ANTONIO FERRES, born in 1924, worked as an assistant engineer until he decided to devote himself entirely to writing. His first book, La piqueta, deals with the life of workers newly arrived from the provinces to Madrid's suburban slum huts. In 1960, he finished Los vencidos, a book banned by Spanish censorship but later translated into Italian and French and soon to be printed in German and Dutch. Ferres is now receiving the acclaim of critics in the United States.

IN OCTOBER and November three of Spain's foremost contemporary novelists visited the campus to speak in a lecture series sponsored by the department of modern languages. "I don't think OU's had anything like this before," says Dr. Lowell Dunham, chairman of the department. "The University may have had a visiting writer here at one time or another but never a series."

Happily, the unprecedented program turned out an unqualified triumph. But it couldn't miss, really. The stature of the guests assured its success. Ana Maria Matute, Ignacio Aldecoa and Antonio Ferres are the leading voices of a new movement in Spanish literature. "These are top writers whose works have been translated into many languages—French, German, Italian, Japanese," says Dr. Robert Vlach whose Books Abroad, OU's international literary quarterly, has followed the career of each author. "We have had no one on such a world-wide scale here before. Writers from Asia and Africa have visited us from time to time on State Department programs, but this is the first time OU has been host to authors of international renown."

Members of the generation who grew up as spectators to the Spanish Civil War, the three novelists write books of penetrating reality which are powerful protests to conditions in present-day Spain. "They have a bitter love for their country, and they criticize out of their love," says one critic.

Though their books are often censored by the government and are subjected also to a more subtle, insidious technique called el silencio in which any mention, any publicity is suppressed, despite these harassments they continue to write with force and conviction. Sometimes they must go outside Spain to have books published; sometimes they must endure censorship. Still they continue. "They are heroes to their countrymen," says Dr. Vlach. "The Spanish have a great pride and respect for them. The status of writers is different (in Europe) than it is here. In the United States, status is likely to be won by how much money a writer makes."

Each writer was on the campus for two days during which he met with classes and talked with professors and students in addition to the scheduled...
lectures, each of which attracted a large audience made up not only of OU faculty and students but also teachers and students from state high schools, colleges and universities. "As one whose primary interest is in Spanish and South American literature, I found their visits a unique, wonderful opportunity to meet those who are writing what we are interested in," said Hugo Martinez, instructor in modern languages. "It's tantamount to having a Carson McCullers or a Philip Roth or a John Updike on the campus. From every conceivable point of view, they gave us firsthand information about a terribly complex country. They were able to tell us what's going on. They afforded us insights no one else can give."

Said Dr. A. M. de la Torre, professor of modern languages, "The personal contact with the younger generation of intellectuals in Spain was the most impressive and lasting benefit I shall derive. It was gratifying to meet these people who, in their own way, are making the best of a situation, are trying to lay a foundation for a new Spain. Their protest against the Franco regime is outspoken in personal contact. It's something one isn't conscious of in their writing because of the censorship. You cannot know a writer simply through his writings. You must talk to him personally. This is not because of fear or lack of courage on the writer's part. They put it down, but they're censored as long as it is published in Spain. It's a tremendous revelation to talk with them, to have them bare their souls to you. It's gratifying to know that Franco must tolerate them to a degree."

Dr. James H. Abbott, associate professor of modern languages who was in charge of arranging the series, is delighted with the response. "Interest has greatly increased since the visits. It has been good for the department, both for the students and the faculty. We were quite fortunate in having writers of such prominence. Students are asking for more of the same from other countries."

A graduate student working toward a Ph.D. in 20th century Spanish liter-