 277.
26 Alejandro Andrade Coello, Del Quito antiguo (Quito: Imprenta “Ecuador,” 1935) 89.
27 For an example of the importance of honor to his characters and the contrast with the modern sensibility, see “El Hombre orquesta,” in Del Quito antiguo, especially p. 84.
29 Ferguson’s concept of the “literary guidebook” describes a literary map of Paris popular during the nineteenth century. Through these reflections, writers not only set forth an image of the city they lived in, but also interpreted its character according to self-constructed standards. See Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
30 Bakhtin, “Forms of Time,” 159-60.
32 Alfonso García Muñoz, Estampas de mi ciudad (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1936), 65-70.
33 This is a direct illustration of Bakhtin’s conception of the carnival as a ritual in which traditional hierarchies are overturned. See Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Hélène Iwowski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
34 García Muñoz, Estampas, 125.
35 Bakhtin, “Forms of Time,” 85.
36 “This peculiar “trans-positioning,” this “inversion” of time typical of mythological and artistic modes of thought in various eras of human development, is characterized by a special concept of time, and in particular of future time. The present and even more the past are enriched at the expense of the future.” Ibid., 148.
37 Ibid., 226.
38 Bakhtin discusses at length the relevance of pre-class differentiation to the use of folkloric chronotopes in his discussion on Rabelais in his chronotope essay. See Ibid., 206-17.
39 “It is important to highlight the degree of distortion in each writer’s portrayal of the past, a feature that underscores their main attention to the social problems of their day. Gangotena’s vision of colonial Quito as a simple land characterized by holy friars and genteel aristocrats bears little resemblance to the historic record. Colonial Quito was rife with social strife that involved the church both as a domineering social force as a location for social criticism and instigator of public protest. See Martin Minchom The People of Quito, 1600-1810 (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), especially Chapter 8 – “Religious Riots and Civil Disturbances.” Similarly, constant bickering and violence between liberals and conservatives characterized the fin-de-siècle represented by Andrade. This was accentuated by the medical and transportation difficulties normal to a non-industrialized city, such as the bad sanitary conditions that led to consistent presence of diseases like typhoid during the early 20th century before the adoption of modern plumbing replaced the colorful aqueducts. García Muñoz is perhaps the one chronicler who least distorts his main subject, the present day. In fact, he even provides some examples of the difficulties of modern life, particularly with regard to financial troubles- Evaristo is chronically short of funds. However, this is overcome not through the developing political protest of labor unions and leftist political parties but through Evaristo’s sal and his good fortune to run into a friend with money at just the right moment to buy him a drink. Again, the figure of the rogue asserts his ability to escape incautiously.” Some of the better-known contemporary chroniclers include...
Bibliography


Campos, José Antonio. Cosas de mi tierra. Guayaquil, Quito: Ariel, n.d.

________. Linterna mágica. Guayaquil, Quito: Ariel, n.d.


Chavez Franco, Modesto. Crónicas del Guayaquil antiguo.

Guayaquil: Publicaciones Educativas Ariel, n.d.


Pino Rocca, J. Gabriel. Leyendas, tradiciones, y páginas de la
La ley de la calle: inseguridad urbana y control social del espacio en la Ciudad de México

Alfonso Valenzuela Aguilera*

La incidencia del crimen y la delincuencia han venido escaldándose durante las últimas dos décadas en la Ciudad de México, llegando a convertirse en uno de los principales desafíos para la gobernabilidad de la ciudad. A raíz de ello, las autoridades locales han llegado incluso a solicitar asesorías internacionales en materia de seguridad a una docena de países que han enfrentado el problema recientemente. En el presente estudio se revisan las principales teorías de la sociología de la delincuencia para después definir una serie de criterios de análisis con los cuales examinar la problemática de la Ciudad de México, y delinear así una serie de elementos claves para la definición de una estrategia urbana encaminada a recuperar el control social del espacio urbano.

Si bien para algunos analistas la creciente espiral de violencia y criminalidad de los últimos años representa un fenómeno cíclico en el comportamiento de la delincuencia, para otros refleja la progresiva desaparición de las relaciones de proximidad, de los vínculos de solidaridad y de los mecanismos de vigilancia comunitaria. Estas relaciones aparentemente juegan un papel determinante dentro del equilibrio y la regulación de las relaciones sociales en los barrios.

En el presente trabajo se cuestiona la supuesta relación entre inequidad, precariedad y delincuencia, examinando los argumentos por los que se asocian como un sistema causal. Asimismo, se expone la manera en que dichas condiciones aumentan las tensiones relacionada con las precarias condiciones de vida que llegan a manifestarse, a fin de cuentas, en el incremento de las tasas de criminalidad. Por otra parte, se advierte que los problemas que se encuentran a la base de la delincuencia son de naturaleza compleja lo cual nos remite a cuestiones estructurales del modelo socioeconómico vigente en donde, de manera intrínseca, se genera pobreza, desempleo, precariedad habitacional, exclusión económica y desintegración social.

Un elemento clave en relación con los índices delictivos es el clima de inseguridad – o la percepción ciudadana de la misma–, el cual ha