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Political Culture in Mexico

Federico Reyes Heróles

Controversy Over Gulf of Mexico Oil

Jorge A. Vargas

Juan Soriano

Creator of Visual Parables

An Interview



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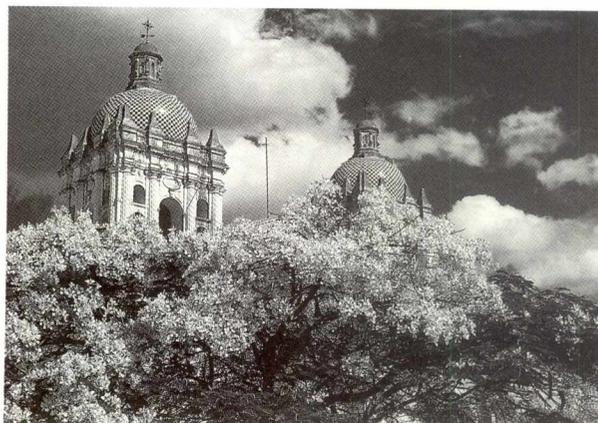
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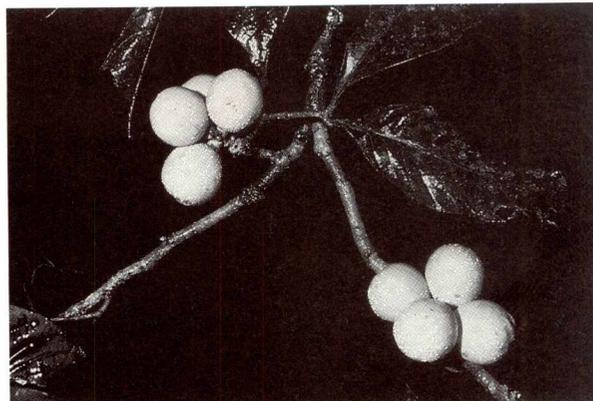
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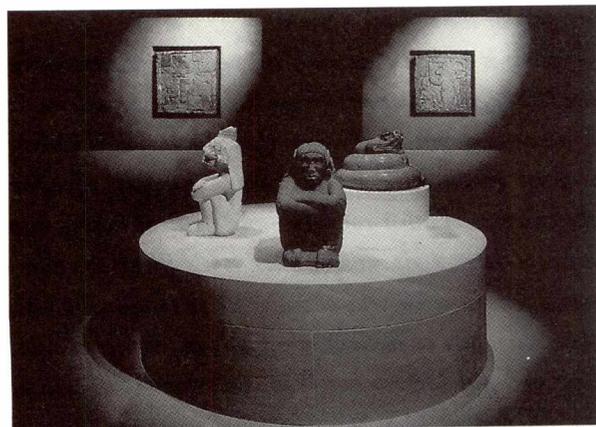
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OUR VOICE

Of all the possible options for its bilateral relations with Cuba, the United States picked a peculiar normative strategy: the Helms-Burton Act. This piece of legislation establishes that all companies which benefit from the use of property in Cuba confiscated from U.S. citizens (many of whom are former Cuban nationals) in the first years of the Revolution may be sued for damages in U.S. courts; among other things, it also denies visas to businessmen who invest in Cuba and blocks the importation of products with Cuban content. This law has been enacted during the U.S. election campaign, when quick answers are more “successful” than well-thought-out, long-term decisions. In this case, the dynamic of the ephemeral victory won out, reflected immediately in the electoral opinion polls. This is the only possible explanation of the passing of a law with extraterritorial effects in violation of international law, which was the reason behind the almost unanimous rejection of the Helms-Burton in the Organization of American States (OAS) (23 countries voted against it), particularly because of the threat to the sovereignty of the region’s nations.

What is truly a concern is the power concentrated in the U.S. Congressional Foreign Relations Committee. It acted on demands by the powerful Miami-based Cuban interest group with a “hard line,” directly affecting the interests of other countries and without taking into account the possible consequences. It is difficult to understand that in a 30-year obsessive drive to drown Cuba, the sovereignty of nations like Canada, France, Spain, England and Mexico has been compromised as well as the interests of U.S. multinational companies just to

pander to the Cuban-Hispanic vote in the U.S. One wonders what makes the world’s largest power use such costly tactics against a little island in economic distress when many other strategies seemed to be at hand.

The democratic process in Mexico is a topic which concerns the country’s diverse political actors and researchers in the social sciences. For that reason, in this issue our section on political issues takes up this question from two different standpoints.

Federico Reyes Heróles, in an illuminating and thought provoking article, explains how Mexico, although still immersed in an authoritarian culture, is going through an irreversible process of democratization. Education, the transformation of communication policies and the reform of electoral procedures are three key elements to accelerate that change.

In his article “The Political Reform of the Mexican State,” Roberto Gutiérrez deals with the new groups and new demands which have arisen in the country and the need to create a new legitimate institutional arrangement in which all political and social actors participate.

In November 1996, the United States will hold presidential elections, which will necessarily affect our country. Barbara Driscoll underlines in her article that Mexico has been dealt with very negatively in the U.S. presidential campaigns and explains that this is unusual in domestic matters. Fortunately, the extremist candidates have not been favored by the voting public.

Also in our “United States Affairs” section, we include a study by José Luis Valdés-Ugalde alerting us to the role that ideologies of racial superiority play in the formation of the U.S. national identity. He also looks at the imperialist elements in the nature of U.S. foreign policy throughout its history.

One of the social phenomena always present in U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations is migration. In that context, Luz María Valdés writes in “The Discovery of Great Manhattitlan” about Mexican migration, particularly from the Mixteca region, to New York. She explains the success and mutual benefit of this migration because of how productive and efficient Mexicans from the Mixteca region are in filling jobs in that great northern city.

New discoveries about some aspects of the morphology of the brain and its functioning are reviewed by scientist Guillermo Gutiérrez Ospina in his article. He emphasizes how important environment can be in the development of certain brain functions.

The section “Science, Art and Culture” also includes an interesting article by Raúl Valadez Azúa, illustrating the important role that dogs played in pre-Hispanic societies, as evidenced in the legends and artifacts left to us from that time.

Voices of Mexico is proud to be able to publish an interview with the extraordinary Mexican painter Juan Soriano, whose paintings grace our pages and whose ideas, experiences and memories enrich them.

Jorge A. Vargas’ important article offers us a series of factors to help us think about the conflict over the legal interpretation of the recent discovery of fossil fuels in the Gulf of Mexico. Apparently, in the area where the newly discovered deposits are located, Mexican and U.S. legislation does not clearly establish the maritime limits.

Our “Economic Issues” section is completed with a pioneering study by Elaine Levine on the effects of NAFTA on the workforce both in Mexico and the United States.

“The Splendor of Mexico” once again offers an article about Mexican cuisine. You can almost taste the delicious Mexican candy that Lynn Wehnes describes. Her article gives a small taste of the wide variety of Mexico’s candy.

Oaxaca is one of Mexico’s most important colonial cities. In his article “Land Use and the Restoration of the Ex-Convent of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Oaxaca,” Enrique Fernández offers us a panorama of the magnificence of that southern Mexican city and describes the efforts to restore one of its most historically and architecturally important colonial buildings.

This section closes with an article by Luis Roberto Torres Escalona, describing two great works by the painter, engraver and illustrator Albrecht Dürer. These works can be seen in Mexico’s National Library.

We have also included an interview with Barbara McDougall, foreign relations minister for the government of Brian Mulroney, who deals with the differences between the foreign policy of Canada’s Liberal and Conservative parties.

In this issue, Voices of Mexico also pays homage to three important public figures who died in the last three months, two Mexican and the other Mexican American: the outstanding ranchera singer Lola Beltrán, the extraordinary poet and untiring cultural promoter Jaime García Terrés and the Chicano activist and one of the pioneers in Mexican American studies, Julian Samora.

Mexico is one of the countries with the broadest biodiversity in the world, both in fauna and in flora. This issue dedicates its “Ecology” section to the great wealth of Mexican flora, rich both in its variety and its importance for the economy and science. Rodolfo Rizo’s article introduces the topic elegantly and simply, while “Medicinal Plants in Mexico” by Edelmira Linares and Robert Bye deals with the importance of this age-old use for plants, part of traditional wisdom, as the authors show by the references to the medicinal properties of plants in the pre-Columbian codices.

Lastly, in the “Museums” section, we offer a brief article about the Mexico room in London’s British Museum. The exhibit combines the architectural and museological mastery of architect Teodoro González de León, who designed the room, with a fortunate selection of pieces from the different pre-Hispanic cultures represented.

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla
Editorial Director

POLITICAL CULTURE IN MEXICO

Paradoxes at the End of the Century

*Federico Reyes Heróles**

It is both true and useless to say that the beginning and the end of cultural phenomena are impossible to pinpoint. The term “process” grants a certain license, offering a broad and suitable margin which allows for referring to these rhythms and long-term processes where so many variables interact that they become unmanageable. How can we blame scholars for surprises when the whole social panorama escapes human possibilities?

This thinking leads to a destination where everything becomes relative. Is Mexico a fully democratic country? The answer is no. But is it becoming democratic? Yes. However, it still has an authoritarian culture. Of course. Nonetheless, another modern and bold Mexico also exists. Yes. And corporativism is still very strong. This is equally true.

The premise of the most serious, rich and suggestive version of this approach is to divide Mexico into many Mexicos and, therefore, reformulate questions into a thousand others. Which Mexico are we referring to? That of the North, the South, the urban, rural, educated, or illiterate Mexico, the one of young people, or that of women. I would like to make it clear that I consider this fragmenting answer from scholars and professionals a more responsible one. It marks great progress for several reasons. First, because statistics have been included in the analysis of Mexican political culture. Second, because once and for all, it puts an end to the unitary version of the country that enabled demagogues and pre-

tenders to talk about Mexico in the singular and use it for their own purposes. Statistics compel us to talk about several Mexicos, and this implies recognizing plurality.

It will definitely take decades to leave behind literary and prescientific approaches and ensure that statistics are present in Mexican social sciences. This is not a simple epistemological or methodological problem, but a matter of altering political and academic interest groups. According to Thomas Khun, the orientation of relevant centers of learning will have to change. My concern is now different. Just as the unitary interpretation of Mexico was fallacious and deceitful, at this stage of the discussion the country’s major cultural traits, derived from figures, are a sea of partial truths that make everything relative. In this sense, I think it worthwhile to review authoritarian sources of thought and contrast them with those of democratic thought. While partial truths may be exact, certain common characteristics produce a different global understanding. Like all generalizations, these face the risk of being inexact or unfair. However, without generalizing it would be impossible to identify the exact location where the process is taking place. Any diachronic reading in which the main latitude is time demands the definition of the complementary parameter. The central objective would be to determine what specific conditions have favored or inhibited democratic culture.

Civilization is one of the concepts that generate great uneasiness in Mexico’s political and academic milieus. For some, it threatens the discourse of nation-

* Editor of *Este país* magazine.

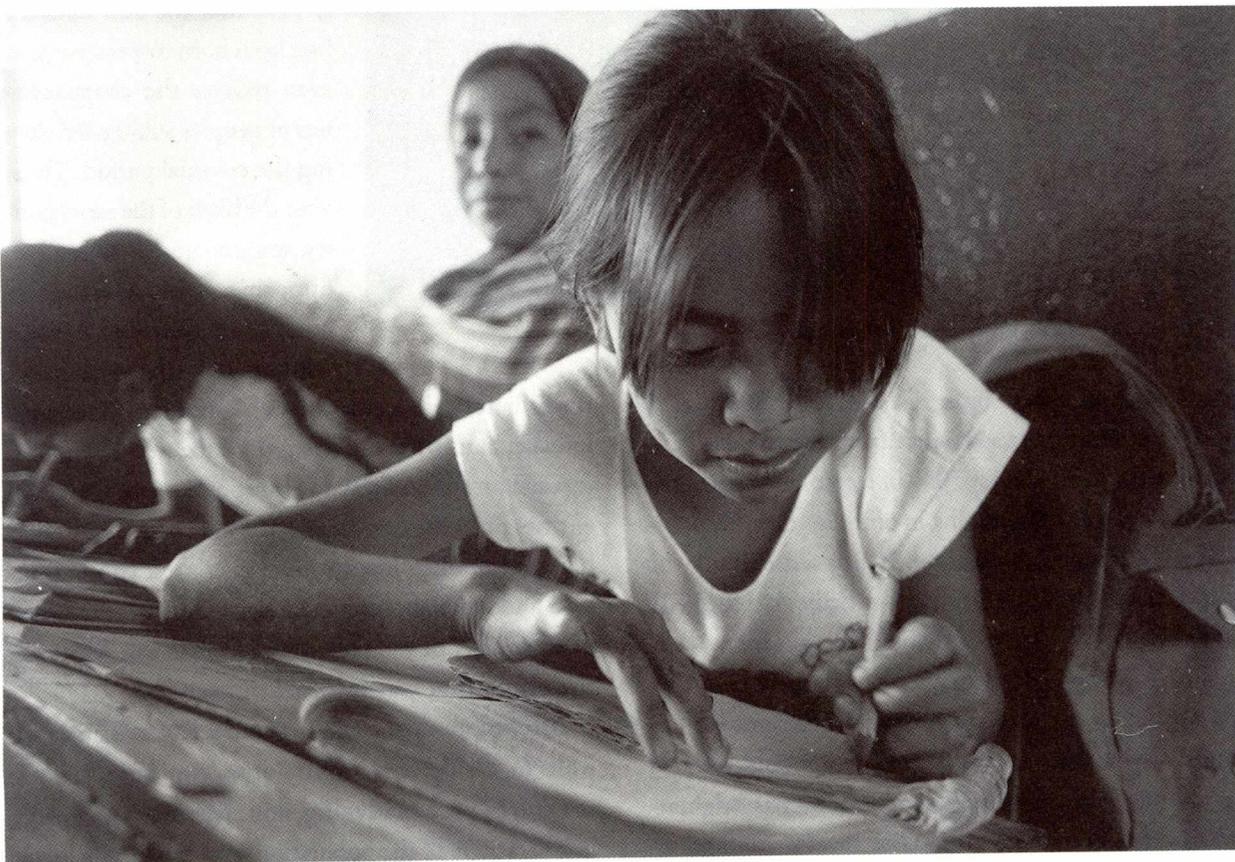
al sovereignty and leads to accepting the unfailing presence of the United States in the Americas. For others, the Eurocentric implications of the concept obliterate the idea of difference as a value in itself.

But then, what can be done? Maybe we should discard this term as inconvenient and impractical for the Mexican case. Should we simply stop talking about civilizing processes and agents? I think that would be a serious mistake. The definitions of civilization are countless. Many of them are validated by such respected authors as Michelet, Tönnies, Alfred Weber, Toynbee, Levy-Strauss or Norbert Elias. I will use here, the one that seems less conflictive for the Mexican case. Braudel says that "civilizations are spaces." Hence the question: To which civilizing space do we belong? For several decades the argument has turned around our cultural proximity to Latin American countries, our belonging to that continental, indigenous and Spanish secondary world that denies the Anglo Saxon through its values.

However, the facts do not support these assertions. In 1990 the U.S.-Mexico border was crossed almost 300 million times. This figure increases geometrically during periods of economic growth in both countries. It took the whole decade of the 1930s for there to be more than 200 million crossings. Today what once happened in one year takes place in only one month. What has happened to anti-Yankee feeling if all public opinion polls indicate that the most admired country in Mexico is the United States, with Japan lagging behind as a distant second? Neither facts nor feelings show that Mexico is looking southward. Furthermore, there is room for the painful question of whether Latin America constitutes a civilization in the full sense of the term. Late in the twentieth century, while relations with the East show great potential, at best they represent wishes, if not wishful thinking.

Many of the civilizing agents presently at work in Mexico come from the West. They have an impact

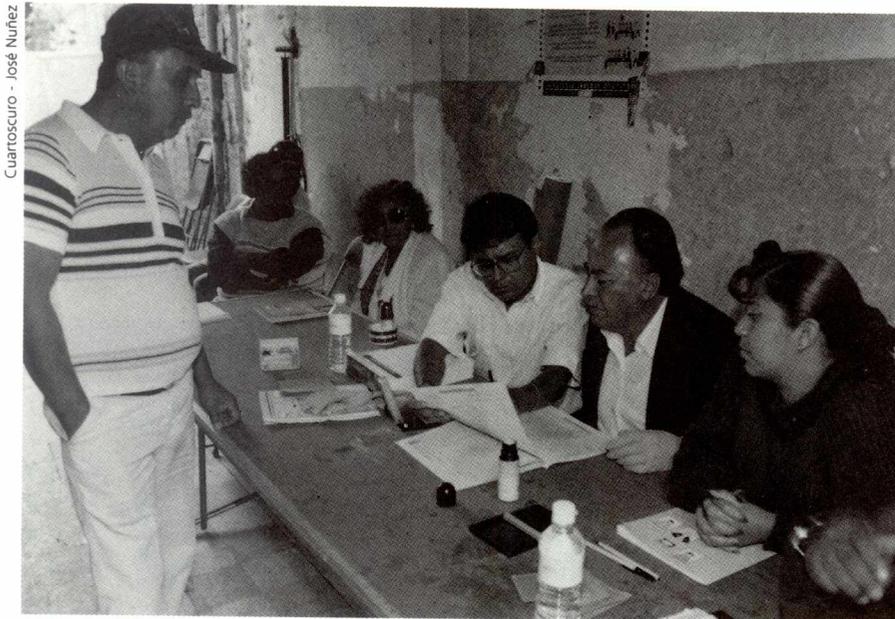
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Educational reform, the key to democratization.

on a society that is totally different from the one which decades ago declared itself Latin American. Ninety-five percent of the population has electricity. Radio broadcasting covers almost 90% of Mexican territory. Around 75% of families owns a radio. Television reaches nearly 70% of the country although there are fewer television sets than radios. In Mexico urbanization is still very rapid: already 70% of the population is urban and only 30% is rural.

There is a direct correlation among urbanization, information, participation and electoral fairness. The main problems arise in rural, isolated areas. Electoral



Cuatrosucro - José Nuñez

Mexico's citizens now participate more actively in politics.

trends already show signs of a Mexican mainstream and indicate the disappearance from the scene of radical positions. In almost 70% of electoral districts the contest is real and alternating in office is a tangible possibility. The trend is increasing. In this sense, it may be said that the country is heading—whether it is the PRI's intent or not—toward a democracy that follows the rules of Western democracies. While it is true that during the last decade Latin America has become increasingly democratic, at least formally, it would be hard to say that Mexico's democratic process has originated specifically in the region. Globalization and growing trade have forced Mexico to systematically com-

pare itself with what is happening in the rest of the world. The strains of modernization are evident.

However, the road is not totally straight and paved. The very origins of the country's national integration still show problems. The founding myth of the Mexican state planted the seeds of authoritarianism and intolerance for which we are now paying a high price. In other words, the creole, independentist discourse based the idea of a new nation on the meeting of two cultures, two bloods, two races: the overwhelming indigenous majority and a very small minority of Spanish creoles. It was assumed that the new

nation would find in *mestizaje* [the mixture of the races] both its origin and destiny, its rationale. *Mestizaje* was authentically interpreted as a new form of integration between ethnic and population issues. Nonetheless, it was simultaneously held that the new country had been born to preserve and even recover the characteristics of peoples subjugated during the colonial period. Thus, with the birth of the new country, tension arose between two opposing poles. Mexico was born to be different; Mexico was born to be the same as cen-

turies before. In contrast with what had happened in other countries, the strength of the new social pact focused on the recovery of ethnic and racial aboriginal entities or in the emergence of a new race. The underlying normative, institutional pact sank the federation and incipient individual rights beneath the notion of otherness, of the entelechy of what was Mexican, the origin that was justified in itself.

After more than a century and a half it is still possible to divide the country into two large groups: mestizo Mexico, and indigenous Mexico. The former includes 90% of the population, and is basically incorporated into the same economic, language and edu-

cational networks as the rest of the country. Indigenous Mexico, 10% of the population, scattered among multiple ethnic groups that speak more than 56 different languages, is simply a separate world with many secondary worlds. The nation as such is fractured. This phenomenon is certainly the result of economic marginalization. But there is also certain self-segregation, a separateness than not even economic integration can overcome. The desire to belong to the Mexican mestizo nation can be a false premise. The founding myth assumed that Mexico crossed the indigenous skies and not the other way around. Different world views are not an obstacle to sharing the same category: They represent the miserable among the miserable. But let's now go back to the underlying cultural aspect.

In his brilliant essay "The Hedgehog and the Fox," Isaiah Berlin sets forth two kinds of thought: that of hedgehogs who know only one truth, however big, and that of foxes, who admit multiple small truths. Hedgehogs do not accept the coexistence of truths and are, therefore, sources of cruel intolerance. Foxes, humbler creatures, skip from one truth to another. The hedgehogs' and foxes' ways of thinking go hand in hand in different countries. Foxes represent the Renaissance thought that allows human beings to explore their own truths. Hedgehog thought of the religious and all-inclusive kind rejects the coexistence of worldviews. Fox thought is liberal, and through the doorway of freedom of belief and expression, forces the acceptance of difference. Hedgehogs represent dogmatic thought based on a large source of unique inspiration, whether a duty, a cultural tradition or a millenarist or racial conviction.

In Mexico, foxes and hedgehogs fight openly. Proto-nationalism based on the purity of the aboriginal became, as always, exclusionary and short-sighted nationalism. Mexicanness —whatever that means— was the incomparable essence of a morally superior people that, as Edmundo O'Gorman once said, made Mexicans different, *sui generis*, special. "There is no

place like Mexico," says the proverb. The nationalism that for decades continued invoking the remote indigenous past as origin and destiny flowed through two inexorable streams of intolerance: the belief in original purity and the idea of a foremost national unity. The problem is that these concepts are mutually exclusive. Either Mexico institutionally agreed to overcome the indigenous world, or an attempt was made to perpetuate the alleged original purity. The belief in purity led to a kind of intoxication with the past. If our only reason for existing as a nation lies in our origins, the past must be turned into a huge totem to which endless tribute should be rendered. The present, and particularly the future, are thus considered mere accidents on a national journey that had, and will always have, its better days in the past. Furthermore, this search for the origin weakened and is still weakening the national pact. If origin is des-

*The different sources
of authoritarian thought still alive in
Mexico are countless.*

tiny, any reformulation is a betrayal. The consequences of this discourse are seen at quite different levels. For instance, if the past is by definition glorious, the community, a legendary form of organization, must be equally so. Hence, not only certain representatives of the Zapatista Army, but quite prominent intellectuals or rulers during the late twentieth century sympathize with the idea of implementing or reinstating in certain areas of the country hands-up voting, which, although an old tradition, violates secrecy and minimal respect for republican forms.

From that perspective, the country's history has been a succession of betrayals of the indigenous world. During a visit to Mexico, the king of Spain met a group of indigenous people who were demanding the right to exercise their property titles over lands granted during the colonial period. Mexico had taken them

away. The idea of preserving indigenous purity and placing community traditions above individual rights, plus the justification of authoritarian measures for the preservation of national unity, has been a terrifying cultural mix.

The different sources of authoritarian hedgehog thought still alive in Mexico are countless. The long-standing hegemony of the Catholic Church propitiated intolerance. Today communities divide and indigenous people kill each other because of differences in beliefs, or sometimes simply over ways of expressing the same belief. Intolerance is alive. It would be useless to say that the lack of religious plurality gave way to intolerance. Mexican corporativism, that for decades buttressed the party in government, is seen as different states within the state. Political life in certain societies and labor unions is sometimes reminiscent of medieval guilds. Agrarian and worker control systems do exist, and represent sources of authoritarian thought where individual rights of free expression of ideas are subject to the political interests of guilds and unions.

The Pax *priista* inhibited fundamental political rights and the country is now paying the consequences of that political culture. The preeminence of a political party in the national arena, the enduring weakness and corruption of other irrelevant political actors terribly undermined the image of political parties as such. According to the World Value Survey of the University of Michigan, around 70% of the population distrusts political parties. Governmental institutions, the judiciary and the legislature, the civil service and the police are not seen as trustworthy. This propitiates volatility in public opinion.

Without exaggeration, it can be said that scientific thought as such has not yet taken root in the country. A recent study¹ shows how 50% of the urban population still accounts for life events as a result of luck. A society with low educational levels and as yet unconsolidated political institutions necessarily speculates. That is our case. How far is Mexico from reach-

*How can we make sure
that the political culture
of Mexicans is
definitely democratic?*

It is hard to tell.

ing the other river bank? How can we make sure that the political culture of Mexicans is definitely democratic? It is hard to tell.

Two extremely important factors affect millions of Mexicans every day. First, the educational system: Mexico must increase the country's general schooling level to 12 years if it wants to contend with the rest of the world. A better educated Mexico will be more democratic. Take for example the recent local elections. Another important factor for transition is the media. Despite their many limitations, television and radio offer information of all kinds to millions of Mexicans, thus modifying their world views. Although there are no recent studies about the type of values transmitted by the educational system or the media, their indirect impact is certainly felt in the behavior of citizens.

Foxes or hedgehogs, democratic or authoritarian. How easy it would be to imprison some and free others! The problem is that, as pure categories, they only exist in our imagination. In their daily lives, millions of Mexicans tread the winding road of industrialization, of urbanization, and are bombarded daily by the interests of their communities, their *ejidos*, their labor unions, their churches, their parties, their neighborhoods; they are bombarded by morning news programs, by commercial spots for international firms. They live their days in the company of the "nomadic objects" that Italo Calvino once talked about. For some, change is too slow. For others, it is too abrupt. When did it start and when will it end? Who can set the dates? What is undeniable is that the process is underway. 

¹ Mónica Sáenz, "Zedillo y la brujas: magia y legitimidad," *Este País*, No. 60, March 1996.

THE POLITICAL REFORM OF THE MEXICAN STATE¹

Roberto J. Gutiérrez López*

This article will present a general panorama of how the political reform of the state has developed in our country, including its motivations, its main objectives and the method used to carry it out. In addition, we will mention some of the most significant steps forward made until now in the framework of an agenda set by consensus to orient the

process. It is noteworthy that because of the breadth and depth of this strategic project, some of the objectives may be attained only in the long term.

A SOCIETY IN TRANSFORMATION

The central and decisive impulse toward the political reform of the state originates in Mexican soci-

ety itself, which is experiencing an intense process of transformation on all levels. Indeed, it is a society which is ever more plural, demanding and participatory, a society which requires more and better institutions in order to make its points of view about public affairs known, as well as to get involved in the solution of the problems confronting it.

The complexity of today's Mexican society is attributable to the magnitude of the demographic,

* Sociologist. Professor at the Autonomous Metropolitan University.

¹ I wish to thank Rubén García Clarck for his comments on this article.

Imagenlatina - Héctor García



The broadening out of the Mexico City Assembly's attributions is being considered.

political, ideological and cultural changes over the last few decades. Undoubtedly, the growing social plurality has translated into diverse forms of organization and representation of social groups who seek to stabilize their social and political positions in a context of generalized change. This is why the many groups and sectors of Mexican society tend to organize themselves and participate in public life not only through political parties, but also through different kinds of citizens' organizations.

Society has changed in ways as varied as regional composition, socio-economic stratification, ideological diversity and political pluralism. Obviously, state institutions could not answer these changes with anything less than a reform that included such essential points as the validity of the federalist structure, the checks and balances among the branches of government, an updated electoral system, the new forms of communication and the new relationship between the state and indigenous communities.

Along with these domestic aspects the reform has also been fostered by the new international conditions. In fact, the international context of economic globalization

and political liberalization has had a decisive impact on the institutions of countries like ours. This has presented us with a double challenge, both due to the social energy liberated by processes of opening and to the imperious need to reorganize both social and productive forces under a new institutional arrangement. Such an arrangement would give impetus to the country's development on different levels, making it competitive within the concert of nations and at the same time taking care that this not be at the cost of sovereignty.

Within this perspective, the country needs to guarantee its internal cohesion through a series of legal and political modifications which will make it possible to take advantage of the existing potential in the nation's social base. In short, both the legal system and state institutions need to be reformed in such a way as to allow them to adjust to the new domestic and international circumstances.

In this sense, the reform of the state has not been conceived of as, nor can it be subject to, any type of individual interest or momentary consideration; its very *raison d'être* is intimately linked to the viability of the national commu-

nity itself. Therefore, both its conception and its implementation must be inclusive and decided by consensus.

This is not, then, a strictly governmental reform, even though it does have the explicit commitment and support of the government. Neither is it a transformation in line with any one political party's project, although all the political parties are involved in it. It is, rather, an effort involving the government, parties, social organizations and the public in general, which explains and justifies the name it has been given: a political reform of the state.

In sum, this transformation of the state undoubtedly constitutes one of the central ways in which the country's political structures will become more efficient and acquire a new institutional legitimacy. That is why it is absolutely necessary to decide on its precise content, limits and tempos.

THE AGENDA OF THE POLITICAL REFORM

On January 17, 1995, the document entitled Commitment to a National Political Accord was signed by the national leaders of the political parties represented in congress and witnessed by the president of Mexico. Following the agreement, a specific methodology was put in place as a result of partial agreements and decisions made by consensus by the political actors in-

*This transformation of the state
is one of the central ways
to make the country's political structures
more efficient.*

volved; this allowed, in turn, for a precise definition of the most appropriate procedures and channels to thoroughly go through the reform agenda. In this framework, participation of the public was understood as basic to dealing with the different topics.

To guarantee efficient handling and coordination of all deliberations needed to formulate the reform proposals, the federal government, the leaders of the four political parties with congressional representation and their respective parliamentary coordinators of both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate agreed on mechanisms and topics for discussion which give body to the work of the reform.

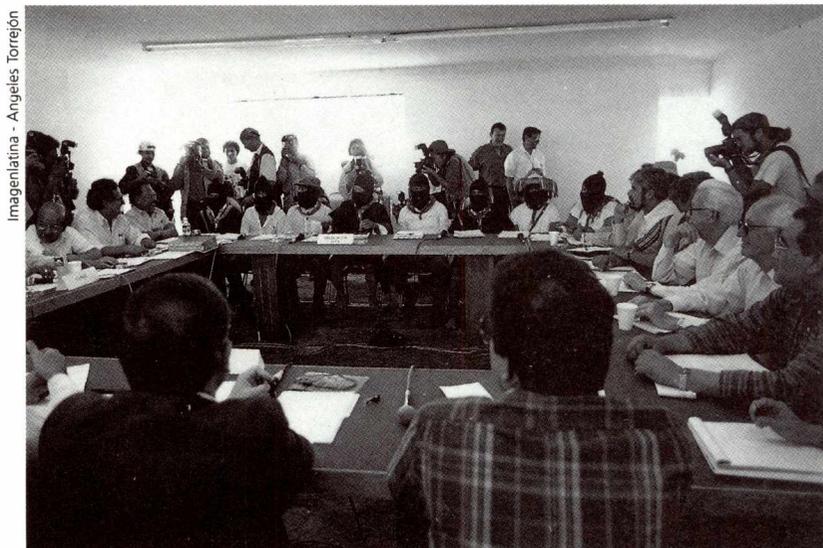
This was the origin of the initiative of creating 10 working groups—a Central Body and nine Specific Working Bodies—to foster political dialogue and the creation of the basic agreements to consolidate democratic changes in the country. The main functions of the Central Body are to coordinate and orient the efforts of the Specific Working Bodies, as well as keeping up permanent communication with congress so that if it deems it appropriate, it can at the right moment legislate on the basis of the proposals made.

All work, consultations, deliberations and consensuses related to the topics on the political reform agenda are different since they advance at different rates and have different limits. This is because in dealing individually with the top-

ics, their particular points of departure must be taken into account: they have both different backgrounds and objectives.

Until now, the steps forward with regard to each topic depend on specific needs and scheduling. Because of the approach of the 1997 federal elections, for example, it was considered appropriate to begin work on the federal electoral reform and that of Mexico City.

Briefly, the following progress has been made:



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The reform of the state aims to include all sectors of society.

a) *Electoral Reform*: The agreements reached bring the difficult stage of consensus-making to a close and open up the new, legislative, stage. The basis for concretizing a definitive electoral reform has been laid; it has been conceived of as definitive because it would close the cycle of reforms begun about two decades ago and establish democracy as the country's norm with regard to electoral processes.

The talks among the participating political parties have led to progress in agreements in the following areas: political rights and the legal mechanisms for their protection; electoral institutions and authorities; organization of the electoral process; conditions for electoral competitiveness; the system of political parties; and mechanisms for representation.

We should underline here the proposals to consolidate the autonomy of the Federal Electoral Insti-

tute, the integration of the Federal Electoral Tribunal into the judicial branch of government, the new conditions for participating in elections (financing and media access), the establishment of the legal possibility of declaring an action related to elections unconstitutional and the measures aimed at creating the Program for a National Citizens Registry.

b) *Political Reform of Mexico City*: Among others, there have

been advances regarding the direct election of the head of the capital city's government, the legal causes for recall from this position, broadening out the Mexico City Assembly's attributions with regard to electoral legislation, the procedure for naming the heads of the boroughs (*las delegaciones políticas*, or the political subdivisions of

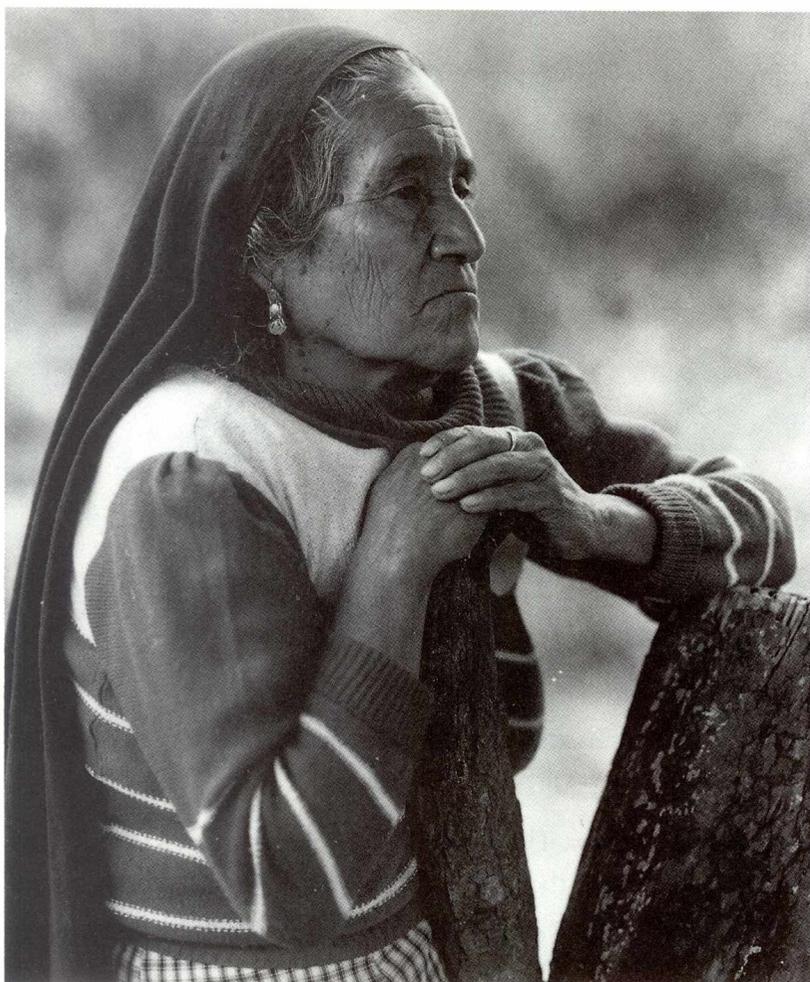
c) Reform of the Three Branches of Government: There has been gradual progress in the establishment of a new relationship between the different branches of government. From the beginning of his administration, President Zedillo, as head of the executive branch, has insisted on a democratic, strong presidency, based on its constitutional pow-

Office, under the aegis of the legislative branch, to facilitate the control and evaluation of public administration, contributing in this way to the strengthening of the system of checks and balances. The Program for the Modernization of Public Administration has also been presented with the aim of making internal government functioning more efficient.

The legislative branch also set up the Plural Commission for the Political Reform of the State to deliberate on increasing its impact on national political life and better expressing the plurality of Mexican society.

d) Administration of Justice: The urgent task of fighting insecurity in Mexico spurred the development of the law that establishes the Bases for the Coordination of the National Public Security System. This piece of legislation defines safeguarding public security not only to include crime prevention, but also investigation and the hunting down of lawbreakers, with the aim that they be tried, sentenced and readapted more efficiently and according to law. Based upon this, the National Council for Public Security was established to coordinate pertinent federal and state activities.

e) Fostering Federalism: A profound process of decentralization has begun in different aspects of national public life, such as education, health, agriculture and animal husbandry, communications and transportation, as well as envi-



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Indigenous rights is one of the main items in the negotiations.

Mexico City), the establishment of procedures for consulting the public about government activities and the designation of the Mexico City District Attorney by the local government.

ers, as the basis for better understanding and cooperation with the other two branches.

In this context, the federal executive sent congress a bill to create the Federal Government Auditor's

ronmental policy and water management.

This progress, considered only the first step, is moving toward strengthening both municipal and state governments' legal, fiscal and economic abilities to promote balanced regional development. To continue with this process, a series of different kinds of consultations will be carried out nationwide.

f) *Indigenous Rights*: A national consultation was carried out which has permitted making the viewpoints of Mexico's indigenous communities known, as well as those of other social groups which deal with the topic. The consultation was inclusive in that it also took into account the proposals of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) as conveyed by the Pacification Commission (Cocopa).

To coordinate this national consultation, a group was formed with participants from both the legislative and executive branches of government: the Indigenous Affairs Commissions of both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and the Secretariats of the Interior, Social Development and Agrarian Reform.

Generally speaking, the idea here is to redefine the relationship between the government and indigenous communities so that, without violating the principles of national unity, these communities be in a better position to decide for themselves their own forms of organization, functioning and political representation.

Press Office - Secretariat of the Interior



Negotiations at the Secretariat of the Interior.

g) *Communications*: In 1995 and 1996 several advances have been made: the Chamber of Deputies agreed unanimously to establish a Special Communications Commission coordinated by a group of representatives of all political parties. This commission sponsored a national consultation, carrying out 11 regional forums in which representatives of both national and local media, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations participated, as well as journalists and individuals from the public at large. The outcome was presented to the Chamber of Deputies last November.

h) *Civic Participation*: An agenda to be made up with the participation of the executive and legislative branch is planned to deal with this topic. The viewpoints of the public and civic organizations will of necessity be included. The Chamber of Deputies formed a Commission for Public Participation which has been carrying out a consultation to bring the cor-

responding legal framework up to date.

* * *

All these advances are only the first steps in the process of transforming and bringing the country's political institutions and culture up to date. The Mexican state will thus go through an overall transformation to become more efficient, to better answer society's increasing demands and to meet the challenges derived from the international context of the late twentieth century.

Without a doubt, the process of political reform of the state is a testing ground for the political culture of the different actors involved. The possibility of a modern structure as a nation and the consolidation of a truly democratic government, capable of successfully becoming a part of the new world order, is at stake in our ability to build agreements using the basic democratic methods of dialogue and negotiation. **W**

XIII Meeting of the Mexico-United States Binational Commission

The XIII meeting of the Mexico-United States Binational Commission took place May 6 and 7 at a difficult moment for relations between the two countries because of the violence perpetrated against Mexican citizens in California recently, in one case resulting in the death of undocumented immigrants.

The high-level Mexico City meeting was a form of consultation to analyze and seek forms of cooperation on the broad range of topics which have an impact on the relations between the two nations.

The meeting was headed up by Mexican Foreign Affairs Secretary José Angel Gurría and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

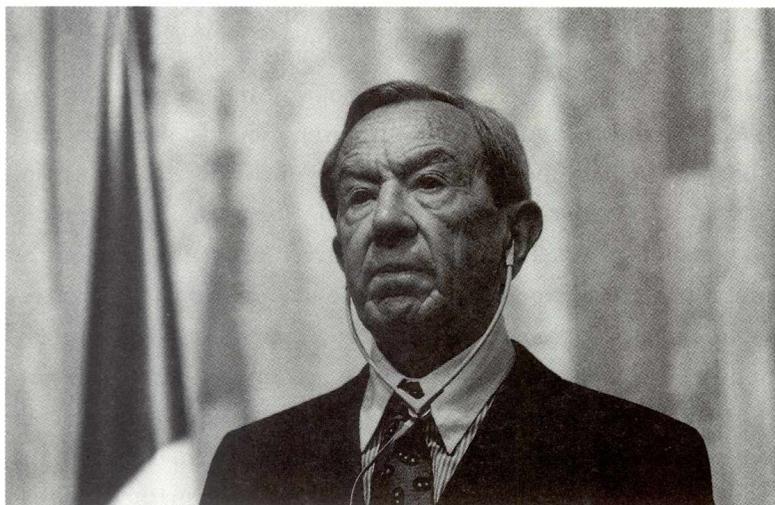
The government officials who participated in the meeting divided up into 16 working groups to discuss the following topics: political affairs; housing and urban development; environment and natural resources; energy; business promotion; fishing and tourism; fiscal, financial and customs matters; labor; agriculture; migration and consular affairs; legal matters and cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking; trade and investment; transportation; education and cultural affairs; health; science and technology; and cooperation on the border.

Among the many agreements which emanated from the meeting, the most outstanding include the steps forward in consular protection of nationals of both countries and human rights. The mistreatment and persecution of undocumented Mexicans in California by officers of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) border patrol —commonly known as “la migra”— and by local police from border towns in April of this year were determining factors in the different working groups. Concretely, in the working group on migration and consular affairs, both delegations expressed their concern about the incidents. The U.S. delegation said

that the State Department was committed to following up the investigation and promptly informing the Mexican government on progress in the case. Also, it said that the U.S. Justice Department would work with local police officials in border areas to review procedures and establish training in human rights protection.

The Memorandum of Understanding About Consular Protection of Mexican and U.S. Nationals was signed precisely to safeguard the human rights of nationals from both countries and considers it in the interest of both governments to prevent situations which threaten the physical safety and human

Cuartosuro-Rodolfo Valtierra

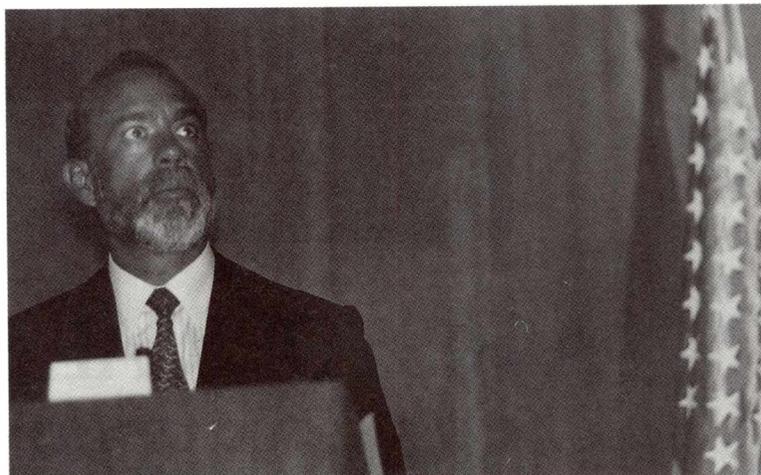


U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

dignity of their citizens when they are in the territory of another country. It also emphasizes the importance of fostering and setting up appropriate institutional mechanisms to efficiently deal with these situations as they arise.

The document establishes the following principles and goals:

1. *To include within the mandate of the Working Group on Migration and Consular Affairs of the Binational Commission, the discussion and evaluation of issues, problems and trends related to the consular protection and human rights of nationals of both countries and the understandings expressed in this memorandum as regular matters on its agenda, in order to make recommendations to the respective Governments, if mutually agreed upon.*
2. *To provide any individual detained by migration authorities with notice of his/her rights and options, including the right to contact his/her consular representatives, and to facilitate communication between consular representatives and their nationals. Both Governments will endeavor, consistent with the relevant laws of each country, to ensure that specific notification to consular representatives is given in cases involving the detention of minors, pregnant women and people at risk.*
3. *To endeavor to provide settings conducive to full and free exchange between the consular representatives and detained individuals in order to allow, consistent with the relevant laws of each country, consular officials to interview their respective nationals when they are detained, arrested, incarcerated or held in custody in accordance with Article VI, paragraph 2, section (c) of the Consular Convention between the United Mexican States and the United States of America of August 12, 1942, and in accordance with Article 36, first paragraph, of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963.*
4. *To allow and to facilitate, consistent with the relevant laws of each country, consular officials to be present at all times at the trials or judicial procedures concerning their respective nationals, including those legal procedures relating to minors.*
5. *To bring to the attention of the Working Group on Migration and Consular Affairs significant reports concerning consular protection and respect for human rights of nationals of both countries discussed at the Border Liaison Mechanisms and the Consultation Mechanisms on Immigration and Naturalization Service Activities and Consular Protection.*



Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Affairs José Ángel Gurría.

Cuartoscuro-Rodolfo Valtierra

Among the other important documents signed during the meeting were the Cooperation Accord on the Energy Sector; a Memorandum for Cooperation in Health; the Letter of Presentation of the XXI Border Program; Letter of Intent on Rural Development; and the Agreement to Establish an Inventory of Natural Resources in the Border Area.

Commitments were made to work on plans for urban development of neighboring border cities using Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, as a basis. The meeting also decided to foster investment in environmental technology; to set up a Coordinating Secretariat of NAFTA; to implement the La Jolla protocol for the protection of dolphins; to move forward in instrumenting NAFTA customs agreements; to deepen the agreements on cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking; to advance in the establishment of a Free Trade Zone of the Americas; and to implement many other agreements about the environment, health, education, the border, trade, migration, etc., that made this one of the most productive binational meetings in history. 



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THE 1996 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Implications for Mexico

Barbara A. Driscoll*

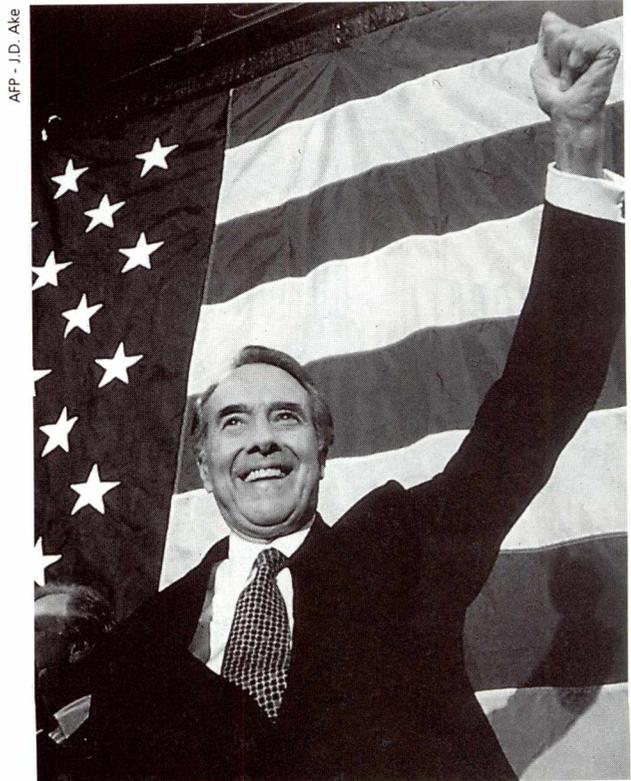
Never has the outcome of a presidential election in the United States had so much potential to affect Mexico. Infrequently does a foreign country receive as much attention in the national political debate in the United States in a presidential election year as Mexico has so far in the 1996 elections. In fact, the president inaugurated in January of 1997, be it William Clinton, the Republican candidate or someone else, as well as the composition of the new congress, could well determine not only the tone of the relationship with Mexico but also the fate of NAFTA, the future treatment of matters such as Mexican immigrants living in the United States and other questions associated with economic integration (e.g., international transport, the import and export of many products and services, etc.). Since the commercial relationship that Mexico sustains with the United States is its most important, even without NAFTA, obviously the stakes are high.

Although many areas of the bilateral relationship and NAFTA could be affected, we will confine our analysis to two points of particular interest.

First, the criticism that has arisen in the United States about the allegedly deleterious effects of NAFTA in that country has worried and perplexed many in Mexico. Many industries throughout the United States clearly benefitted from sales and business in Mexico during the first year of the implementation of NAFTA because the Mexican market really opened. Indeed,

many individual American states have opened offices in Mexico City in the hope and expectation of developing long-term reciprocal commercial relationships with Mexico. Even the mercantile landscape of Mexico has diversified dramatically with the opening of Wal-Marts, K-Marts, Price Clubs, Dunkin' Donuts and even a Marie Callender Restaurant, to the delight of Mexican consumers.

However, the dialogues that have emerged in the United States from the populist conservative arena,



The Republican candidate campaigning.

* Coordinator of the U.S. Studies Area at CISAN.

especially from the Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan camps,¹ distress many in Mexico because they seem to distort the benefits that Mexico has allegedly accrued from NAFTA. Although the implementation of NAFTA has caused profound dislocations in Mexico with painful consequences for practically all sectors of the economy, Mexican public opinion has generally accepted economic integration with the United States and Canada as not necessarily desirable, but inevitable. The December 1994 peso devaluation challenged and still challenges the public perception of NAFTA, as many in Mexico have come to associate the peso crisis with misguided economic integration, although most still accept the agreement resignedly.

The early victories of Pat Buchanan in the Republican primaries demonstrated that a strong anti-NAFTA and anti-free trade position could find electoral support in some sectors of American society, a warning for Mexico that NAFTA might be in trouble. And the

¹ Steven Stark, *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1996.



Seeking reelection.

collapse of Phil Gramm's campaign, a staunch advocate of free trade, further reinforced that opinion and pointed to Buchanan as the representative of the populist conservative right among the Republicans.²

Further, as part of his nationalist economic program, Buchanan has bitterly criticized the financial package that the Clinton administration arranged to help Mexico during the first throes of the crisis after the peso devaluation as basically an aid package for New York banks.³ But as Roger C. Altman has written, Buchanan's position on NAFTA, free trade and the Mexican bailout is more a function of rallying the insecurity of American workers than addressing the realities of the evolving and already profitable new commercial relationship.⁴ Whatever the shortsightedness of the Buchanan campaign regarding international commerce, the image of his electoral victories persists as a symbol of resistance in the United States to economic integration with Mexico.

While President Clinton has been careful not to involve himself in the internal debates of the Republican Party regarding NAFTA, he has made use of opportunities to promote the idea of free trade. In Detroit, at the beginning of March, Clinton took pains to praise the American auto industry, whose exports to Japan have increased 37 percent.⁵ The Clinton administration has clearly supported the notion of expanding the export sector of the economy as much as possible.

Second, the mistreatment of undocumented Mexican immigrants living in the United States personified by California's Proposition 187, and later so graphically illustrated by the recent incidents in Southern California, has grabbed public attention and sympathy in Mexico as nothing else has since immigration to the north became statistically significant during the Revolution.⁶ Historically, Mexico has been ambivalent about the emigration of so many workers north.

² *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1996.

³ Eduardo Mora Tavares, *Época*, March 4, 1996.

⁴ *The Washington Post*, March 5, 1996.

⁵ *The New York Times*, March 5, 1996.

⁶ It is estimated that around one million Mexicans emigrated to the United States to avoid the economic and political hard-

While not a frequent topic of conversation, many policymakers have been aware of the common problems of low wages, substandard living and working conditions and even worse experienced by many migrants. But the undocumented status of many immigrants, a lack of funds, and a sometimes inconsistent policy in Mexico have hampered efforts by Mexican diplomats to better protect their compatriots.

Further, the employment opportunities provided by migration to the United States, regardless of legal status, have helped to offset chronic unemployment and underdevelopment, especially in the Mexican countryside, but also increasingly in the cities. The funds that migrants send to Mexico are often significant sources of income for their families and towns, and in many instances it would be difficult to replace that income with a local source.

More immediately, the poisonous campaign surrounding Proposition 187 in California took many aback in both Mexico and the United States. The emotional criticisms directed at the undocumented Mexican community seemed entirely inappropriate to the Mexican public, but the resounding electoral support that the initiative generated served to demonstrate that anti-Mexican sentiment can win votes. Most in Mexico assume that the subsequent graphic efforts by the Clinton administration to prevent undocumented immigration at the Border are a response to the electoral success of Prop. 187 and to a fear that it would influence the outcome of the presidential election of November 1996.

Moreover, the dramatic videotape of the recent beating of an undocumented Mexican immigrant by a law enforcement officer in Riverside, California, and the tragic deaths of several undocumented Mexican immigrants in a police chase underscored the concern in Mexico about the political climate in the United States. The intensity of the Prop. 187 campaign possibly affected the attitudes of law enforcement per-

sonnel and demonstrated how precarious the lives of undocumented immigrants really are. However, the incidents reinforced an argument that the Mexican government has been using for some time: that one must view the problems of undocumented immigrants within the context of human rights violations.⁷

Not surprisingly, almost all the prospective Republican candidates included the topic of immigration in their primary campaigns, and we can be sure that the final platform adopted at the convention in San Diego will include immigration. Unlike the traditional Republican support for liberal immigration laws, the control of legal and undocumented immigration has become a cornerstone of the Republican party, basically a legacy of the social conservatives. While some, more liberal, Republicans confine their immigration position to stricter enforcement of undocumented immigration at the border, others have addressed the question in general as an analogy for rooting out the causes of American society's ills.

Although no one would deny that Mexicans are the largest group of undocumented immigrants in the United States, the fact is that immigrants from many countries around the world arrive and stay. Moreover, many estimate that about one half of the undocumented immigrants are "overstays," individuals that go to the United States on a plane, boat or car legally and simply stay when their visa expires. Yet, since around the 1970s, public debate in the United States about undocumented immigration basically revolves around Mexicans crossing the border, an image that still persists, and one that was reinforced by the incidents in California.

No one in Mexico was surprised when Governor Pete Wilson tried to launch a campaign for the presidency. It would seem that the strong electoral support that Prop. 187 received encouraged him. In any event, his early withdrawal from the Republican primaries came as a surprise but not a disappoint-

ships created by the Mexican Revolution. Although many later returned, immigration as a product of internal turmoil has remained a point of reference for understanding some United States policies toward the border and Mexican emigration.

⁷ The Mexican Commission for Human Rights has been investigating complaints of human rights violations of immigrants at the border and issuing reports about it.

ment in Mexico. The possibility that Wilson could have carried his Prop. 187 campaign to the national level as a platform was not welcomed south of the border.

Buchanan has also taken the most decided anti-immigrant position, indicating that as president he would build a steel fence on the border⁸ that separates (or joins, depending on your perspective) the United States and Mexico. Although conservative rhetoric in the United States has toyed with the image of building a fence along the border for many years, the proposal is not practical and leaves many wondering about the practicality of Buchanan's policies. One Mexican analyst writes that for Buchanan fence-building takes on allegorical proportions; he seeks to establish barriers to "disturbing liberal" ideas.⁹

In Arizona, Buchanan stressed his anti-immigrant and anti-NAFTA postures, but lost to Steve Forbes and Bob Dole, in part because many voters thought him too extreme.¹⁰ For the first time, Buchanan "met voters who understand their future lies with economic growth tied to exports and a global marketplace."¹¹ Unfortunately, conservative Republicans in states less obviously affected by NAFTA may not have the personal experience to arrive at the same conclusions.

The interesting exception was the Republican primary in New York, where the triumphant electoral machine developed by "Al D'Amato, Inc." to support Bob Dole extolled the ethnic and racial diversity of the region.¹² Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani even vowed to thwart Buchananism which targets New York as the "symbol of immigration's evils."¹³ But New York is worlds away from the Bible Belt, the Sun Belt, the Mexican border and the Republican National Convention to be held in San Diego.

⁸ *Financial Times*, February 10, 1996. Journalist Jurek Martin finds it "odd" that an Irish-American Catholic would be so anti-immigrant.

⁹ Eduardo Mora Tavares, *Época*, March 4, 1996.

¹⁰ *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1996.

¹¹ *The Wall Street Journal*, February 29, 1996.

¹² Steven R. Weisman, *The New York Times*, March 5, 1996.

¹³ *Mexico City Times*, March 6, 1996.

Of course, still the unknown factor among the social conservatives is Ross Perot, who has taken a militant and dramatic position against NAFTA. The national convention of his new political organization, United We Stand (Reform Party), will not take place until after the national conventions of the two major parties. If Buchanan and his followers are not happy with the outcome of the Republican convention, of course it is still possible that United We Stand could court their support.¹⁴

The proposal that illegal aliens be denied social benefits, a legacy of Prop. 187, has also received attention among the Republican candidates. Even fiscal conservative, social moderate Steve Forbes opposes welfare for undocumented immigrants, except emergency medical assistance.¹⁵ Moderate Tennessean Lamar Alexander included the control of illegal immigration in his vision of the future in the United States, ahead of education and abortion.¹⁶

The Clinton administration has defended its position on undocumented immigrants for the last two years by implementing a series of policies designed to reinforce the Mexican border. Not only have the Border Patrol and the Immigration and Naturalization Service received additional funding, but federal authorities have launched highly publicized "projects" to halt undocumented immigration from Mexico. While these policies are intended to respond to domestic criticism arising from Prop. 187 and other anti-immigrant sentiments about the permeability of the Mexican border, immigration from Mexico is inherently a bilateral phenomenon and falls within the parameters of diplomatic relations.

The dilemma of Mexican immigration reflects the emphasis of our argument presented in this article. Obviously, the U.S. presidential elections develop in a domestic framework, but some questions regarding Mexico will play out in the ensuing debates, campaigns and final results. The 1996 presidential election year is one that Mexican society cannot ignore. ❧

¹⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, March 7, 1996.

¹⁵ *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1996.

¹⁶ *The New York Times*, March 1, 1996.

Racism and Early U.S. Foreign Policy

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde*

Since the times of George Washington, the United States has instrumented a peculiar, indulgent notion of charity to indigenous peoples: “We are more enlightened and more powerful than the Indian nations; we are therefore bound in honour to treat them with kindness, and even with generosity.”²

Racism became more than a banner in the United States. When combined with the certainty of being “chosen” among nations, it was a major component of the country’s early “national greatness.” To achieve this kind of “greatness,” there was only one domestic obstacle to overcome: the American Indians. While their aim was economic (their desire to take over Indian lands), the Americans resorted to social and political devices to achieve it. These devices were probably behind the construction of the racist rationale.

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¹ This is a fraction of a major research project in process at the CISAN.

² George Washington quoted in Alexis De Toqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1, Vintage Books, New York, 1990, p. 350. My emphasis.

Moreover, this “encounter with alien peoples” was to be the first of many during America’s pursuit of greatness across the hemisphere and overseas.

U.S. “White power” understood the world and humanity in terms of skin color, assigning characteristics to each color. In this view, Indians were publically condemned as backward, wild and, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, “barbarous tribes of savages that delight in war and take pride in murder.” Franklin, it must be noted, had a racist conception of life. Like Jefferson, according to the convention of the time, Franklin was a slave owner. He considered Anglo-Saxons “the principal Body of White People on the Face of the Earth”; he said he wished “their numbers were increased,” since he was “perhaps partial to the Complexion of My Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind.”³

This notion of race as a concept and as a point of departure

³ Benjamin Franklin, quoted by Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Yale University Press, Yale, 1987, p. 46. See also p. 26.

for determining virtue developed a hierarchical attitude about reality of which Benjamin Franklin was only one outstanding representative. The cultural effect of this on subsequent generations would be important in distinguishing among the “various peoples of the world on the bases of physical features, above all skin colour and to a lesser extent, head type.”

Americans were setting themselves up as the elite among the races, as “superior,” just as the U.S. was to set itself up as a nation **unique** among nations, destined to control the world’s affairs. And this was to be absorbed by Americans as an “awareness of race in their schooling, in their homes and in their work place. As a central point of cultural reference on which all were agreed, race could be applied to foreign problems without fear that the concept itself would arouse domestic controversy.”⁴

Hence the racial and hierarchical emphasis in interpreting world politics was to be an important component in the U.S. definition

⁴ Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 48 and 52.

*Not in vain have Latin Americans
historically resented U.S. citizens’
appropriation of the adjective
“American.”*

of the new order in the post-colonial era. Thus the answer to the question, “Who is going to be in charge?” had interesting repercussions in the southern part of the Americas. Every country needs to consolidate its own identity, its cultural and political language. But this was even more important when that country was about to become a world power, as was the case of the United States, which established both its preeminence and to some extent its identity at the expense of other nations and regions of the world. A major precondition for U.S. strength was its complete control over the affairs that most concerned it.

American expansionism reached its zenith in 1845 when the term “Manifest Destiny” was coined by a journalist⁵ in Washington and thereafter implemented by Democratic President James J. Polk, although the ideas that supported this policy already existed. It was not fortuitous therefore that American policymakers tended to use the name of the continent (“Ame-

rica”) as their own, providing us with a clue to the U.S. ideology of expansionism that was to become a major geopolitical project. If the Americans considered it their right to appropriate the term, it was not for semantic reasons. Perhaps they thought it their right because theirs was the first successful independent process in the region.⁶

It is extremely important to distinguish between the United States and America to come to terms with the vital geopolitical distinction there is between “one” and the “other” America: “The United States is a political entity, but ‘America’ is a place. ‘America’ lacks a government to articulate its foreign policies, a military to sustain them and precise territorial jurisdiction... The United States is *in* the Americas, but America is *of* the Americas. The deceptively narrow but important distinction between those phrases, evaluated historically, is... critical for understanding United States policy toward Latin America and helps to explain why (as some Amer-

icans believe) it is often artfully conceived and enthusiastically supported yet ultimately fails to achieve its purpose. The United States and America have come to mean qualitatively different things to Latin Americans during the past century and a half, as the legacy of the interaction between them has bequeathed two hemispheres... An American (which I define as a citizen of the United States) is one who believes that the promise of America can be fulfilled in the United States.”⁷

I would suggest that the core of the matter lies in the very idea that it was vital that the United States (i.e. “America”) be linked to the rest of the region (i.e. “our little region over there which has never bothered anybody,” as Secretary of War Henry Stimson said in 1944). Some of the nationalism and even anti-American outbreaks in the region later should be seen in this light: from being one more among the actors in the Americas, the U.S. transformed itself into being the “American” dominant actor, the “American Nation” above and beyond the rest. In other words, there was only one way to be “America” in the Americas, and this was by stepping over other countries’ national interests and putting the U.S. first. Historically, then, “America” has had the last

⁵ See F. Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1963, Chapter 2.

⁶ On the origins and rationale of the term “America,” see Christopher Coker, *Reflections on American Foreign Policy Since 1945*, Pinter in association with John Spiers, London, 1989.

⁷ See L. D. Langley, *America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere*, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia, 1989, pp. xvi-xviii.

word in settling regional conflicts and has used indiscriminate interventionist and punitive policies both regionally and domestically (to indiscriminately contain Mexican immigration, for instance).

This contemptuous and superior attitude is openly supported by many in the United States: "It is widely assumed in the United States that the nations of Latin America are an inferior species of states that belong rightfully in the sphere of influence of the United States, existing primarily for the purpose of implementing its foreign policy, contributing to its defense and servicing its economy."⁸ Distinguished politicians like W.H. Taft, for example, considered the Latin Americans "...naughty children who are exercising all the privileges and rights of grown-ups."⁹

Not in vain have Latin Americans historically resented U.S. citizens' appropriation of the adjective "American." It shows the proprietorial attitude toward the hemisphere which already existed before 1823 when the Monroe Doctrine was launched. It was this same attitude that had originally fueled the missionary zeal for the U.S.'s recolonization impulse and westward expansionism.

⁸ See Robert N. Burr, *Our Troubled Hemisphere. Perspectives on United States-Latin American Relations*, The Brookings Institute, Washington, D.C., 1967, p. 48.

⁹ Quoted in N. Chomsky, *Turning the Tide. U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Struggle for Peace*, Pluto Press, Boston, 1985, p. 59.

It may be argued, then, that the U.S. used a normative policy and contempt for peoples and countries, together with an early "containment" strategy, to establish the basis for controlling an entire independent continent (Cuba being the only exception).¹⁰ Thus, it is easy to understand why Latin American integrity was seen as "an incident and not an end."¹¹ Similarly, President John Adams (1797-1801) said contemptuously that the Latin Americans would need to be pro-

¹⁰ With the exception of Cuba, which was still under Spanish rule.

¹¹ *Ibid.* This assertion was made in reference to the case of Mexico.

tected when undertaking independent nationhood, since establishing democracies among Spanish American peoples would be like "...establishing democracies among the birds, beasts and fishes."¹²

The well-known, colorful filibusterer William Walker, who invaded Nicaragua several times and ruled it once, said, "They are but drivellers who speak of establishing fixed relations between the pure white American race, as it exists in the United States, and the mixed Hispano-Indian race, as it exists

¹² Quoted in A. Whitaker, *The U.S. and the Independence of Latin America*, Baltimore Press, Baltimore, 1940, p. 37.

Charles L. "Bart" Bartholomew



The Monroe Doctrine, 1912 (reprinted with the permission of the *St. Paul's Dispatch*).

in Mexico and Central America, without the employment of force. The history of the world presents no such Utopian vision as that of an inferior race yielding meekly and peacefully to the controlling influence of a superior people.”¹³

All these aspects of U.S. policy in the region were major components of the Monroe Doctrine. The region was conceived of as the “natural area” that would allow the U.S. to consolidate its expansion, and the newly independent former Spanish colonies gave the U.S. an excellent opportunity to do so.

To extend its control to the southern part of the continent, it first had to extend its national boundaries westward, beginning with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the Florida Purchase in 1819. While the Monroe Doctrine was ostensibly to “protect” the continental integrity from the expansionism of the Holy Alliance (Austria, Naples, Prussia, Russia and Sardinia), it would be skillfully used to control the west coast and part of Mexico’s territory to the south.

Just one of the myriad of explanations of this phenomenon is to be found in Hegel’s observation: “There [was] no neighboring state in America with which the U.S. could have the kind of relationship which prevails among the European nations, a state which they would have to view with distrust and against

which they would have to maintain a standing army. Canada and Mexico present no serious threat, and England has found over the last 50 years that a free America is more useful than a dependent one.” He was not wrong when he foresaw North America’s prominent future: “America is therefore the country of the future, and its world-historical importance has yet to be revealed in the ages which lie

*American
expansionism
reached its zenith in
1845 when the term
“Manifest Destiny”
was coined.*

ahead —perhaps in a conflict between North and South America.”¹⁴

Perhaps the most important stage in the consolidation of U.S. strength in the region was the war with Mexico and the annexation of half its territory. The U.S. had already annexed the state of Texas, after the American settlers the Mexican government had allowed to live there rebelled against Mexican legislation prohibiting more American immigration. The U.S. supported the Texans’ demand for independence, and, in 1836, after the

defeat of the Mexican army, Texas became independent. Mexico not only protested but committed itself militarily to stop continual U.S. manoeuvring to annex more Mexican territory. A decade later, after two years of war, Mexico lost to the United States. The U.S. victory could not have been more decisive: new borders were established and the Rio Grande finally became what Senator Benton considered a river intended for the United States, according to “the laws of God and nature.”¹⁵ In 1848, with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, U.S. territory was increased by one-fifth when it annexed more than half of Mexico, 850,000 square miles including the states of Texas, Nevada, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Utah and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. While the Polk administration was ready to pay U.S.\$30 million for the acquisition, only U.S.\$15 million was actually paid.

Although the Monroe Doctrine was originally a “hands-off” policy, it was mainly the United States’ best opportunity for practicing its favorite policy of overseeing Latin American developments. It was both imperialist and anti-imperialist. Monroe and his secretary of state, J.Q. Adams, wanted no external

¹³ See Albert Katz Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny. A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*, John Hopkins, Baltimore, Maryland, 1958, p. 211.

¹⁴ This summarizes Hegel’s position in the debate on the New World.

¹⁵ Quoted in R. W. Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire*, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 102. On this aspect of history, see Merk, *op. cit.*; Weinberg, *op. cit.*; De Toqueville, *op. cit.* and W. LaFeber, *The Panama Canal, The Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1978.

interference in the affairs of the new independent nations, least of all a restoration of Spanish control over its former colonies. This was not because of what Monroe called his "great consideration"¹⁶ for their independence, but because of their own need to expand and consolidate their role as protectors. In reality they were protecting their own interests: the preservation of an area set apart for "freedom" and "independence" as conceived by U.S. policy makers and the prevailing spirit in the American republic itself, and which would endure in the decades to come. According to Van Alstyne, "The Monroe Doctrine is really an official declaration fancying the 'western hemisphere' as a United States sphere of influence."¹⁷

¹⁶ See Thomas P. Brockway, *Basic Documents in United States Foreign Policy*, D. Van Nostrand, Princeton, 1968, pp. 25-26.

¹⁷ Van Alstyne, *op. cit.*, p. 99. See also the interesting and complete study by Whitaker, *op. cit.*, Chapters 15, 16 and 18.

This succession of events, combined later with the United States' political control of Cuba's 1899 independence process (plus the imposition of the Platt Amendment and the U.S. holding of Guantanamo), would be the first major signs of U.S. geopolitical aims, the beginning of the U.S.'s self-designated right to defend the region's integrity from "foreign intervention." This went beyond the defense of the new Latin American citizens' "liberty and happiness." It was a major demonstration of U.S. success in increasing both its territory and political power, at the same time that it helped consolidate two historical projects: a) the special role of missionary, whereby the United States proclaimed itself the sole protector of the American states, and b) the creation of a powerful device to justify and dissimulate expansionism, thereafter to be used against foreign attempts to participate in Latin American affairs. In this view, the banner of "the defense" of the

continent from foreign aggression would in the future turn into a paradigmatic, effective means of exerting full political influence over Latin American countries. In this context, it is possible to emphasize the U.S.'s imposition of norms and contempt as major components of its containment strategy.

However, is this imposition of norms a result of the unique national virtue proclaimed by the United States, the element that permitted it to implement its policies successfully? Or, as Colin S. Gray pointed out, "Did the United States succeed in nation-building and in forcible nation-restoration because it was virtuous, or because it had Canadians and Mexicans as its neighbors rather than Russians and Germans...?"¹⁸ 

¹⁸ See Gray, *The Geopolitics of Superpower*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 1988, p. 39.



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THE DISCOVERY Of Great Manhattitan¹

Luz María Valdés*

Mexican migration to the New York metropolitan area is a phenomenon which has recently occupied the attention of scholars, experts and politicians alike. Traces of families who went to New York from the Mixteca area of the state of Puebla can be found as far back as the 1930s, but it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that thousands of Mexicans from the Mixteca region—which covers parts of the states of Puebla, Oaxaca, Guerrero and Morelos—emigrated to the great metropolis.

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¹ Part of the research for this paper was done for the Tinker Foundation. *Los Mexicanos en Nueva York*, New York, 1994.

This flow of immigrants has changed the nature of the attraction that New York enjoys for Mexicans. In the 1970s, New York was not even mentioned in population censuses as a destination for Mexicans. In 1990, however, it was the state with the highest growth rate (eight percent), higher even than California and Florida.

This change has created an economic, political, cultural and social interdependence between the inhabitants of the Mixteca region and the group of immigrants living in New York. Because of the acceleration of this flow of migrants and the part of the labor market that they have occupied, this relationship has transcended the limits of the Mexican milieu and plays



New York City has become one of the main destinations for Mexican immigrants.

a role of circular dependence between the supply of jobs for New York employers and the demand exerted by Mixteca employees.

The way opened by the 1970s immigrants was key in establishing a permanent migratory pattern. For 25 years, Mexicans have known how to make themselves indispensable in the New York labor market. Quality, tenacity, efficiency and loyalty on the job are characteristics that drive up the cost of Mexican labor. As a result, there is a high demand for Mexicans in restaurants, dry cleaners, fruit and vegetable stores, organizations of itinerant salespeople, etc., parts of the labor market disregarded by other workers.

These efforts bring in important sums of money that the immigrants send to their hometowns, with positive results: brick has substituted adobe in housing; local parks have playground equipment; the churches have been restored and decorated. A substantial part of the resources go into basic infrastructure: schools, paved streets, drainage, etc. Also, when the immigrants return for good, some bring home with them a great variety of technology and know-how. This is the case, for example, of the municipality of Tulcingo del Valle, in the state of Puebla, where three pizzerias have been opened by people who worked for more than 15 years in the business in New York. Others return to their original activities, particularly the peasants.

As a result of this relationship, an information and communications network was born among the Mexico and New York communities which contributed to an increase in migration, creating what we have called in this article "Great Manhattitlan," a city which



The Mexican-Korean connection: a Mexican working in a Korean-owned store.

for thousands of Mexicans has become their land of hopes and dreams. A reflection of this is Tehuixtla, a ghost town in the Mixteca region, known among local inhabitants as "Little New York" because its entire population went to live in New York. The Hegira began in 1972. Only a few old people were left to take care of the houses. The schools closed; the restaurant shut its doors; and the amusement parks emptied. On the streets, only dust and *huizaches*.² And the church's entire year is spent preparing for the arrival of the inhabitants of "Little New York" who come home in December to their traditional festivities.

This scenario demonstrates the economic and social success enjoyed by some undocumented immigrants who are now some of the New York's most highly respected businessmen. Some of them have invested their profits in Mexico, stimulating local production by setting up canneries, can factories, chili-packing plants and other businesses that employ their compatriots and slow the migration to the north.

Not just anyone can easily emigrate to New York.

Some prerequisites must be fulfilled: among them, a minimum educational level, direct con-

*For 25 years, Mexicans have known
how to make themselves indispensable
in the New York labor market.*

² A thorny plant native to arid regions of Mexico. [Translator's Note.]

tact with migrants already residing in New York and the ability to take on the challenge of a more than 5,000 kilometer trip, which implies a stay of at least a year.

Mixteca migrants are descendants of peasants. Some of them were in New York in the 1970s working in restaurants or factories and returned to their hometowns to work the land. The younger immigrants, their children, in contrast, have been exposed to an important degree of social mobility, particularly because of their access to better education. This makes them ideal candidates for migrating to New York.

Migrants from Mexico City, on the other hand, have different backgrounds. They are the sons and daughters of office and retail employees as well as skilled workers. However, they have the same educational level as the migrants from the Mixteca region. In both groups, 95 percent has a primary school education; 80 percent has a junior high school education; and some are even primary school teachers or have higher education.

Clearly, while Mexico's investment in the education of these young people has evened up opportunities, it has also resulted in decapitalization of human resources since they emigrate to the United States in search of better lives.

The majority of immigrants are between 19 and 25 years of age, mainly single. Eighty percent are men and

twenty percent women. They usually plan to stay in New York from one to five years and they all initially plan to come back to Mexico to live permanently.

Most of them crossed the border in Tijuana, paying between U.S. \$500 and U.S. \$800 (today the fee is between U.S. \$900 and U.S. \$1,000), which includes getting across the border and transportation to New York's La Guardia Airport. There, they are met by friends or relatives who give them temporary lodging and information about job possibilities. Almost 30 percent have a job waiting for them when they arrive.

Migrants from the Mixteca region worked in Mexico mainly in the primary sector: 34 percent in agricultural jobs, commerce and services which require no previous training, even when they had the necessary education to be able to do more skilled work.

In New York they work in everything from itinerant sales to clerical jobs. Since 1985 there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Mexicans working in small fruit and vegetable stores owned by Korean merchants. This Mexican-Korean connection is common all over "Manhattan." Mexicans sell the products while the Koreans work the cash register and manage the store.

Restaurants are one of the most attractive sources of employment for Mexican workers because of the expectations they arouse. Stories abound of youths who began as dishwashers and ended up as partners.



Most Mexicans in New York are of Mixteco origin, particularly from the states of Puebla, Oaxaca and Guerrero.

Migration brings along with it many cultural traditions and customs that begin to take root in the great metropolis. This is the case of *fondas* where tortillas, *cecina*,³ goat's cheese, Jalapeño chili peppers and crisply fried pork rinds are served; Mexican music is played; Mexican soft drinks —imported by a company called “La Nostalgia”— are sold; and domino is the favorite table game. Today more than 80 Mexican establishments in Manhattan cover everything from restaurants of differing quality to bakeries.

Besides these enclaves, Mexican food products have won a place in the market served by large stores, which sell wheat and corn tortillas, different kinds of chili peppers, hot sauces, fruits like *jicama* and all kinds of spices like coriander and *epazote*.

Flower selling on street corners is another job for thousands of immigrants from March to October. For seasonal reasons, this is when the flow of migrants is the greatest. Flower sellers, mostly women, live in the cellars of Harlem and eat in nearby Mexican restaurants in order to subsist and save. This migration is definitely rotational since they go back home periodically to prepare for their next sales season.

Forty-two percent of the immigrants work in semi-skilled service jobs: as dishwashers, barmen, busboys and waiters, cooks' apprentices and cooks.

Only 10 percent have higher education. These work as skilled workers in auto shops, carpenter shops and similar places. The construction industry and



Cultural traditions are a unifying factor for immigrants.

semi-skilled jobs like painter, electrician and door and window installers provide employment for 7.8 percent. And 4.6 percent do work that requires agricultural skills, like cultivating delicate vegetables and fruits, caring for greenhouses and gardening in country clubs, jobs practically cornered by Mexicans from Michoacán and Jalisco. Only three percent are clerical workers, technicians or professionals. They work from 40 to 80 and more hours

a week. Thirty percent of the immigrants who work in the service sector work more than 55 hours a week and earn under minimum wage. These figures indicate the over-exploitation of Mexican labor, particularly in low-skilled jobs. They work many hours of overtime to be able to earn a little more and send some of their savings home. Sharing rent and leisure and other costs are common strategies to increase savings. They always have the hope of getting ahead and attaining “The American Dream,” which has been reached by very few.

The option of living in New York and not somewhere closer to Mexico is based on a series of conditions. The first consideration is that they have relatives and friends there, as well as the certainty of finding a job that will allow them to save. Another factor is the mirage of economic success attained by some.

Solving the job problem is indispensable to beginning a new life. Therefore, recent arrivals place great stock in the feeling of protection they get from the powerful network of relatives and friends from the same area. Lastly, the knowledge that immigration author-

³ A salted beef steak. [Translator's Note.]

ities are more flexible in New York than on the West Coast is another factor.

Mexicans live in New York's five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Staten Island and Queens. An important number lives in the state of New Jersey, in Patterson, Passaic and Westchester Counties, as well as in the town of New Rochelle.

Mexicans' sense of community in a foreign land is admirable. To counter the cultural nostalgia caused by being far from home, they have developed mechanisms for cohesion which give them solidity and a feeling of belonging.

One of the most important cohesive factors is sports, which have brought together a sizeable number of Mexicans. Since 1976, five soccer leagues have been created, with 126 teams and 2,700 players; two baseball leagues, with 50 teams and 980 players; one basketball league, with 10 teams and 100 players; and the Mexican Athletic Club, which has 150 members.

The sports' enthusiasts need to meet to plan strategies for their games has forced families to participate, making the meetings real Mexican fiestas, in which complicity, ties and affection are fostered among those who leave and those who stay in Mexico. The stays in Great Manhattitan, therefore, tend to get longer, particularly if the first year's stay has been economically successful and allowed for the acquisition

of comforts that only with great difficulty would have been attainable if the immigrants had stayed home.

Things have changed greatly in these 20 years of Mixteca-New York migration. Many immigrants have become U.S. residents or citizens in order to work, expand and help new immigrants. The 1970s offered important advantages and facilities to recent arrivals because of the enormous demand for Mexican workers, who guaranteed loyalty to the employer, good personal relations and long working hours. The 1980s witnessed the discovery of "Great Manhattitan": the great migration from the Mixteca of Puebla, Oaxaca and Guerrero.

In the 1990s, the migratory flow is still important. However, even though in 1995 migration was still high, in 1996, as a result of the high price of the dollar and its impact on transportation costs, migration has tended to decline. The cases of repatriated immigrants who could not gather the funds needed to reembark on the adventure and decided to stay home are frequent today.

In the last two years, migration has created new social problems, particularly due to the increase in very young undocumented immigrants who have organized gangs for stealing and mugging, antisocial behavior that did not exist among the original migrants. The Mexican community with more than 20 years in

New York is concerned about this new wave of migration. This has led them to organize support groups to provide orientation and slow destructive impulses that have only begun to cloud the healthy relationship that has always existed between Mexico and this part of the United States.

Because of the changes over the last few years, immigrants who have lived more than 20 years in New York advise the youths from their communities to stay in Mexico. End-of-the-century conditions offer neither the advantages nor the safety that immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s enjoyed. **W**



They hang on to the hope of the American dream.



Self-portrait, 1952 (tempera on canvas).

JUAN SORIANO

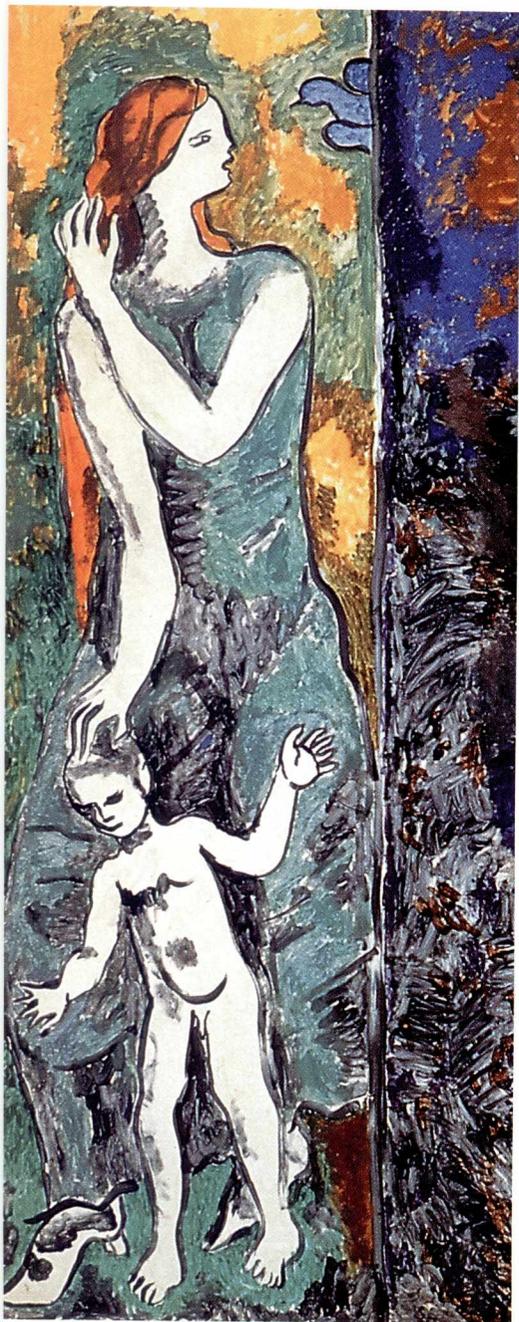
Creator of Visual Parables

*Sculpture and painting
were a game in his
childhood. Sixty
years later, the
game is still on.*

If anything can be said about Juan Soriano, it is that he has painting and sculpting in his blood. A child prodigy who at the age of seven heard the prophetic words, “You will be a painter.” A precocious adolescent who at 14 was noticed by his elders, María Izquierdo, Lola Álvarez Bravo, José Chávez Morado,

Octavio Paz, Alfonso Reyes.... A young, self-taught artist whose first exhibition at the age of 20 was taken seriously in the art world. The mature man whose art has attained through the decades the simplicity of the complex. A unique man full of images clamoring to be rescued and returned to canvas and sculptor’s materials.

Soriano did not give in to the demands and conditions of “committed art.”



Woman Frightened by Bird, 1950 (oil on wood).

Sculpture and painting were a game to Soriano in his childhood: making and dismantling figures with clay and wax, filling blank canvases with paintbrush and color. More than 60 years later, the game is still on; it is simply more precise in inventiveness and execution, without losing any of that combination of freedom and profundity already present in his early work.

Born in 1920 in Guadalajara, Jalisco, where he lived until the age of 15, Soriano always evokes this stage of his life as the only truly formative years, both personally and artistically.

Unschooling as a painter, he showed great ability for self-expression and considerable dominance of technique. He received his first lessons in beauty during frequent visits to the home of Jesús Reyes Ferreira, a young antique collector, who shared his enthusiasm for Mexican art, objects from the past and far-off worlds like France and Italy. By the age of 14, Soriano was in the Evolution Workshop directed by Francisco Rodríguez “Caracalla” where he sketched, prepared canvases, mixed colors and participated in his first group exhibition at Guadalajara’s Regional Museum. His work surprised and interested Lola Álvarez Bravo, José Luis Chávez Morado and María Izquierdo. They encouraged him to move to Mexico City, which he did at the age of 15 “armed with all the weapons of

adults without any of their hypocrisy.”¹

In the capital, he met and joined the painters, photographers and architects of what has been called the second phase of the “Mexican Renaissance,” who were rebelling against the impositions of public art, “nationalist” painting and the muralists like Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros. Soriano did not give in to the demands and conditions of “committed art.” Neither did he evolve toward a style of his own; his only commitment was, and continues to be, to his art, in a style which is unique and varied at the same time. That is the essence of his work’s authenticity and the effectiveness of his art.

Octavio Paz, a friend and admirer, wrote in 1962, “Few Mexican painters provoke in me the diversity of responses that Juan Soriano does, at the same time both changing and loyal to himself. Twice—in 1941 and in 1952—I have attempted to fix a few hasty words to his images... Today, more than 20 years after my first attempt, I feel the same enthusiasm for his work and the same critical impossibility to judge it.”²

Contemporary art critic Juan García Ponce concurs in the difficulty of categorizing Soriano’s work. Writing about Soriano’s exhibition in *Bellas Artes*, which in-

¹ Octavio Paz, “Rostros de Juan Soriano,” in *Las peras del olmo*, UNAM, Mexico City, 1957.

² Octavio Paz, *Puertas al cambio*, UNAM, Mexico City, 1966.

cluded works from 1934 to 1984, he says, “The personal nature and the difficulty of defining his vision is surprising; it is a vision that follows at all times permanent external and internal changes and yet somehow is always the same in a way also difficult to define.... From his first canvases, it is surprising to see what the painter sees when looking at himself, when looking at his sister, when painting a still life. And that surprise becomes a style; but that style changes continuously until it disappears. You cannot find Juan Soriano through it. What remains is the surprise, even though it takes different shapes.”³

Soriano’s work reminds us not to art history, but to what has been experienced day-to-day, to the people he has known: Carlos Mérida, Rufino Tamayo, Juan de la Cabada, Elena Croce, María Zambrano, Antonio Saura, Julio Cortázar, Alberto Gironella, Pedro Coronel. Soriano lives in Mexico, in Paris, in Rome. He paints always, even in difficult times: portraits, landscapes, still lifes, allegories; he experiments with abstraction and retreats from it; he makes ceramics; he sculpts monumental works; he designs scenery.

He has been honored in many ways: the Mexican government has given him the National Prize for the Arts; in his home state he received the Jalisco Prize for Art;

³ Juan García Ponce, “Juan Soriano: uno de los caminos del arte,” in *Imágenes y visiones*, Editorial Vuelta, Mexico City, 1988.

he has been named Gentleman of Arts and Letters by the French government. He has had 91 individual exhibits and participated in innumerable group exhibitions in Mexico, the United States, Europe, Japan and Latin America.

All this is more than enough reason, then, for *Voices of Mexico* to want to share with its readers this interview with the man whom Luis Cardoza y Aragón said was, above all, “a poet, a deep painter of visual parables.” His opinions, interests and obsessions reveal a man who lives both his life and his art to the full.

Voices of Mexico: *Juan, when did your love of painting begin?*

Juan Soriano: It began when I was about 40 years old. Before that I wasn’t aware that I loved it. It was a spontaneous, natural thing which was part of my life, something like a game. From the time I was very small I did sculpture and painting, but I didn’t know it had any special value. I confused play with the creation of things and I thought all children were the same.

I didn’t begin the study of art and aesthetics formally until I was over 40. Before then, I was self-taught. It was really quite difficult for me to accept painting as a vocation. I felt that it limited me, it put me on a road already mapped out. My personal experience also kept me away from art: the history of the [Mexican] Revolution, my childhood during the Cristero rebellion, and then the advent of painters



The Flower Garden, 1970 (oil on canvas).

like Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros.⁴ It felt like an obligation, something imposed which was meant to seek power or to mold consciousness. Naturally, at the time I didn’t express it in these words but I didn’t like it. And later on, I liked it even less because all the galleries and people that wanted my work asked me to deal with the same topic: being Mexican. This horrified me. The

⁴These were the main representatives of Mexican muralism; for them, art was not only aesthetic, but also had a social and cultural function which it performed through the visual exaltation of different historic moments and post-revolutionary values. [Editor’s Note.]



Girl of the Green Jug, 1953 (oil on canvas).

idea of “being Mexican” was incomprehensible to me. I was completely identified with my culture emotionally, but not politically or geographically. For me, being Mexican included the history of the world, of Spain, the Jews, the Arabs; everything I read: cloak and dagger dramas, great poetry, the Iliad, the Odyssey, etc.

Those of us interested in art in Mexico don't limit ourselves only to Hispanic culture; we want to know what's written in the United States, what's painted in Russia, what's danced in this or that place. The crowd I was in all my life

was very interested in world events. But, when I lived in France and Italy most people were interested only in what was going on in their country, despite the proximity of all the countries in Europe, I realized that they are not very familiar with each other and that we know much more about them than they do about us. I remember someone saying that Mexico was a country without a history. I answered, “Maybe for you, because you're ignorant. You know nothing about history and what the discovery of America meant for the world.”

VM: *What was your experience like abroad, in Italy, in France?*

JS: It was wonderful. I discovered there were cultured languages in which you can express yourself in a very refined way; that all the things that I had been interested in because of books—paintings, monuments, plazas and cities—were not only much more beautiful, but that they had acquired a dramatic quality because of the destruction of the two world wars, particularly the last one.

People in the cities, even today, are terribly marked by the effects of the wars, the persecution and

fratricide. They lived on the run, permanently in hiding; and both sides turned out to be the same: fascism and communism were equally totalitarian and destructive. It was like a moral epidemic, worse than AIDS, that destroyed people's souls. The disillusionment was noticeable, for example, among the existentialists, with the statements of Sartre and the intellectuals of his time. The movements in painting, in architecture, and the so-called "cultural" movements were, at bottom, profoundly destructive: they sought to put an end to tradition without substituting anything for it. An enormous, compulsive desire came about to build powerful weapons to destroy cities, monuments and, above all, to destroy human beings.

Life is very short and limited; it is not easy to understand why there is so much hatred. If life, no matter what happens, is going to come to an end, there is no reason to cut it short. Besides, it should always be possible to come to an agreement. Arguments over land, money, profits, could be solved through dialogue and tolerance.

Art, until then, was not mixed up in this vicious circle. Post-war art became something horrible, and it continues to influence many young people who seemingly are not studying to be artists but to rid themselves of their sensitivity, to transform art into something "pseudoscientific" or "curative." Many are artists because it "relaxes" or "calms" them, because they think

it allows them self-expression. But you can't express yourself artistically just because you want to. You have to study your possibilities of expression. Today, everything seems to be mixed in a kind of enormous "music hall." The music is deafening and when you reproduce it, it becomes even more so. You want to have much more hearing, but you can't hear more than what is to be heard. The limits of the senses must be respected if you want to cover the immensity of experience and emotions fruitfully.

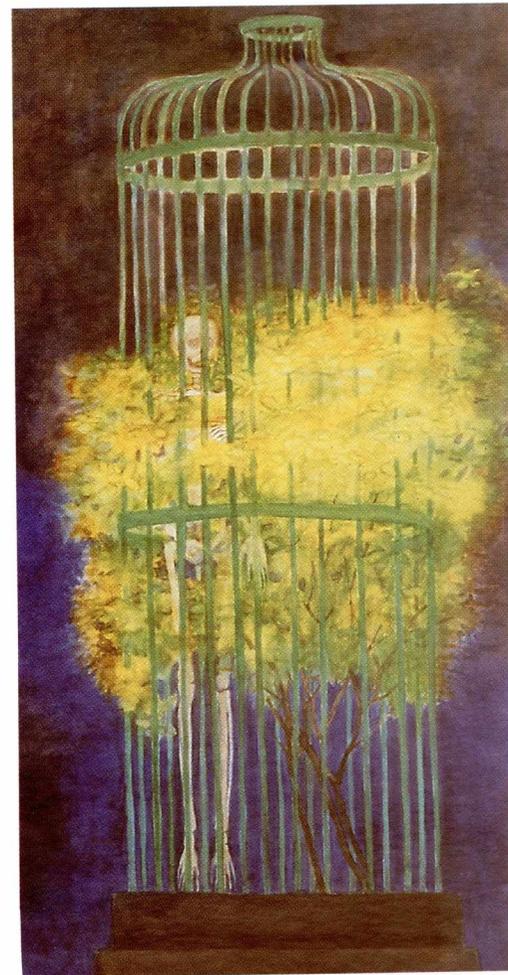
VM: *What do you think the relationship is between art and life?*

JS: I always felt like I was on the edge of an abyss when I talked about painting: either I took a nationalist stance or a political one, but in either case, painting began to fade, the object of painting disappeared. Only when I could forget all that could I paint, draw, sculpt. I did it for myself, without directing it at anyone, because the "public" began to horrify me, mainly because it made demands on me. The public wasn't like the one I had read about, a public that understood that a painting was a metaphor for something. It was a public that confused art with life.

Today, many "artists" use chairs, pieces of television sets, mirrors, bowls, all in big installations, because they can't draw, they can't suggest concrete reality with a few lines and a little color. They have to use objects, to objectify reality.

That was the moment when I felt that no matter what I did I

"The limits of the senses must be respected if you want to cover the immensity of experience and emotions fruitfully."



Death in a Cage, 1983 (watercolor).

strongest influence has come from the people who raised me, particularly my nursemaid. It seems a little ridiculous now, but I still have a nursemaid.

Until very recently in some places in Mexico, part of your inheritance from your grandparents were the servants. We called the nursemaids “aunts” and gave them pet names. It was almost always one family that lived with another family because they had fallen on hard times. I felt that my servants were like part of my family; they were just like all Mexicans, of all colors: light-skinned, dark-skinned, with a wide variety of features. I never had racial prejudices. They were all treated very affectionately by my father and my mother, sometimes even better than we were. It was an old, sacred custom going way back. We were all grateful to them for their services and their loyalty. There were times when we were very poor, and they still continued to live with us. Sometimes I used to go home with them, to an old hacienda they had inherited on the outskirts of Guadalajara, and I would stay weeks, months. They took good care of me.

In later years my mother would invite my nursemaid to lunch at her apartment in Mexico City, but they would end up fighting because my nursemaid didn't want to sit down. She just wouldn't give up the place she had had.

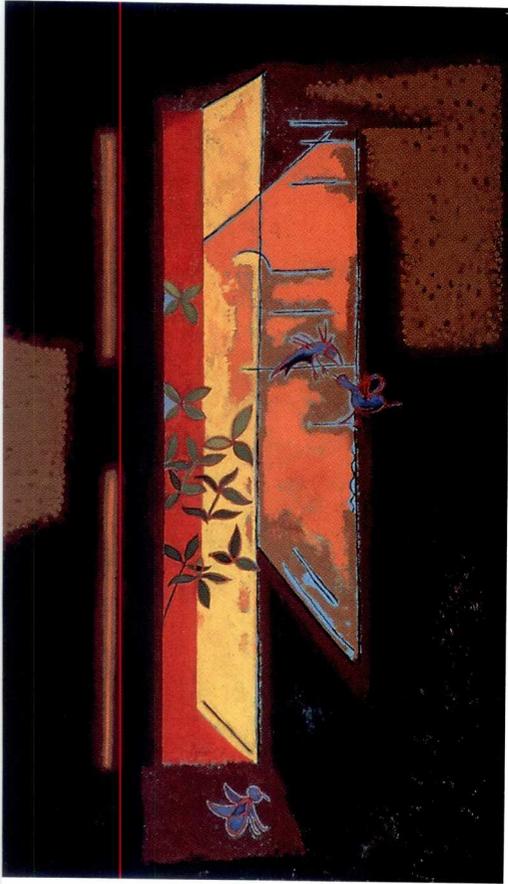
These people taught me stories and legends. They were also very free in their talk about sex. They

bathed the little girls and the little boys, naked, together. We had water fights. It was all very normal. I never had strange thoughts or strange desires because everything was absolutely normal for them. There were people among them who were very cultured. Not cultured as in book-learning, not well-read, but people who were very well educated. It was actually an education in which the main value was respect for other people, an education with many advantages that I appreciated.

When I lived in more “cultured” milieus, people's hypocrisy really surprised me because there were many things which couldn't be talked about in public even though they did them in private. In Guadalajara, life was appearances. It was a fictional world where you had to pretend to be someone you weren't or to have something you didn't. That bothered me enormously. I do not have pleasant memories of my adolescence in Guadalajara in the sense of a flowering of my spirit. I remember more that I was closed to everything natural, everything spontaneous.

VM: *What does Juan Soriano feel when he faces a blank canvas?*

JS: The desire to fill it immediately with colors. I have never been afraid of ruining it. I also don't think much about it because I don't think it has value until it's painted. And when it's finished, sometimes after struggling for months or years, I always feel that I could



The Window, 1967 (oil on canvas).

would be on the sidelines because I couldn't lead my life following those guidelines. They seemed banal to me, silly, sometimes entertaining and even funny, other times the liberators of small emotions, but never great pieces of art.

VM: *Who has had the most influence on your painting?*

JS: Almost everyone I have ever met has had an influence, but the

make it better. Sometimes, when I see a painting of mine when I visit someone's home, I want to correct it. But by then, what does it matter?

I want to correct everything, even life. The day after a party I think about what I said, what I did, and sometimes I'd like to change whatever it was. I always want to do things very well. Sometimes you fail and do very bad paintings or drawings. I love feeling the desire of starting a painting, of dirtying the canvas or staining that marvelous blank page.

VM: *What are your favorite materials or colors?*

JS: I don't like all materials. I only like to use pencils and brushes. I don't like air brushes or tools like that. Today there are many mechanical tools to make sculptures and engravings; I'm sure they save a lot of work, but the piece is born of the domination of technique, which must be constantly reinvented. They say an engraving can be made by photographing a drawing and transporting it to a plate, but I like to copy it myself. If it is very large, I ask an assistant to help me bring over the paper and stretch it. I like to do it myself because as I go along, I feel the need to change the lines, the shapes, that will later be etched with the acid. I also put more or less acid on. And if all that is done with a computer, you don't enjoy it. It's a real problem when I go to the large print shops where if you just give them a small piece of paper they repro-

duce it in any size they want. But then it's no longer completely your work.

I just did a cat: initially it took me a year to ruin it. It just wouldn't come out right. Later I began again and after another year and some months, it finally came out right. Technicians say you can avoid all that, but I don't want to because every time I do it I invent a technique. For example, the cat I was going to do didn't exist. Now it exists just as I invented it, crooked or straight, but it is a cat that I made with my hands.

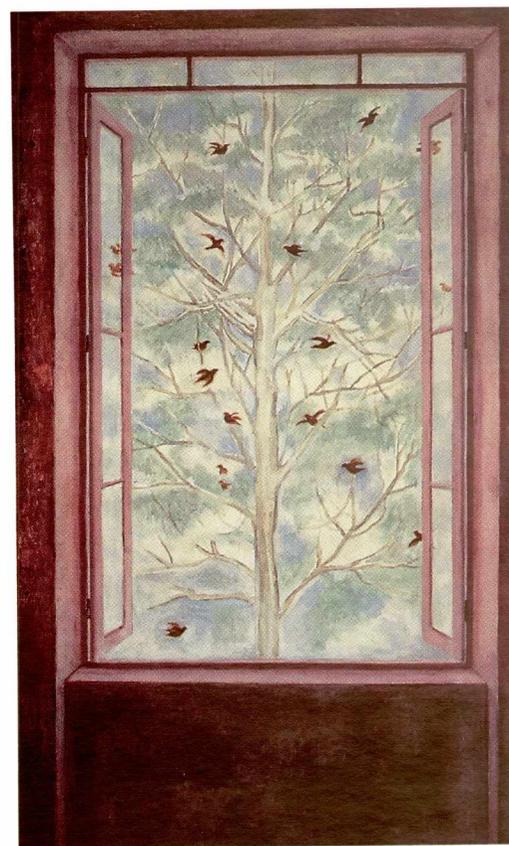
VM: *When did your love for sculpture begin? Was it at the same time as your love for painting?*

JS: It was at the same time, so I really can't say which came first. Today, sculpture gives me more physical happiness. Painting tortures me a little because I have a problem with the idea that it's flat, that sometimes a few lines make it too deep. The proportions of a canvas also horrify me because they change by just changing a color. Sometimes when I begin to paint a large drawing that I like very much, I reduce it little by little until it ends up tiny. This happens to a lot of sculptors. It doesn't happen to me with sculpture, but it does with painting. At the same time, it is all very pleasant because the canvas itself changes size according to the figures, the spaces and the colors you put on it.

VM: *How do you pick a topic?*

JS: It picks me. It is a very strange process because it's all mixed up:

forms you see, feelings that these forms produce inside you and a critique of these feelings. It's like an obsession. It's always at work. All this together creates an emotion that may later turn out to be a painting. But when I see it done,



Window, 1972 (oil on canvas).

*“I would like my work
to give someone
the joy that work
by other artists
has given me.”*



Dead Girl, 1944 (oil on wood).

I always think of the moment that produced it. Twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years may go by, and when I see a painting, my mind is illuminated with the sensations of that moment, like when you hear a piece of music again.

VM: *What is Juan Soriano's work-day like?*

JS: Lately, it's full of anxiety because every day I think to myself that I have less time left. Now I feel very free; I'm not as concerned about whether what I paint will be correctly interpreted or not, whether I'm going to have a public or not, or whether this is a bad time. I have become reconciled to my time: everything in life seems sacred to me, the good and the bad. I always have a desire to do something. I always have half-finished pieces in progress, always more than I can

finish. So, some anxiety grows out of this. For example, if I have to go to a dinner and the next day I have to get up early, I leave the dinner early. I decide not to make too much effort and just be calm so I can get everything possible out of the day and I can do something complete, without leaving it half done.

All this makes me a little anxious until I calm down and tell myself, "Oh well, there will come a time when something will be left half done, so just calm down and get to work," I want to go to parties; I want to paint; I want to sculpt; I want everything. I like life. The terrible things that happen in the world also cause me much pain. But then I think that you shouldn't suffer so much about things that are far away from you, that aren't

part of your daily life. At the end of the day, they do affect you, but that's life and you have to accept it as a whole.

VM: *Do you have a favorite work?*

JS: They are all my favorites and not. Your own work is always important to you. But I would like my work to give someone the joy that work by other artists has given me. Sometimes I remember the first times I saw Tamayo's paintings, which fascinated me. I felt very moved and happy. Hopefully, someone will appreciate this whole day-in-day-out struggle to create when looking at my work and feel the pleasure of seeing an artist's work without it mattering who the person is. *VM*



The artist in his studio.

THE MORPHOLOGY AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BRAIN

Guillermo Gutiérrez Ospina*

Understanding the relationship between the brain's morphology and function has been a fascinating and challenging scientific and philosophical enterprise. Once considered a device to cool off our bodies, the brain is no longer thought of as a "cooling system" but the organ where our sensations and emotions are integrated. More important, the brain is the organ where our humanness resides and from which our individual identities emerge. But how does this extraordinary organ create illusions, expectations, ideas, obsessions, emotions, language and memories? In other words, how does it create the story of our lives? Neurobiologists believe the answer lies somewhere in the intricate and convoluted anatomy of the brain (Figure 1).

A large fraction of the brain's mass is made up of connections among nerve cells or neurons. These connections form cir-

cuits responsible for receiving, processing and storing the information we perceive through our sensory organs. It is fair, then, to think that studying how these connections are established and assembled into circuits will lead us to better understand how the structure and function of the brain interrelate.

Here, I will succinctly describe current thinking on how the brain deals with the problem of assembling neural circuits. It may surprise lay readers that the prevailing view suggests that the final geometry and function of neural circuits arise after many connections among neurons are removed during brain growth. I will argue, however, that the assembling of neural circuits also involves the progressive elaboration of new connections as the brain matures. This gives rise to more complex circuits, thus providing the anatomic substratum necessary for the brain to accomplish some of its formidable functions.

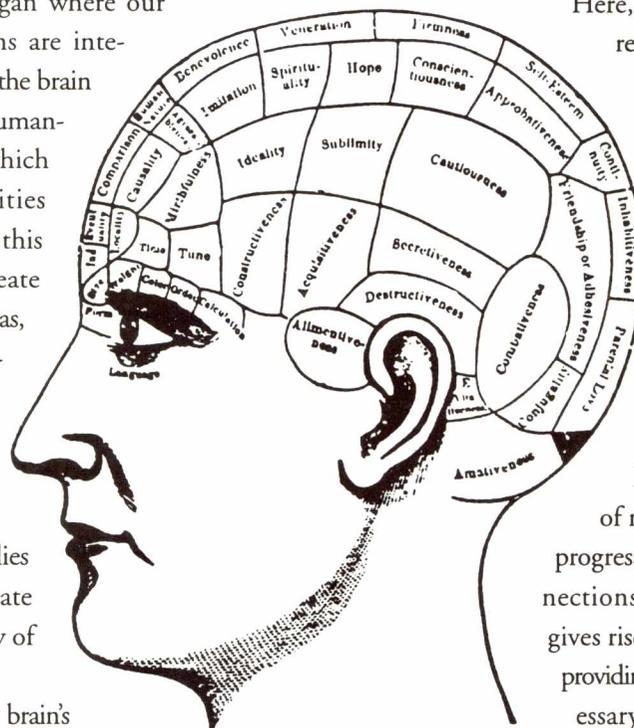


Figure 1. At the end of the eighteenth century the belief that mental functions were localized in particular regions of the brain was deeply rooted in some neurologists' minds. This way of thinking (phrenology) would later provide the basis for the "localizationist" view of brain functions that still dominates, albeit in a different context, modern neuroscience (original by Spurzheim; reproduced in P. T. Churchland, *Neurophilosophy. Toward a Unified Science of the Mind/Brain*, MIT, MA, 1992).

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REFINING THE BRAIN'S CIRCUITRY

In the 1960s, Nobel laureates David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel carried out a series of experiments that provided important clues about how neural circuits are assembled. Based on their observations of the visual system of growing cats and monkeys, Hubel and Wiesel concluded that at birth the brain has many redundant connections that are subsequently removed as we

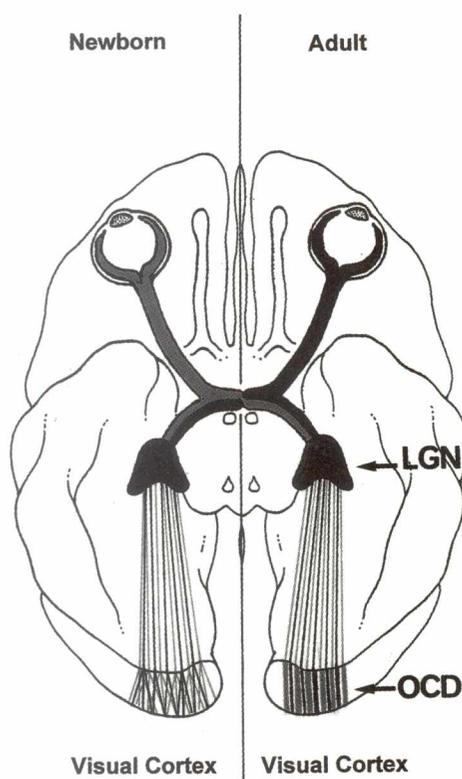


Figure 2. In the monkey brain, as in humans, visual information is transferred from the eyes to the primary visual cortex, in the back pole of the brain. Hubel and Wiesel noticed that in adult monkeys the visual cortex was divided into anatomic and functional units called ocular dominance columns (ODC). Under normal conditions, each of these columns receives information from a single eye. For instance, red columns in the sketched adult visual cortex only receive information from the left (red) eye. Furthermore, left (red) and right (black) eye-associated columns alternate throughout the adult primary visual cortex. Ocular dominance columns, however, do not exist in the primary visual cortex of newborn monkeys. At birth, neural connections associated with both eyes overlap extensively over the entire visual cortex. Ocular dominance columns in adult monkeys gradually emerge after neurons in the lateral geniculate nucleus (LGN; dark blue) remove many of their connections from the visual cortex, as the animal matures (Adapted from D. Purves & J.W. Lichtman, *Principles of Neural Development*, Sinaver, MA, 1985).

*The brain is the organ where
our humanness resides and
from which our individual
identities emerge.*

experience our surroundings during postnatal maturation (Figure 2). What could be the purpose of removing connections among neurons while the brain is still maturing? It has been suggested that this process refines the geometry and functional properties of neural circuits and decreases the number of erroneous connections between neurons and their many potential targets. Thus, apparently the final goal of reducing the number of connections is to shape neural circuits in harmony with the needs imposed by the surrounding environment, thus making the brain's functioning more efficient.

Since Hubel and Wiesel's landmark experiments in the visual system, new evidence has been gathered to suggest that elimination of connections may be a general mechanism by which neural circuits are assembled in all brain regions. However, a process like this is difficult to reconcile with at least two facts: 1) The brain and its neurons greatly increase in size from birth to adulthood (Figure 3) and 2) The elimination of neural connections seems to occur at a time in development when our brains receive, process and store increasing amounts of information, and when complex patterns of behavior progressively emerge (Figure 4). Several questions arise then from these puzzling observations, among them: How do the brain and its neurons increase their size while neural connections are removed? Why should neurons increase their size if they lose contact with their neural peers? How can the brain progressively increase its capacity to process and memorize information and generate complex patterns of behavior, while at the same time eliminating neural connections?

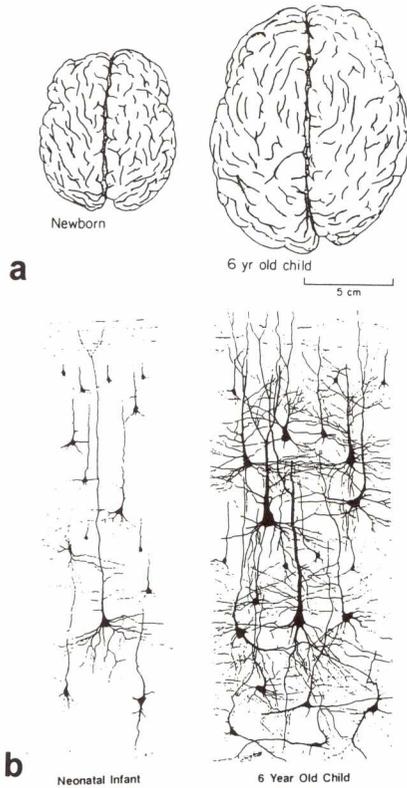


Figure 3. The human brain increases its size by about four-fold during postnatal development; a) At birth, the human brain weighs an average of 350 grams reaching approximately 1400 grams in adulthood; b) This increase in brain size not only reflects the “passive” enlargement of neurons and their connections, but the “active” elaboration of more complex circuits (Adapted from D. Purves, *Neural Activity and the Growth of the Brain*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., 1994).

ELABORATION OF NEW CIRCUITRY IN THE BRAIN

A mechanism whereby the brain’s circuitry may be sculpted during postnatal development would be to progressively add new connections to immature neural circuits. These additions would provide the anatomic substratum necessary for the developing brain to increase its capacity to process and store novel and relevant information. Evidence supporting this possibility has been found in the peripheral nervous system, which is formed by neurons in the brain stem, the spinal cord and in small, seed-like structures called peripheral nerve ganglia (Figure 5). These neurons give rise to nerve fibers that regulate the activity of organs

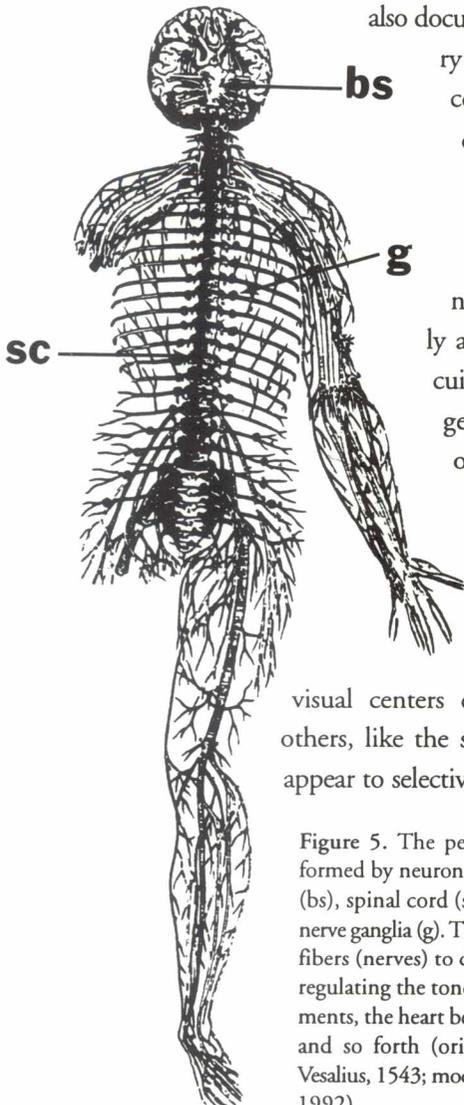
such as muscles and viscera. Neurons localized in some types of ganglia are themselves targets of nerve fibers from neurons in the spinal cord. Early in development, ganglion neurons receive many fibers but only a few connections are made. As postnatal maturation proceeds, the number of fibers reaching ganglion neurons diminishes. The remaining fibers, however, grow to make many connections with ganglion neurons (Figure 6). This observation suggests, therefore, that selective growth of connections also shapes neural circuits during postnatal development.

Recently, it has been demonstrated that new connections are also made in the developing brain after birth. The somatic sensory cortex is a region of the brain that contains a map representing the body’s surface (Figures 7 and 8). This map in the human brain is



Figure 4. Human motor skills improve rapidly during the first year of life. Although the sequence illustrated here emphasizes the development of motor behavior, this phase of development is also characterized by a surprising improvement of children’s cognitive abilities. Indeed, rudiments of language begin to appear by this time of development.

called the “homunculus” (Figure 7), and similar body maps exist in the brains of all mammals. The brain’s body map can be readily visualized in rats and mice in which it is organized in units termed barrels because of their three-dimensional appearance. Each of these barrels represents sensory organs such as the facial whiskers on the surface of the skin (Figure 8). Studying how the pattern of connections arises in the rat barrel somatic sensory cortex, Ariel Agmon and his collaborators at the University of California, Irvine, have demonstrated that neural circuits are progressively elaborated during postnatal life, and that elimination of connections does not occur in this region of the rat brain (Figure 9). Addition of new connections to immature neural circuits has been



also documented in the olfactory system, spinal cord and cerebellum during brain development. Thus, together these observations support the idea that neural connections are progressively added to immature circuits in the brain and suggest that different areas of the brain use different ways to shape their neural circuits during postnatal development. For instance, while areas such as the visual centers eliminate connections, others, like the somatic sensory cortex, appear to selectively create more.

Figure 5. The peripheral nervous system is formed by neurons localized in the brain stem (bs), spinal cord (sc) and in different types of nerve ganglia (g). These neurons send their nerve fibers (nerves) to different target organs, thus regulating the tone of our muscles, gut movements, the heart beat, the pupil’s reflex to light and so forth (original drawing by Andreas Vesalius, 1543; modified from P. T. Churchland, 1992).

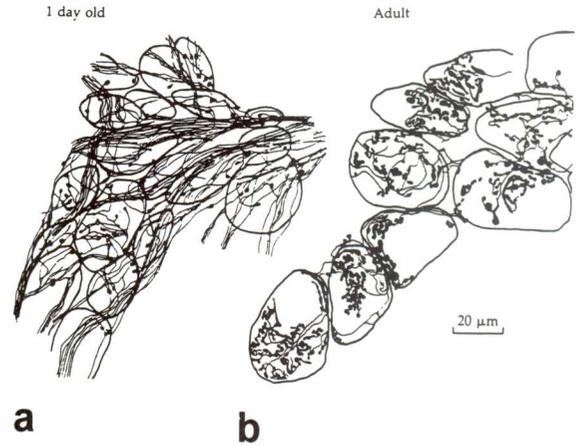


Figure 6. Some types of neurons (round outlines) in peripheral ganglia are reached by nerves from the spinal cord neurons: a) At birth, many fibers (dark lines) reach ganglion neurons but only few connections (dark dots) are made on them; b) As development continues and the adult pattern of connections is established, the number of nerve fibers diminishes while the number of contacts created upon ganglion neurons increases. This observation suggests that connections are added to immature neural circuits during postnatal maturation (from Purves and Lichtman, 1985).

SENSORY EXPERIENCE AND NEURAL CONNECTIONS

Up to this point, I have described evidence to the effect that the developing brain creates new circuitry as postnatal development proceeds. I shall turn now to an explanation as to how this might happen. I will summarize experimental data suggesting that sensory experience spurs the elaboration of neural connections in the brain.

For some time, psychologists have known that environments rich in sensory stimulation promote and improve, so to speak, the development of the brain and its functions. Experiments have demonstrated that groups of rats living in cages with “interesting objects to explore and play with” have relatively larger brains than those living in environments with poor sensory and social stimulation. Anatomic comparisons of brains from both groups of rats have shown that the number of neural connections increases in some brain regions of those animals exposed to sensory-enriched environments. Although these experi-

ments seem to support the contention that increased sensory experience promotes the elaboration of neural connections, it is important to point out that different parts of the brain respond differently to environmental enrichment. While some regions of the brain indeed increase in size, others do not change and even diminish in their dimensions. Thus, these experiments show that the effects of enriched sensory stimulation on the elaboration of neural connections are complex and that more research is needed before advancing further conclusions.

More clear evidence supporting the role of sensory stimulation in the development of neural circuits comes from studies of the brain structure following the surgical removal of sensory organs (i.e., anatomic deprivation). For instance, deprivation of visual experience after eye removal leads to a reduction in the number of neurons, their size and their connections in areas of the brain that process visual information. However, anatomic deprivation of sensory organs probably alters interactions other than those dependent on sensory experience, making the interpretation of these results difficult. This shortcoming has been solved by depriving animals of sensory stimuli without compromising

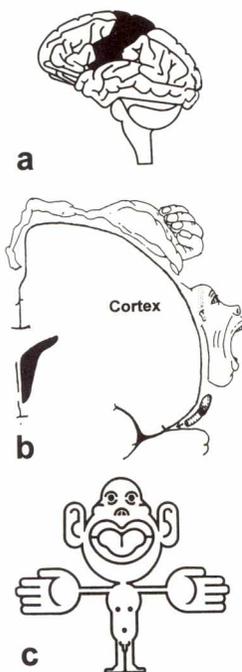


Figure 7. The human brain is divided in many distinct regions responsible for processing different types of information: a) One of these regions is called the primary somatic sensory cortex (dark area) since it receives tactile information (i.e., touch), such as vibration, temperature and pain; b) The somatic sensory cortex contains a representation of the body surface called the homunculus; c) This representation is somewhat distorted presumably reflecting anatomic differences in the sensory innervation of different parts of our bodies.

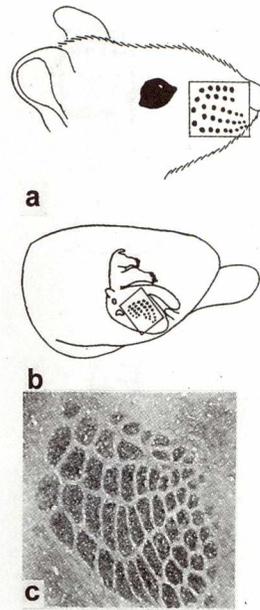


Figure 8. a) Mice whiskers provide tactile information necessary for these animals to survive in their natural environment; b) As in humans, these rodents have a body representation “imprinted” in the primary somatic sensory cortex of their brains. The head and, in particular, the whiskers occupy a large percentage of this body representation; c) The whisker representation in rats and mice can be readily seen in slices of the brain as geometric figures called barrels. Each of these barrels in the cortex represents each of the whiskers in the face. The anatomic definition of the whisker representation, among other reasons, makes it a suitable model to ask how neural connections are established during development.

anatomical links between the brain and sensory organs. An example of this kind of experiment is sewing the eyelids closed to accomplish visual deprivation while the eyes preserve their anatomic position. These sorts of manipulation have confirmed that the absence of sensory stimuli decreases neuron number, their size and the complexity of neural circuits in the brain.

The most compelling evidence supporting the hypothesis that sensory experience regulates neural size and growth and the elaboration of new connections has been furnished by natural models of increased sensory stimulation. For instance, in lactating rats some groups of neurons and their circuits increase in size and complexity as a result of suckling, the constant

*Restrictions of the neurons’
ability to grow and create new
circuitry might also play a role
in the pathogenesis of
neurodegenerative disorders.*

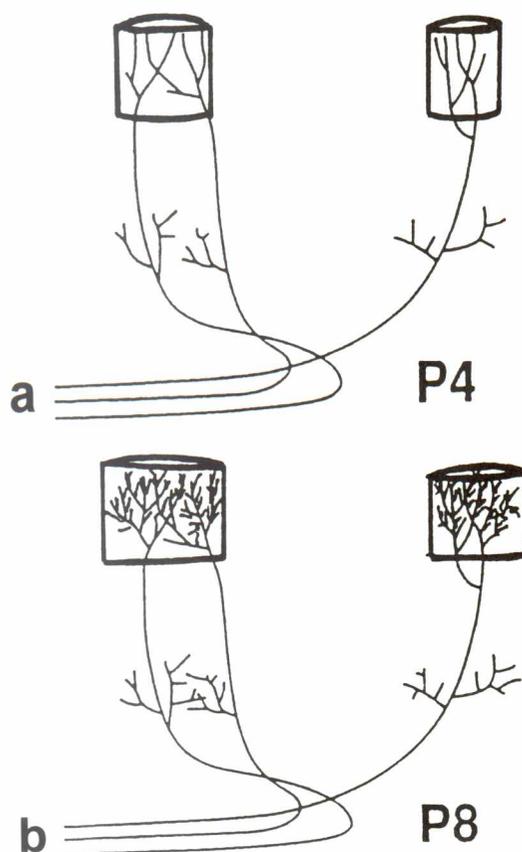


Figure 9. The development of neural circuits in the barrel cortex involves the gradual elaboration of connections: a) For instance, at day four after birth (P4), only a few branches extend from the nerve fibers to the barrel cortex; b) By postnatal day eight (P8), however, an increase in the number of branches per nerve fiber in the barrel cortex is observed. These results suggest that some regions of the brain assemble their circuits by increasing the number of connections as opposed to eliminating them.

stimulation of nipples by hungry and demanding pups (Figure 10). These changes in neural size enhance the ability of some of these neurons to secrete oxytocin, the hormone that facilitates milk secretion. These changes disappear once the suckling stimulus ends after weaning. These observations suggest, therefore, that increased sensory stimulation promotes neural growth and the elaboration of connections and that modifications in neural size and connectivity lead to striking changes in neural function.

SOME FUNCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Is the elaboration of connections necessary to accomplish normal brain function? Different lines of evidence document that this indeed is the case. It has been documented that neurons in different areas of the brain (including regions of the visual system!) increase their number of neural connections steadily during postnatal maturation. Conditions causing hormonal and or nutritional deficiencies, as well as some genetic syndromes that impair the formation of neural connections during brain development, lead to mental retardation in humans, and in rodents, to low performance scores in learning and memory tasks.

Restrictions of the neurons' ability to grow and create new circuitry might also play a role in the pathogenesis of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. As with humans, studies of aged animals have documented cognitive alterations associated to the degeneration of neurons and their connections in specific areas of the brain. This cognitive impairment can to some extent be reversed by treating the animals with proteins, known as neurotrophic factors, that stimulate neural growth and the elaboration of new circuits in affected areas.

The brain's capacity to modify its anatomy and function is termed plasticity, and perhaps it is best exemplified by the partial or total recovery of neural functions following severe head injuries. Although the mechanisms underlying this recovery are not fully understood, it has been shown that, in some cases, functional compensation follows the re-innervation of injured areas by their original connecting partners. This compensatory mechanism depends upon the ability of neurons to grow and make connections in a selective fashion.

While some regions of the brain indeed increase in size, others do not change and even diminish in their dimensions.

Neural connections and brain circuits are shaped by complex interactions of biological and environmental factors.

Addition of new neural connections have long been thought to underlie processes such as learning and memory. In support of this idea, it has been shown that certain patterns of electrical stimulation directly delivered to the hippocampus, a brain structure involved in learning and memory, not only strengthen neural connections and increase their ability to transmit information, but also induce the elaboration of new connections among stimulated neurons. Elaboration of new connections has also been reported in the cerebellum, a brain structure involved in learning some motor sequences.

Finally, evidence supporting the hypothesis that building up neural circuitry increases the capacity of the brain to process and store information comes from comparative anatomic studies among different animal species. These studies indicate that the progressive increase in brain size during evolution results not only from augmenting the overall number of neurons, but from increasing the brain's volume devoted to neural connections. It is likely that this increment in neural connections, and not their elimination, led to the anatomic and functional specializations of the mammalian brain.

In summary, neural connections and brain circuits are shaped by complex interactions of biological and environmental factors. Although it has been thought that the elimination of connections mediates the effects of these factors on the neural circuitry, recent evidence suggests that the developing brain elaborates new ones as postnatal development proceeds. This addition of new connections to neural circuits may explain the increased capacity of the developing brain to process and store information, its ability to generate complex patterns of behavior and its capacity to recover after different types of injuries. 

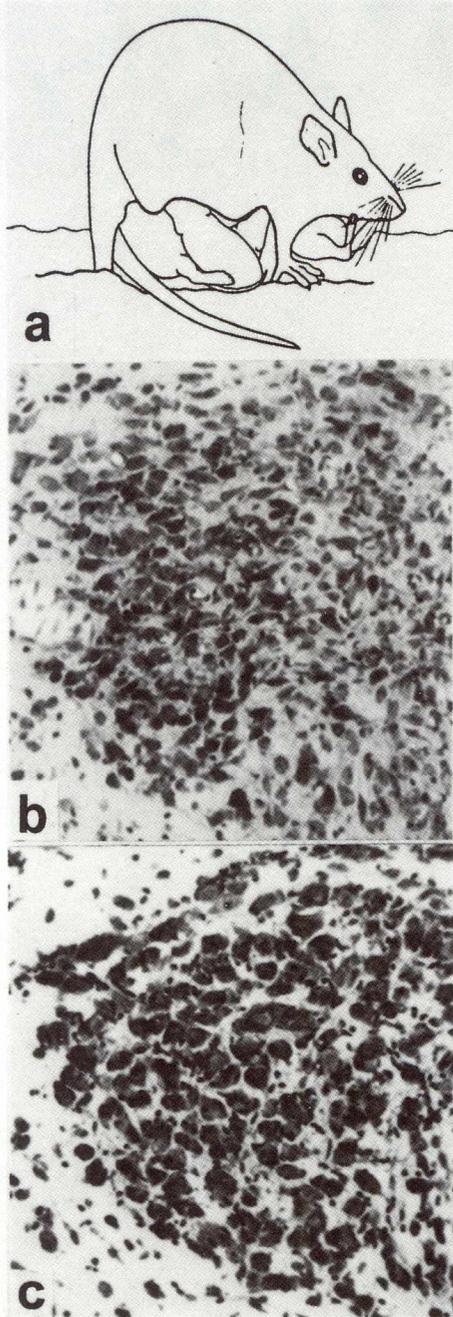


Figure 10. a) In lactating rats changes in the morphology of neurons and their circuits occur as a result of sensory stimulation. An example of these changes is illustrated by comparing the size of neurons of the paraventricular nucleus in the brain of virgin (b) and lactating (c) rats. Neurons in lactating rats are larger than in virgin rats. These differences in neural size disappear after weaning, thus suggesting that sucking stimulus (i.e., sensory stimulation) is important for the occurrence of these changes.

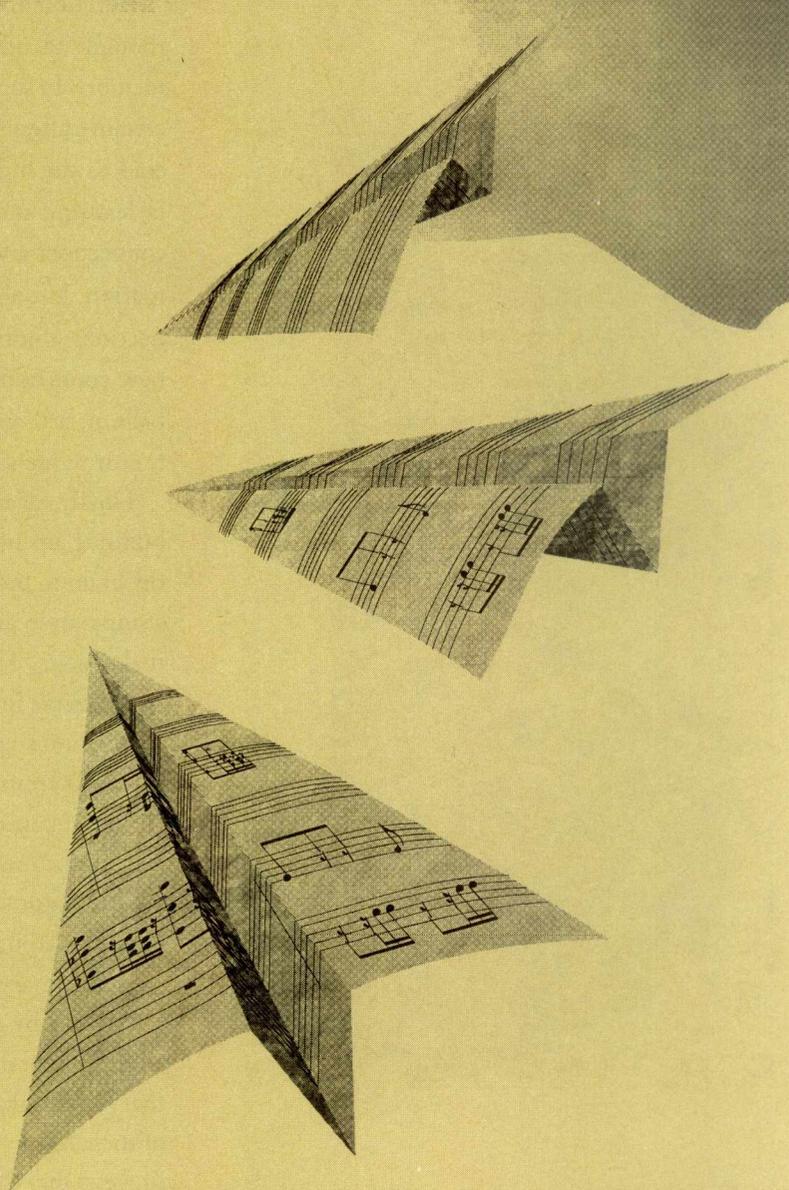
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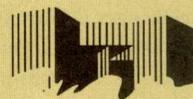
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21/22 de septiembre al 14/15 de diciembre

The Pre-Columbian Dog

Raúl Valadez Azúa *

Divine animals, symbols of the sun, food and an essential part of rites and funeral ceremonies, dogs accompanied pre-Columbian Man from the time of his arrival in Mesoamerica and were an important part of his religious life and diet. Only in our time, however, do we have enough information to reconstruct a general idea of the role they played in the different cultures that flourished in Mesoamerica.

Dogs arrived in Mesoamerica with groups of hunter-gatherers about 9,000 or 10,000 years ago. We do not know if these peoples gave them a special place in their world, but a dog burial mound found in what is now the central United States dating from about 10,400 years ago indicates that they had certain importance.

The oldest evidence of dogs in Mexico are several zoomorphic figurines found in Tlapacoya, in the State of Mexico, dating from the High Cenolithic Period, about 8,000

years ago. While fossilized remains of dogs have been discovered in different excavations, they are commonly discarded as “useless.” During the Formative Period (6,000 B.C. to A.D. 300), the interest of Mesoamerican peoples in dogs grew, making them an important part of their religious lives and their diet. It is interesting to note that their use varied from village to village. Apparently, the basic uses were:

1. As food, as the isolated and fragmented dog remains found in Terremotetlaltenco and Tlalchinolpan show.

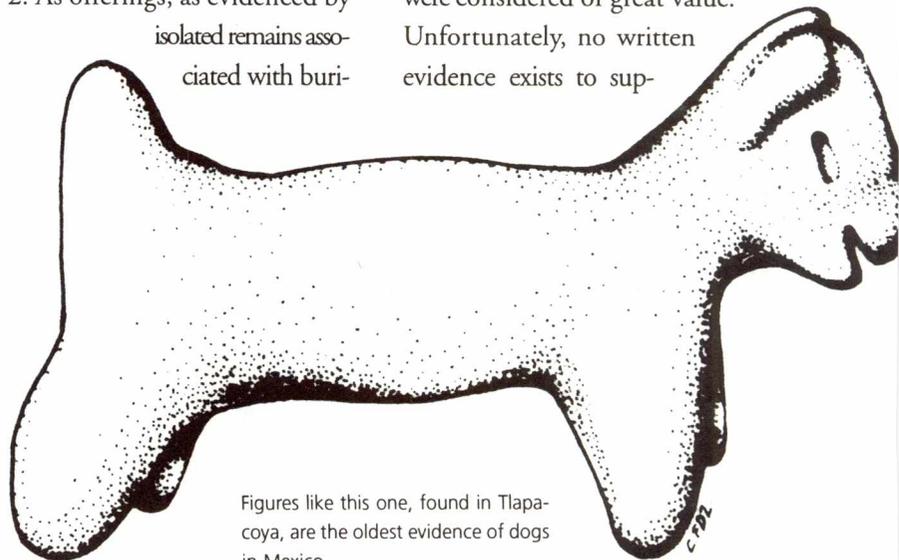
2. As offerings, as evidenced by isolated remains associated with bur-

ials discovered in Tlatilco, Cueva de Gallo and Cuicuilco in the Valley of Mexico.

One very important piece of information about these animals is that they were all medium-sized and covered with fur. They also had a complete set of teeth, in contrast with their descendants (anyone who has ever had a Xoloitzcuintli knows that the adult dogs lack both canine teeth and premolars).

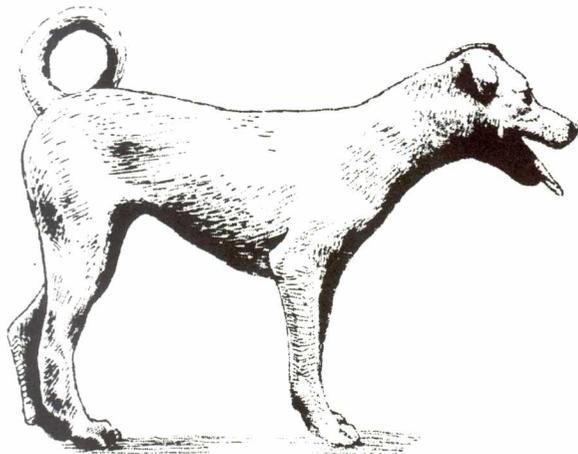
The remains tell us little about the religious practices they were used in, but it is common to find them associated with religious contexts; this leads us to believe that they were considered of great value.

Unfortunately, no written evidence exists to sup-



Figures like this one, found in Tlapacoya, are the oldest evidence of dogs in Mexico.

* Ph.D. in Science. Researcher at the Institute of Anthropological Research.



Representation of what dogs were like in the Formative Period (6,000 B.C. to A.D. 300).

port this idea, but almost certainly most traditions involving dogs which survived until the end of the pre-Columbian period (the sixteenth century) originated in the Formative Period or before.

The advent of the Classical Period (A.D. 300-900), the era of the splendor of Teotihuacan in central Mexico, did nothing to alter the relationship between dogs and men. Studies over the last 20 years of numerous Teotihuacan sites place dogs among the three most exploited species.

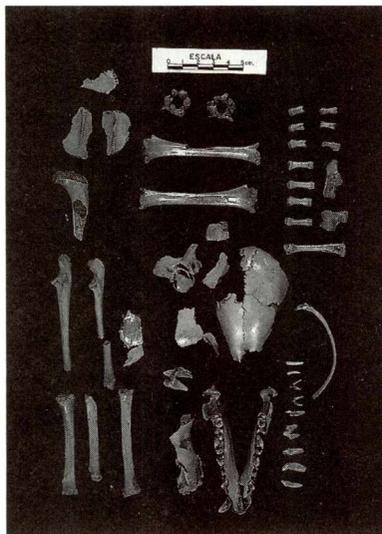
Dogs were generally used in religious ceremonies, funerals and as food.

Studies on Teotihuacan nutrition show that dog was an important source of protein and that about 10 percent of the meat consumed in the city was dog meat. Any inhabitant of the city could eat dog, but the amount a person ate may have depended on economic factors. People from the upper class used them for meat and certain reli-

gious activities, while people from lower echelons of society might use them as food. Part of the Teotihuacan population bred dogs, so they were available to those who needed them.

The use of dogs in religious activities was limited by social and economic factors.

The city's elite could use dogs freely not only as food, but also in different rites. However, no Teoti-



The remains of a five- or six-month-old dog in Terremotetlaltenco.

Dogs were generally used in religious ceremonies, funerals and as food.

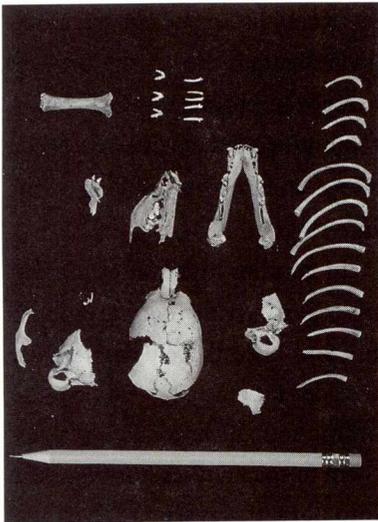
huacan human burial site has been found which includes whole dogs; apparently in Teotihuacan there was no custom of burying people with dogs.

Now, what do we know about the kind of dogs that lived in Teotihuacan? All remains studied indicate that they were of the same kind that had existed since the Formative Period.

Central Mesoamerica was invaded by groups of Chichimec nomads from the North and West in A.D. 700. One of their stopping places was Tula, where evidence shows they brought their dogs with them.

In 1980, 26 dogs were found in burial mounds at the digs that were part of the "Tula 80-82" archeological project, thus showing that even though in Teotihuacan the custom of using them in funeral ceremonies had been lost, it continued among the men who had recently arrived at Tula.

The remains included puppies and adult dogs. The most important discovery, however, was that three different species were identifiable. The most common was the typical dog with fur; in second place came the hairless dogs;



Puppies were made as offerings in Teotihuacan.

and lastly, a species which had fur, but was only 30 cm high.

The Post-Classical Period saw no change in the relationship between Man and dogs. Dogs continued to be used as food and in rituals and people continued to raise them. Tenochtitlan, for example, had a dog market where they were bought and sold.

The new species spread and became common in Mesoamerica. The Spaniards, then, found three kinds when they arrived in the Western Hemisphere: the *Itzcuintli* ("dog" in Nahuatl); the *Xoloitzcuintli* ("rare dog" in Nahuatl); and the *Talchichi* ("floor dog" in Nahuatl). The first was the "dog with fur"; the *Xoloitzcuintli* is today's Mexican hairless dog and the *Talchichi* was the Toltec short-legged dog with fur.

There is evidence that during certain festivities, dog was cooked and served: for example, on the first day of the ninth month (Tlaxochi-

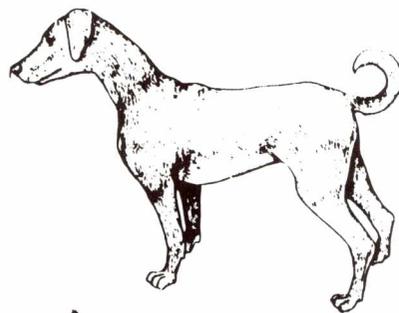
maco), honor was done to Huitzilopochtli and dogs were slaughtered to prepare the food on the eve of the celebration. Merchants held banquets during the festivities of Panquetzaliztli and served dishes made from between 20 and 40 puppies.

It was traditional to sacrifice and consume a *Xoloitzcuintli* in periods of drought. Another type of sacrifice consisted of offering greased puppies to the gods, and, in New Year's ceremonies, old women danced

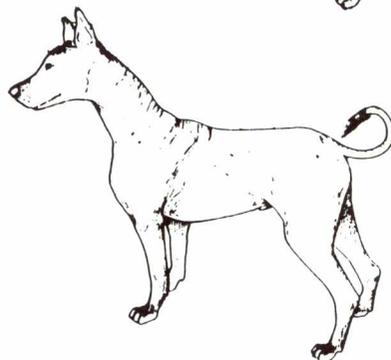
with clay puppies and sacrificed a black-backed puppy.

The old custom of burying men and dogs together derived from the idea that people who died of disease should be buried together with a bright red dog shot with an arrow through the neck or buried alive. Later, a piece of cotton cloth was tied around its neck and it was put in the burial mound.

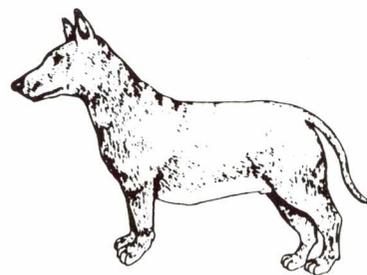
The man and dog were buried together because the dead were



A



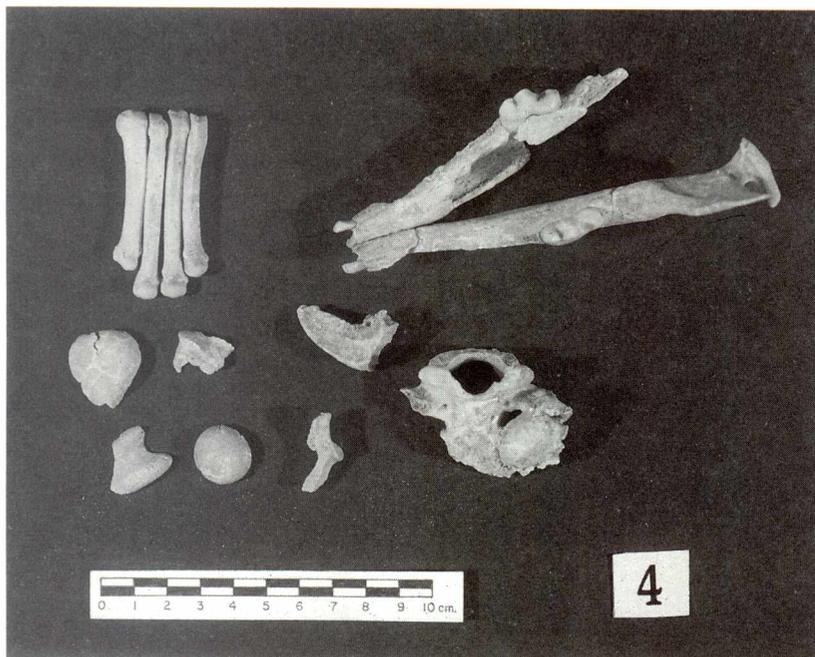
B



C



Types of dogs that existed in Tula in the eighth century (left) and the types illustrated in the *Florentine Codex* of the fifteenth century (right) A. *Itzcuintli*, B. *Xoloitzcuintli*, C. *Talchichi*.



The *Xoloitzcuintli* appeared in the Toltec Period in Central Mexico.

believed to travel to pay homage to *Miclantecutli* (god of death), but first they had to cross the Chiconahuapan River, which could only be traversed on the back of a bright red dog.

Dogs were also used to heal. *Xoloitzcuintlis* were thought to cure rheumatism because their body heat lessened the pain caused by the condition. Ground dog bone mixed with food was thought to cure disease and protect the patient from evil spirits.

Xoloitzcuintlis standing next to the door were also thought to protect against evil spirits. Priests used the slime from dogs' eyes to see the dead and gods of the underworld, and their blood was reputed to revive the dead, bestow clairvoyance and permit communication with heaven.

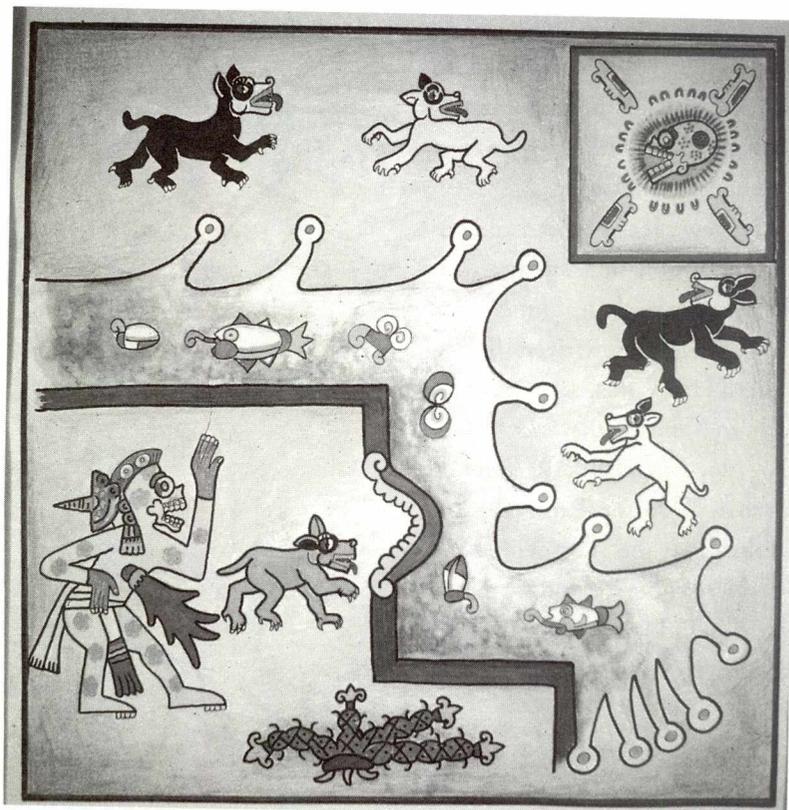
The *Itzcuintli* was the tenth sign of the days and was associated with

lightening or celestial fire. Dogs also appear as central figures in

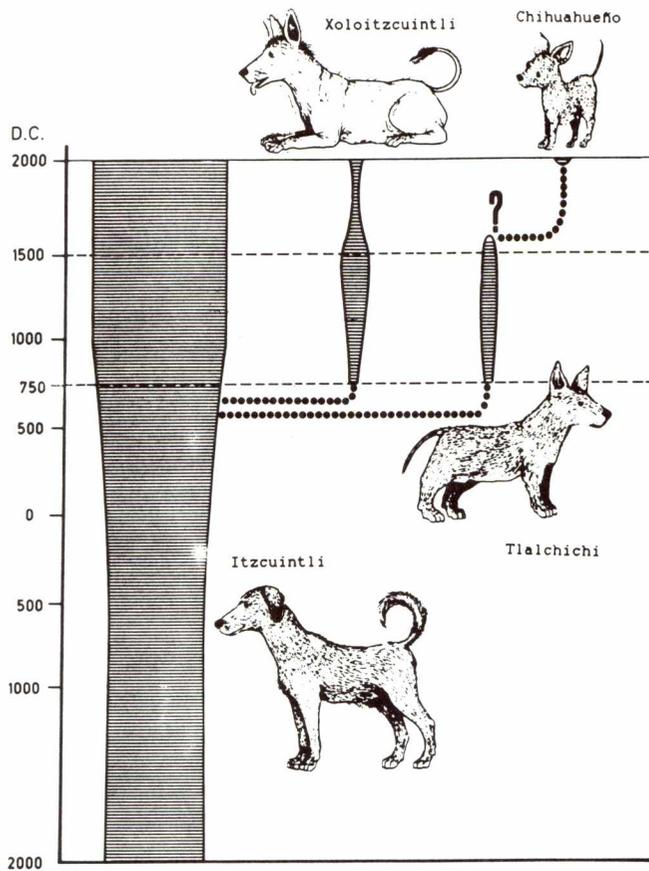
several myths. In one, the sun courts a woman and then turns her into a dog. The cosmic sun *Chalchiuhtonatiuh* ended when a rain of fire swept men away, turning some into dogs.

In another myth, after the deluge, a surviving couple cooked fish and filled the sky with smoke; the gods became angry and one cut off the couple's heads and attached them to their anuses, turning them into dogs. It was also believed that human beings had been born in a cave of a woman impregnated by a dog.

The question still remains: What is left today of these three species of dog? The most fortunate has been the *Xoloitzcuintli*, which has sur-



Representation of a dead person and his dog crossing the underworld to reach *Miclantecutli*, the god of death (upper right).



vived until today and is considered a rare, special breed. The *Itzcuintli* survived under the name of “creole dog” and is considered a “mutt.”

The *Tlalchichi* probably became extinct in the Colonial Period, but it is possible that it changed constantly over the years and became the Mexican Chihuahua.

Their utilization as food, as well as their ritual use in festivities and funeral ceremonies, are clear recognition of the role of dogs, Man’s best friends for the last 15,000 years. **W**

Mexican dogs of today may be the descendants of the dogs of ancient Mexico.

On Nahuatl Wisdom

Mother and your father, as we are, as we live; our fame, our name, is nothing, since all the great ones who departed left us here. Did they by chance also throw us their hands and feet as they left? Look also to your relatives and those around you—for whom Our Lord does no good—who live in misery.

Although you be someone, born of someone, someone’s intimate, the child of lords, palace raised, noble and illustrious, you still must sustain yourself and get up for yourself.

Hark: courtesy, modesty, humanity, weeping, sobbing, the knowledge of one’s own misery is nobility, valor and glory.

Hark: No one haughty, no one vain, no one without shame or dissolute has ever reigned.

Note: Fragment from *Huehuetlatolli*, the sixth book of the *Florentine Codex*, published by the National University of Mexico, Mexico City, 1995, with paleography, Spanish-language version, notes and index by Salvador Díaz Cintora.

With this fragment, Voices of Mexico inaugurates a section to bring the philosophy and literature of the pre-Hispanic peoples who inhabited what is today Mexico to English-speaking readers. The materials have been collected and translated by specialists in Mexico’s indigenous languages and cultures.

The National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (NAACS) held its XXIII Convention March 20-23.

News From Aztlan

...Juan will be eating the fruits of his labor when the *migra* deport him out of the state that tilts the ocean.

CARLOS CUMPIÁN, Chicano poet.
From his poem *We don't wanna peso much*

The NAACS meeting was held in Chicago, which boasts one of the U.S.'s largest Mexican American communities.

The convention was both festive and marked by concern. The academic phalanx of the Chicano movement had a lot to celebrate: one of its most prominent members, Rodolfo Acuña, had just won his anti-discrimination case against the University of Texas.

There was also an air of indignation and alarm because of the escalation of racist activities and statements targeting members of *la comunidad*. In fact, this has become so important that the central topic of this convention was "Mapping Strategies: NAACS and the Challenge of Racist Policies."

Among the keynote speakers were Adaljiza Sosa-Ridell, a well-known civil rights activist, who centered her presentation on the double discrimination—both racist and sexist—confronting Chicana women because of their ethnic background and gender. Other speakers included René Nuñez, one of the main organizers and co-editor of the *Santa Barbara Plan*, a guiding document of the Chicana and Chicano studies movement; Ana Castillo, well-known poet, novelist, essayist and editor, whose work has appeared in many anthologies in the United States and is considered one of the most representative literary voices of the Chicana experience; and Rudy Acuña himself, the author of one of the most influential books on the history of the Chicano movement, *Occupied America*, who won the two-year suit that he brought when denied a post supposedly for reasons of age.

The Acuña case put the continuing racism in some parts of the U.S. higher education system under public scrutiny. It also turned into a battle to consolidate the epistemological and administrative independence of Chicana and Chicano Studies programs, of which Acuña is one of the founders.

The majority of the working groups, and particularly the plenary sessions, concentrated on racism,



basically from three different viewpoints: changes in migratory laws and policy, which in the era of neoliberalism have increasingly limited the rights and possibilities of immigrants; the struggle for human and civil rights, more and more frequently violated as evidenced by the aggression perpetrated against Mexicans trying to cross the border, aggression which has even resulted in fatalities; and the discussion about the concept of “equal opportunities,” which implies thinking about affirmative action (for example, setting up admittance quotas to educational institutions on the basis of race or national origin) and discrimination on the basis of race, language, sex, age, health (illness and physical challenges) and sexual preference.

Racism as a global phenomenon, and anti-Latino xenophobia in particular, defined to a great extent the NAACS’s conference resolutions. Other topics, like the association’s ideological orientation and political strategies and a declaration entitled “Democracy Movement in Mexico,” supporting the Zapatista National Liberation Army and the Mexico City *Ruta 100* Bus Drivers Union, were also dealt with.

Among the convention’s most important resolutions are the “NAACS Declaration of Equality,” committing the association on all levels (regional and state levels, as well as individually), to a national campaign in the media and of letter-writing to government offices against discrimination, demanding an end to institutional physical and mental abuse based on race; opposing all forms of political, economic and social injustice affecting the “Chicano family;” and to fight for education as a basic human right, a collective bargaining agreement to establish and raise the minimum wage, basic medical care for all and policies that would tend to decriminalize immigration, etc.

The convention was also the venue for the world premier of a 30-minute segment of the television program *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, financed by the Public Broadcasting System and the Ford Foundation. Also shown were the videos *Viva la Causa! Some Years of Chicano History in Pictures*, by activist Betita Martínez and *Pochonovela*, by the courageous director, Coco Fusco.

There were also art, painting and sculpture exhibits and several sessions of poetry and prose reading. The Aztlan Prize for Literature 1995 was awarded to Norma Elia Cantú for her book *Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood in La Frontera*.

It is also important to mention the unanimous decision to hold NAACS’s XXV Conference in Mexico City in June 1998 with the support of prestigious academic and government institutions like the National University of Mexico, the Autonomous Metropolitan University, the National Institute of Anthropology and History, the Autonomous University of Sinaloa, the University of Guadalajara and the National Fine Arts Institute.

For four days, Chicago was renamed Chicano, Illinois, allowing an important part of *la Raza*, its intellectuals, to meet, and —inspired by their heroes Cesar Chavez and Reies Tijerina— to discuss and express their concerns and strategies for forging a better future for *la comunidad*. 

Diego I. Bugada Bernal
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Photos by Eduardo Sepúlveda

Alegrías made of amaranth seeds, a sweet and nutritious tradition inherited from the Aztecs.

MEXICAN CANDIES

A Bit of Edible History

Lynn Wehnes*

Visitors to Mexico are often struck by the brilliant colors, rich variety and delicious flavors of Mexico's candies. But few realize that these sweet delights are portable pieces of Mexico's past.

Many of today's most popular treats date back to pre-Columbian times. Amaranth candies, for example, are made from the grain of a plant that was prized as a gourmet food by the Aztecs, and was cultivated extensively by them in the valleys of central Mexico.

* Historian.

Photos taken at Celaya and Candy Stores, both on Juárez Avenue, in Mexico City's Historic Center.

Today, amaranth appears most frequently in *alegrías*, sweets made by popping amaranth seeds on a *comal* (griddle) and holding them together with molasses.

Daniel K. Early explains in his essay "The Renaissance of Amaranth" (in *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*) that, according to the *Mendocino Codex*, a sixteenth-century record of Aztec society and culture, amaranth (or *huautla*, its Nahuatl name) was one of four major crops collected as tribute throughout the empire. The Aztecs' total take, after collecting it from each of the 17 provinces in their empire, was as much as hundreds of thousands of bushels. And amaranth's history dates back even fur-

Before sugar was brought to Mexico, Mesoamerican peoples sweetened their foods with honey from forest bees and the cane from the corn plant, the tuna (Prickly pear) and the maguey plant.

ther: it has been found in excavations in Tehuacán, Puebla that are 5,500 years old.

The Aztec's most important use of amaranth was probably in their religious rituals. During an event called "Huautamalculiztli," or "Amaranth tamale feast," worshippers offered popped-amaranth tamales to the god of fire. They also ate them and put them on graves to serve as funeral offerings.

"An even more highly charged use was in rituals involving the sacred *tzoali*, a mixture of popped amaranth seeds held together with syrup from the maguey cactus and, at times, human blood," writes Early. "The faithful considered this preparation the flesh of the gods. Images of at least six deities (Chicomecóatl, the

goddess of crops; Xiuhtecuhtli, god of fire; Tláloc, the rain god; Macuilxóchtli, the flower god; Omócatl, god of feasts; and Huitzilopochtli, god of war) were fabricated from *tzoali* for consumption in a communion ritual."

Naturally, when the Spaniards arrived, they were horrified by what they saw as a perversion of the Catholic communion ritual.

"No historical evidence has been found that the Spaniards prohibited the cultivation of amaranth itself, but they certainly waged a repressive campaign against this 'idolatri', in which amaranth played a central role," Early notes.

Other examples of contemporary sweets common to Mexico's indigenous cuisine include the *cajetas* of Celaya (caramelized goat milk, often served as a dessert on crepes); *chongos zamoranos* (a milk and syrup sweet shaped like mushrooms); the fruit sweets of Puebla; pumpkin seeds; sweets made from sweet potatoes and gourds; and the *ates* of Morelia, as Heriberto García Rivas points out in *Cocina prehispánica mexicana: la comida de los antiguos mexicanos* (Mexican Pre-Hispanic Cuisine: The Food of the Ancient Mexicans).



Celaya, a traditional candy shop.

Among the candy ingredients used by indigenous people is vanilla. Its incorporation into native cuisine is remarkable, explains Patricia Rain in her essay “Vanilla: Nectar of the Gods” (in *Chilies to Chocolate*), given that the vanilla flower and its fruit have no noticeable scent or flavor unless fermented.

“This biochemical fact makes it remarkable that, in antiquity, vanilla’s virtues were discovered, let alone that an efficient means of curing the beans was developed and the plant itself brought under extensive cultivation,” she writes.

Rain credits the Totonacs of Veracruz with these accomplishments. “At least a thousand years ago the Totonacs worked out a means of processing the beans very much like the methods used today in commercial vanilla extractions, and they began to make vanilla an integral part of their culture. In addition to using it as a perfume and as a flavoring for food and drink, the Totonacs found that vanilla was effective as a medicine, an aphrodisiac and an insect repellent.” About 500 years before the Spaniards arrived, the Aztecs forced the Totonacs to give them part of their annual vanilla harvest.

“Chocolate is another indigenous ingredient with a long history,” writes John A. West in “A Brief History and Botany of Cacao” (in *Chilies to Chocolate*). The *Mendocino Codex* shows large sacks of cacao beans being paid in tribute by other Indian groups to the Aztecs, along with other fine goods such as honey, feathers and gold. Spanish colonial governments established a monopoly on cacao production, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, cacao became the Spaniards’ most important export crop. The Spanish

controlled its trade and consumption in Europe and its colonies.

Members of the Spanish royal family began the practice of adding other flavorings, such as aniseed, vanilla, cinnamon and sugar to their liquid chocolate beverage.



A great variety of shapes, flavors and colors in marzipan.

*The art of
Mexican sweet making
may have reached its climax
in the convents,
during the colonial period.*

*“In the eighteenth century they [sweets] became true works of art, baroque in the mixture of colors and shapes, in the *récherchés* names and in the original combination of ingredients.”*

“Presumably, the Spanish court took such great liberties in doctoring chocolate drinks because long, damp voyages from the New World left many of the beans moldy and poor tasting; the additional flavors became necessary to mask the undesirable ones,” West writes.

Despite the drink’s popularity in Mexico, hot chocolate as we know it—hot milk mixed with chocolate—did not exist until it was invented in 1727 by an Englishman named Nicholas Saunders, according to West.

The arrival of the Spaniards also meant the arrival of sugar, which they transported from the Canary

Islands to Santo Domingo, and from there to Cuba and Mexico. Before sugar was brought to Mexico, Mesoamerican peoples sweetened their foods with honey from forest bees and the cane from the corn plant, the *tuna* (Prickly pear) and the maguey plant, says Sonia Corcuera de Mancera in her book *Entre gula y templanza* (Between Gluttony and Moderation). When Cortés first introduced sugar to Mexico, at the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, sugar consumption did not grow quickly, especially among those with meager resources. Cortés himself began cultivation of sugar on his *fincas* in Tlaltenango and los Tuxtles, Veracruz, and cultivation extended to Morelos, Guerrero and other parts of New Spain.

But it was not until the first half of the seventeenth century that sugar began to gain an important place in the Mexican diet, according to Carlos Zolla in *Elogio del Dulce: Ensayo sobre la dulcería mexicana* (Eulogy to Sweets: Essay on Mexican Sweet Making).

The art of Mexican sweet making may have reached its climax in the convents, during the colonial period. “In the eighteenth century they [sweets] became true works of art, baroque in the mixture of colors and shapes, in the *récherchés* names and in the original com-



Pirulies, a children’s favorite.

bination of ingredients,” writes Corcuera de Mancera. She adds, “There came about in the convents what we would call haute Mexican cuisine: dishes more elaborate and more decorated than ‘the typical dishes of that time’. The nuns of Jesús María imitated all types of foods, using sweets as their base: When the sweet-toothed caterers thought they were taking a slice of meat, they found themselves with a slice of almond paste!”

The nuns’ agility with sweets was to be mutually advantageous to both them and the eating public. The convents needed money as a supplement to their gifts and endowments to pay for the goods and products they had to buy from outside their walls. The public needed to satisfy its desire for sweets.

“Those of average condition, placed socially somewhere between the viceroy and the leper, also bought and savored all types of sweets,” Corcuera writes. “To give an idea of the affection that the Mexican had for sugar, it is enough to think about the poetic names of the candies: *suspiros* (sighs), *besos* (kisses), *bocado real* (royal mouthful), *regalo de ángeles* (gift of the angels); one as improbable as *leche de obispo* (bishop’s milk) or the *borrachos* (drunkards) with a discreet alcoholic content.”

As a result, nuns began to set themselves up in business, offering services which produced sweet dishes on demand for all types of celebrations. The nuns added their contributions to the development of Mexican sweets, Zolla explains, introducing the use of Old World technology (the oven), as well as

The nineteenth-century fad in Mexico for all things French found exquisite expression in sweets as well.

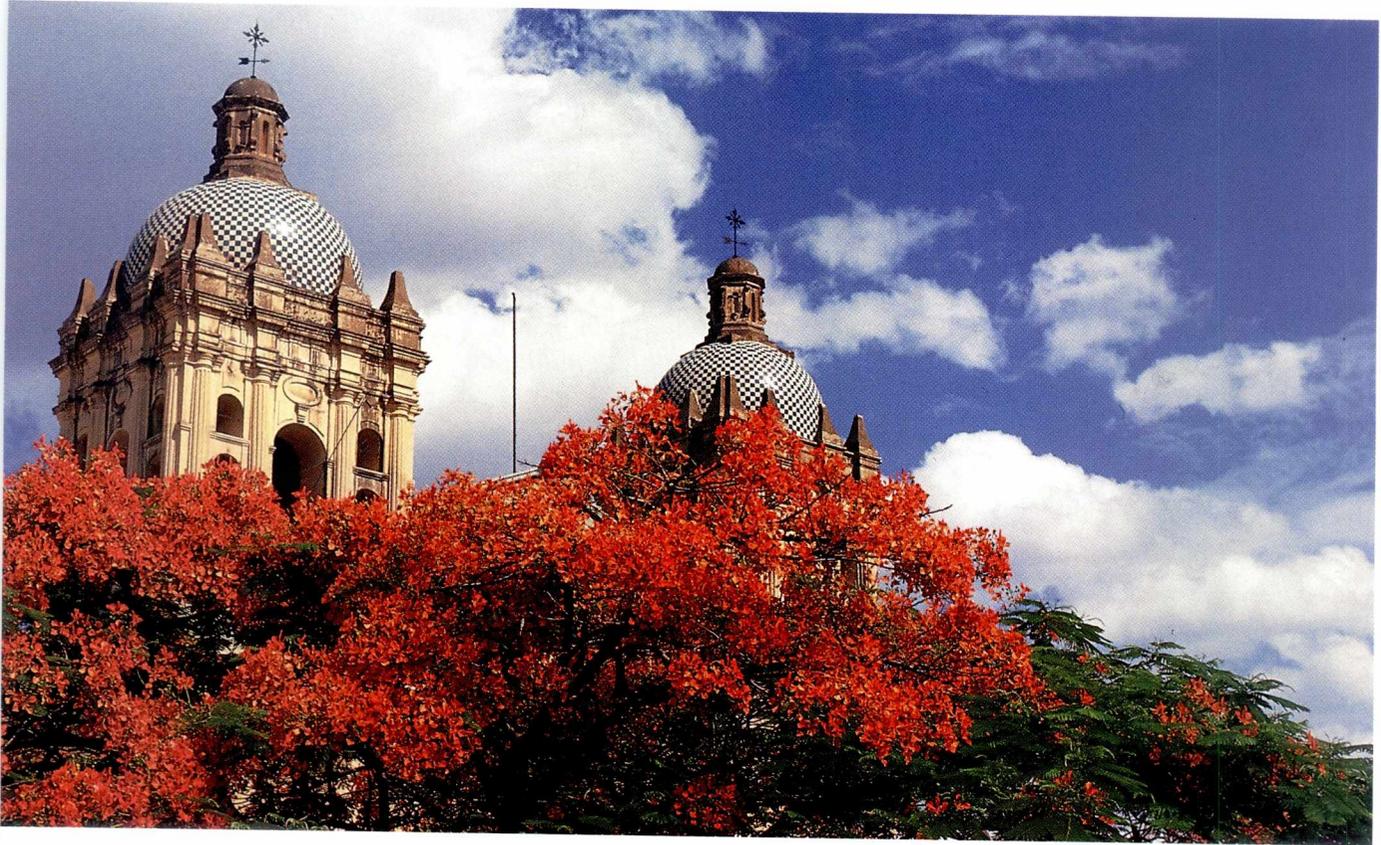


A sweet rainbow.

European preparations such as marzipan. Among the nuns best known for their creations were those in the Convent of San Jerónimo and the Regina Coeli and Catalina de Sena Monasteries.

The nineteenth-century fad in Mexico for all things French found exquisite expression in sweets as well. As Salvador Novò explained in *Cocina mexicana o historia gastronómica de la ciudad de México* (Mexican Cuisine or a Gastronomical History of Mexico City), “With all the pretty sweets inherited from the convents; and the cakes multiplied during the viceroyalty, the attraction of French candies and pastries was in itself above all reflection, all prudence.”

It is probably the twentieth-century, post-revolutionary re-evaluation of Mexican culture and the restoration of its prestige within the country that has resulted in traditional candies’ current popularity. How convenient that such colorful reminders of the nation’s past can be so readily consumed and enjoyed. **W**



Photos by Fidel Ugarte

LAND USE AND THE RESTORATION OF THE EX-CONVENT OF SANTO DOMINGO DE GUZMÁN, OAXACA

*Enrique Fernández Dávila**

After the conquistadors subdued the indigenous population militarily and the so-called spiritual conquest of what is now Mexico began, a town for Spaniards was founded in Oaxaca which affected the interests of

Hernán Cortés, the Marquis del Valle. In 1526, the inhabitants of newly founded Antequera petitioned King Charles V successfully for a decree giving Villa de Antequera the status of a town. However, it was not until April

1553 that it was recognized as a city.¹

This established a division between the city of Oaxaca del Marqués for the indigenous inhabitants and Antequera del Rey for the Spaniards,

* Archeologist. Director of the Archeological Project to Recover the Ex-Convent of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Oaxaca.

¹ Carlos Velasco Pérez, *La conquista armada y espiritual de la Nueva Antequera (1532-1982)*, Mexico, Progreso, 1982.

which lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The city was originally planned by the geometrician Alonso García Bravo who had also laid out Mexico City and Veracruz. For Oaxaca, he drew a checker-board with 80-vara blocks² spreading out from a central module. To the north of this center, the cathedral was built, to the south, the government palace, and on the sides, the most important homes with portals for stores.

The original use of the land and buildings changed considerably with time, affecting many important buildings: among others, the Government Palace, the Cathedral, the Municipal Palace, the Palace of the ex-Bishopric, the San Juan de Dios and San Francisco Churches, the Church and ex-Convent of San Agustín, the ex-Convent of the Seven Princes or Santa María de los Ángeles Convent, the La Merced Church and ex-Convent, the Santa Catalina ex-Convent, the Carmen el Alto Church, what is today the Museum-Home of Benito Juárez, the La Soledad Church, the ex-convent adjacent to the ex-Convent of San José, the El Carmen Bajo Church, the colonial home located at 503 Morelos Street and, of course, the Church and ex-Convent of Santo Domingo, which is our topic in this article.

Throughout its history, Oaxaca “had to adapt not only to topographic conditions, but also to a

great extent to the conditions of the subsoil. This made the city and its buildings constantly adapt and rebuild.”³ From the sixteenth century on, after the design of its main downtown area, it continued to expand in the checker-board pattern. By the eighteenth century, the city had established itself as strategic and became the third most important in New Spain. Its economic growth was matched by a great capacity for construction and remodeling of religious and public buildings, an upsurge which continued until

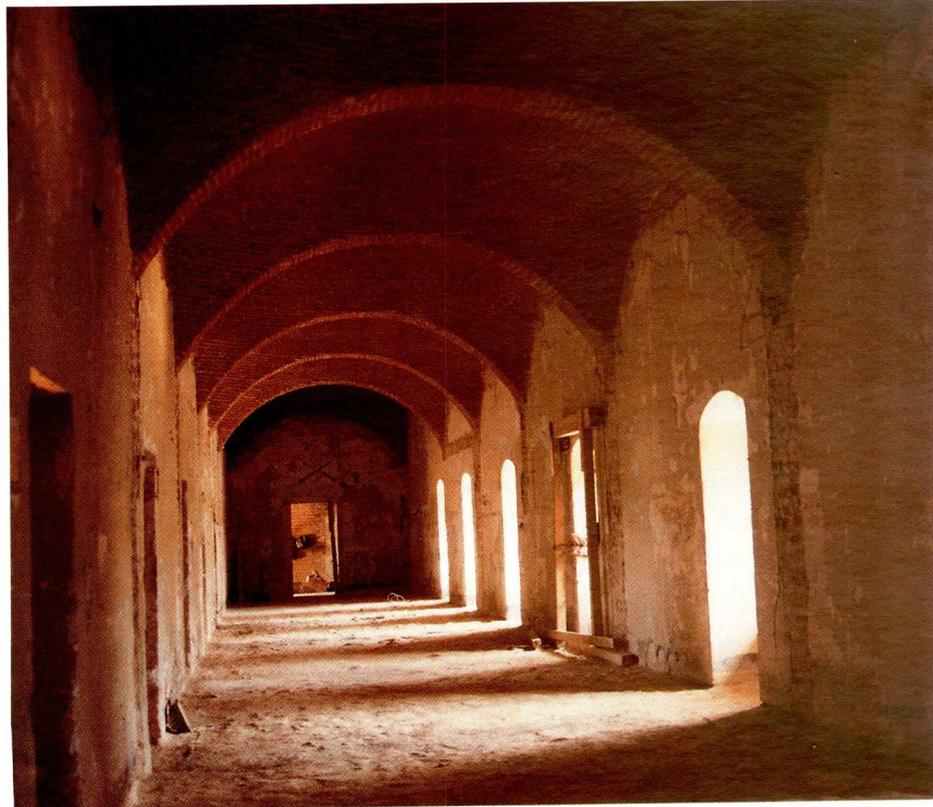
the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the city of Oaxaca had about 26 neighborhoods populated by guilds. The specific functions of each guild determined the use and cost of the land and buildings.

Many constructions were affected by the seismic activity common to Southern Mexico, as well as by the constant battles for independence and later social movements associated with the Reform period, the *Porfiriato*⁴ and the Rev-

³ Francisco Haroldo Alfaro, “Oaxaca. Ciudad histórica y presente: la conservación del Centro Histórico,” *Revista Síntesis*, UAM Xochimilco/Síntesis Creativa, Mexico, 1993.

⁴ The *Porfiriato* was the period in which Mexico was ruled by Porfirio Díaz (1880-1910), generally considered a dictatorship and the immediate cause of the Mexican Revolution. [Translator’s Note.]



Arched walkway around the main patio.

² A vara is about 33 inches long. [Translator’s Note.]



The belltowers.

olution. One of the results of these social and economic movements was the change in land tenure systems and therefore, in the use given the land. At the time, the clergy was the direct or indirect owner of slightly more than half the buildings in the city.

During the entire nineteenth century, important public buildings were constructed in the neo-classical style, which did not break with the city's architectural unity.

However, according to Hugo Altamirano Ramírez⁵ and Dr. Juan

I. Bustamante,⁶ several streets in the historic downtown area were changed at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries as a result of increasing urbanization. The changes in some cases destroyed and in others covered up public utilities and defenses which still existed in 1812, like trenches with moats, watchtowers, parapets, drainage canals, drains and stone paving. It is important to note that the stone paving had the ecological advantage of allowing water to seep into the subsoil and replenishing the underground water sources, currently very depleted.

Today, tourism has an impact on the changes in the uses of the land. The importance of tourism to both the country and the state of Oaxaca is indisputable. However, the increase in tourist services over the last 10 years has caused irreversible damage to the facades and other parts of the buildings in the Historic Center.

Conservation of the buildings in the Historic Center should be considered a vital goal for all the residents of Oaxaca for two basic reasons: 1) knowledge and respect for our past helps us strengthen our identity; and 2) it makes the city more attractive for tourists.

We believe that the modern use of a historic building should be compatible with the original archi-

tectural purpose for which it was built, and its owners and the authorities should be committed to its conservation and restoration. Integral conservation is not possible if, because of the use to which buildings are put, they are changed, mutilated or destroyed to satisfy supposed needs of modernity or functionality. In the case of historic monuments whose use has changed over time, it is important to understand that regardless of those changes, the architecture of historic buildings should be conserved. This is the true challenge, one which few are ready to meet.

The 227 blocks and 500 hectares of land of the Historic Center of Oaxaca are covered with religious constructions and 1,200 buildings catalogued as Historic Treasures.⁷ The variation in the use of the land is so great that there are no fewer than 300 different uses, which in general fall in the following categories: housing, parks, services, mixed uses and non-inhabited spaces. The deterioration of the buildings is due to the changes in land use over time.

This information allows us to view the proposal for restoring the ex-Convent of Santo Domingo de Guzmán—which we will deal with further on—in its proper context.

The theoretical concepts of conservation and restoration are

⁵ Hugo Altamirano Ramírez, *La ciudad de Oaxaca que conoció Morelos*, Láser Plus, Oaxaca, Mexico, 1992.

⁶ Juan I. Bustamante, personal conversation, 1994.

⁷ Francisco Haroldo Alfaro *et al*, *Taller de Restauración Urbana II, Maestría en Restauración Arquitectónica de Monumentos*, UABJO, Oaxaca, Mexico, 1992.

linked to the value placed on historic buildings as the common property of society. However, these concepts constantly collide with the legal concept of private ownership of historic buildings and their conservation, as conceived in the 1972 Federal Law on Archeological, Artistic and Historic Monuments and Regions as well as its regulatory legislation passed in 1975.

In Oaxaca an enormous number of old houses conserve their original facades, but behind the facade, they have been subdivided, and in the process, the original architectural design mutilated. A considerable number of these houses are *vecindades* (tenement-like apartment houses) inhabited by people who work in the service sector who live there because of the different uses given to the land in the building.

Speaking strictly architectural— and not in allusion to the emotional memory that Proust sought— there are three ways of recovering a building. The first is through conservation; the second is restoration, which requires research to discover what the original design was like. The goal of restoration is to return the building to its original state, even though in some cases some details of the construction are freely interpreted or actually remodeled, whether this involve details on the windows or the amplification or reduction of some spaces. The third way is “intervention,” which means including elements of

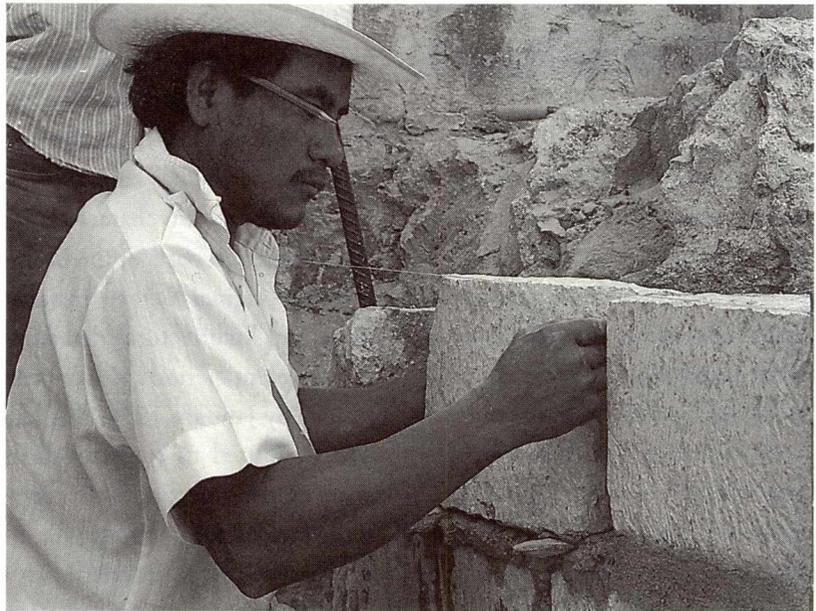
modern architecture in a historic context.⁸

All these were taken into consideration both in designing and in carrying out all the stages of development of the project to restore the ex-Convent of Santo Domingo de Guzmán from its incep-

⁸ Alvaro Quijano, “Recuperación del patrimonio arquitectónico: diálogo de tiempos,” in *Memoria de papel*, Year 4, No. 10, CNCA, Mexico, 1992.

teenth centuries. This recovery of features and spaces has revealed a face of the ex-convent unknown to most.

Several different sources have guided the restoration project: a reading of the original building, the data from archeological exploration, the geometric conceptual analysis of the spaces, an analysis of its content and historic documents stored in different archives.

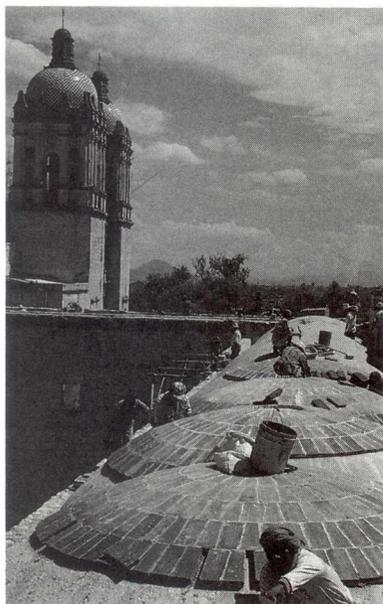


Working the stone.

tion in January 1994. Working on the Santo Domingo project is a multidisciplinary group of researchers from the National Institute of Anthropology and History, with the firm support of the National Council for Culture and the Arts.

The project includes the restoration of all the architectural features of the building used during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eigh-

Numerous historic archives have been consulted, like the General Archive of the State Executive Branch, the Library of the Santo Domingo Church, the archives of the Oaxaca State Association of Notary Publics and the Municipality of the City of Oaxaca, the National Archives and the Historic Archives of the Secretariat of Social Development. Interviews were also conducted, as well as an analysis



The restoration process.

of the context of all the architectural features and the collections found by Archeological Recovery.

The work of archeological recovery allows us for the first time to understand and document the relationship between the ex-convent and the city of Oaxaca in the colonial period, in a diversity of topics found heretofore only in formal historic studies: construction systems of the ex-convent during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; changes made in the building during the military occupation from the nineteenth

century on; the economic dominance of the Dominican order due to both its evangelical and economic organization; the relationships with different haciendas and encomiendas which were peripheral suppliers of human and material resources; conflicts over water and with the town council; and the importation of consumer goods from the cities of Mexico, Puebla and Veracruz and from Peru and Asia (through China's Nao).

The ex-Convent of Santo Domingo is beginning to reveal the role it played in New Spain's society. More than 20,000 square meters of archeological digs have allowed us to establish the characteristics of the different parts of the building; the original factory, installations and architectural details of the different periods it has been in use. By January 1994, this had also permitted us to establish its state of deterioration and therefore, formulate a strategy for its restoration and consolidation.

The information gathered offers both questions and answers about the construction itself and its diverse modifications and uses, as well as about patterns of consumption of

material, about the economy and trade in colonial society and particularly the city of Antequera. We know now, for example, that in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the ceramic dishes used in Santo Domingo were both made locally and imported from Europe, Panama and Southeast Asia, specifically China. The hydraulic engineering of the convent—directly tied to the system of aqueducts and drainage of old Antequera—has also been documented.

The archeological recovery project has already yielded a collection of about 600 items, which will be exhibited in Oaxaca's Regional Museum once they have been mounted. Other important discoveries include the location of the Dominican vegetable garden, the novices' laundry and the buildings added in the period of Independence.

The building will be used for cultural purposes: once restored, it will house an extension of the National Institute of Anthropology and History's Oaxaca Regional Museum, the Santo Domingo Institute for the Plastic Arts and the Ethno-Botanical Historical Garden, all of which will undoubtedly be of great benefit to the inhabitants of Oaxaca.

Lastly, the integral restoration of the ex-Convent of Santo Domingo de Guzmán should be a model for the restoration of historic monuments in the state of Oaxaca and elsewhere. 

*The Historic Center of Oaxaca
is covered with religious constructions
and 1,200 buildings catalogued
as Historic Treasures.*

Albrecht Dürer

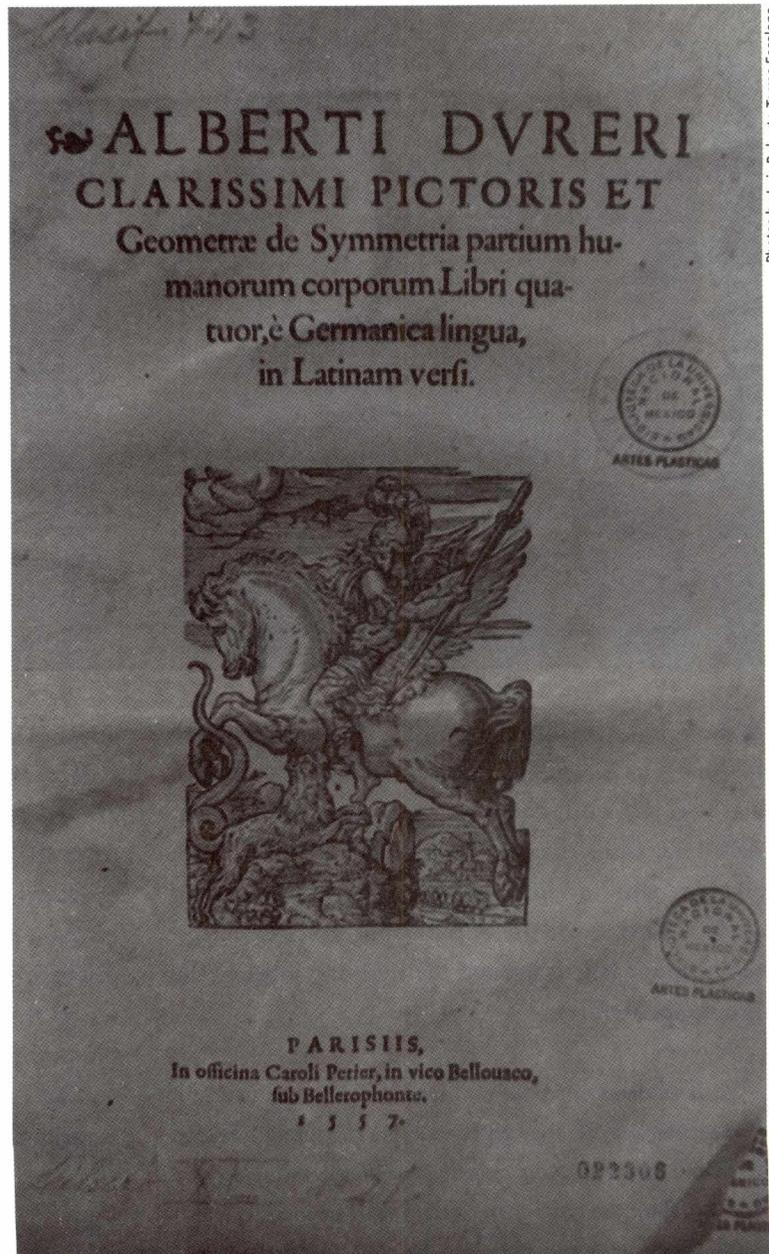
IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

Luis Roberto Torres Escalona*

Two works of the celebrated painter Albrecht Dürer have been stored in the reserved stacks of Mexico's National Library since 1971. The works, *Institutionum Geometricarum Libris, Lineas, Superficies et Solida Corpora Tractault* (Institutions of Geometry) and *De Symetria Partium Humanorum Corporum Libri Quatuor* (The Four Books of Symmetry of the Parts of the Human Body), once belonged to the Old Academy of San Carlos. The former was printed in Paris in 1535, under the direction of Christian Wechel, and the latter in 1557, under the direction of Charles Perier.

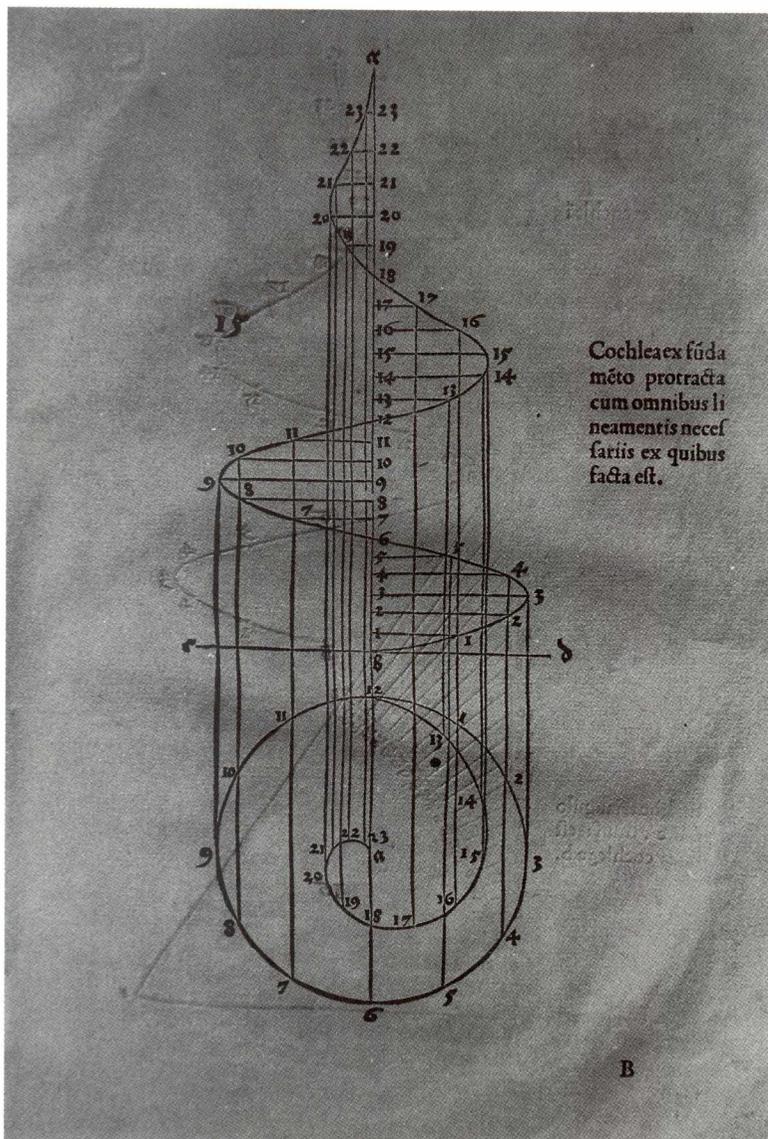
Institutions of Geometry is Wechel's translation of the German publication edited by Dürer himself in Nuremberg in 1525. It is divided into four books: the first deals with lines, their dimensions and types; the second goes into surfaces and explains the way in which different geometric figures should be drawn; the third and fourth deal with solid bodies and how to create them.

Dürer dedicated this treatise, also called *Study of Measurement with Compass and Triangle*, to his dear friend Willibald Pirckheimer, a great humanist and man



Photos by Luis Roberto Torres Escalona

* Researcher at the UNAM's Department of Artistic and Cultural Assets.



wished to adore paintings, wood panels or stones; and for this reason, painting edifies and aids, more than hinders, the Christian religion, as long as it is done honestly, artistically and well.

The work contains a judgement, in the form of a dialogue, about Albrecht Dürer by Erasmus of Rotterdam, another noted humanist and creator of the works *Adagios*, *Coloquia* and *Eulogy to Madness*.¹ In this particular work, entitled *On the Correct Pronunciation of the Greek and Latin Languages*, Erasmus conducts an intelligent discourse through a bear and a lion on the art of lines and monochromatic forms explained by Dürer. Erasmus says Dürer imitated the old heroes, “specifically Pamphilus of Macedonia, an expert both in letters and in geometry and arithmetic,” and points to him as the modern Apelles.

After Erasmus’ text is the dedication by the printer Christian Wechel, who salutes Almirico Bouchard, prince of Saintes and secretary to François de Valois, the king of France, to whom he dedicates his translation because he is “a man blessed with the culture of the fine arts and all manner of virtues.”

The Four Books of Symmetry of the Parts of the Human Body was published by Perier and translated from the German to Latin by Joaquim Camerarius the Elder, historian, philologist, mathematician, theologian, poet and author of numerous translations of classic writers, wise founder of Greek and Latin studies at the University of Tübingen and deputy for Nuremberg at the Diet of Augsburg.

The Latin work is preceded by two prologues by Joaquim Camerarius, one to “equanimous” readers, “lovers

of the world, considered one of the illustrious spirits of his time. In his dedication, Dürer says that his aim was that the work be useful to painters, goldsmiths, sculptors, stone masons, carpenters and “in a word, all those who use the compass, ruler and measuring stick.” Dürer made use of the opportunity to defend his religious beliefs against the budding ideas of the Protestant Reform:

And while in our time we hear some amongst us damn painting because they say it nourishes idolatry, the Christian man is swept away by paintings or images to idolatry no more than the good man, girded with a sword, is led to thievery. It would certainly be dull for a man who

¹ All subsequent titles are translated to English from the Spanish version given by the author. [Translator’s Note.]

“We admire quite rightly Albrecht [Dürer] as the right custodian of honesty and modesty.”

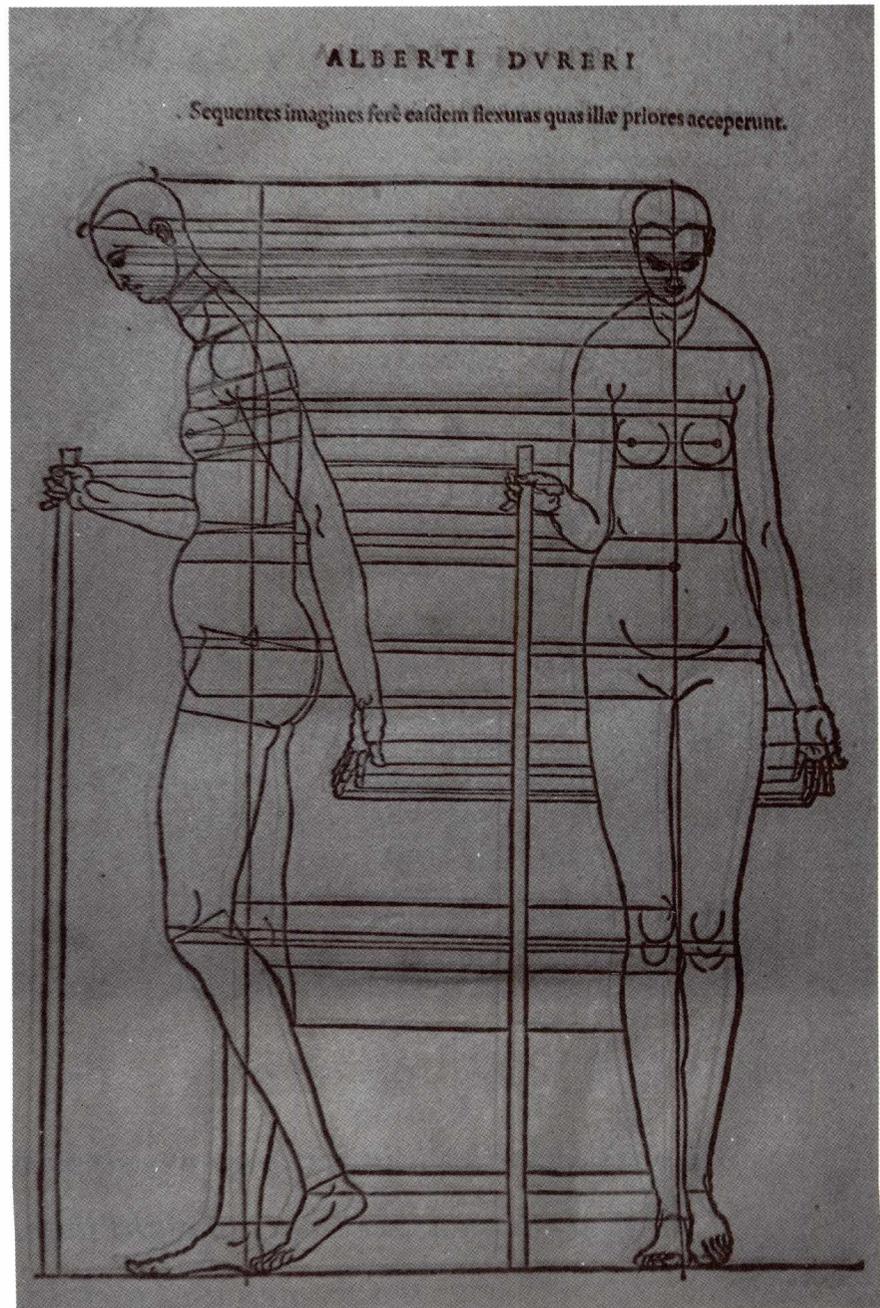
Joaquin Camerarius

of the fine arts,” and another to Christopher Colerus, “conspicuous gentleman,” who urged Camerarius to do the translation. In the first prologue, Camerarius writes of Dürer: “We admire quite rightly Albrecht as the right custodian of honesty and modesty, and proclaim ourselves aware of his virtues, to the degree that even of his lesser works, nothing is to be disdained.”

There are two laudatory essays and four epitaphs by Eobonius Hessus, 10 obituaries and three epitaphs by Willibald Pirckheimer, all in memory of Albrecht Dürer.

This work was the result of measurements taken of eight men, 10 women and a child. It is divided into four books: *First Technique of Measurement of the Human Figure*, *Second Technique of Measurement of the Human Figure*, *On the Variation of Figures*, and *On the Flexing and Gesture of the Figures Described*. The first book explains the way to measure the human body with vertical lines and figures from the front, the back and in profile. In the second book, Dürer uses a ruler one-third as long as the figure he is going to measure; this technique is done with the images placed in the same fashion as in the previous book. The third book

proposes a theory of movement based on variations of the human figure: large and small; long and short; heavysset and thin. The fourth and last book studies the movements of the head, using masculine figures with both front and profile views, with indications for each of its parts; in other cases, he puts the figures in cubes. Dürer said



that the inspiration for his work came from the studies on proportion by Vitruvius and Leon Battista Alberti.

Albrecht Dürer was born May 21, 1471 in Nuremberg. Extant writings from his father tell us that his godfather was Antonius Köberger, the famous printer of Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum*.

In 1485, Dürer began his training as a goldsmith in his father's workshop and the following year had his first artistic contact: he was admitted to the work-

shop of the painter Michael Wolgemut who made, together with Wilhelm Pleydewürff, the 2,000 xylographs (wood carvings) which illustrate the aforementioned incunabula.

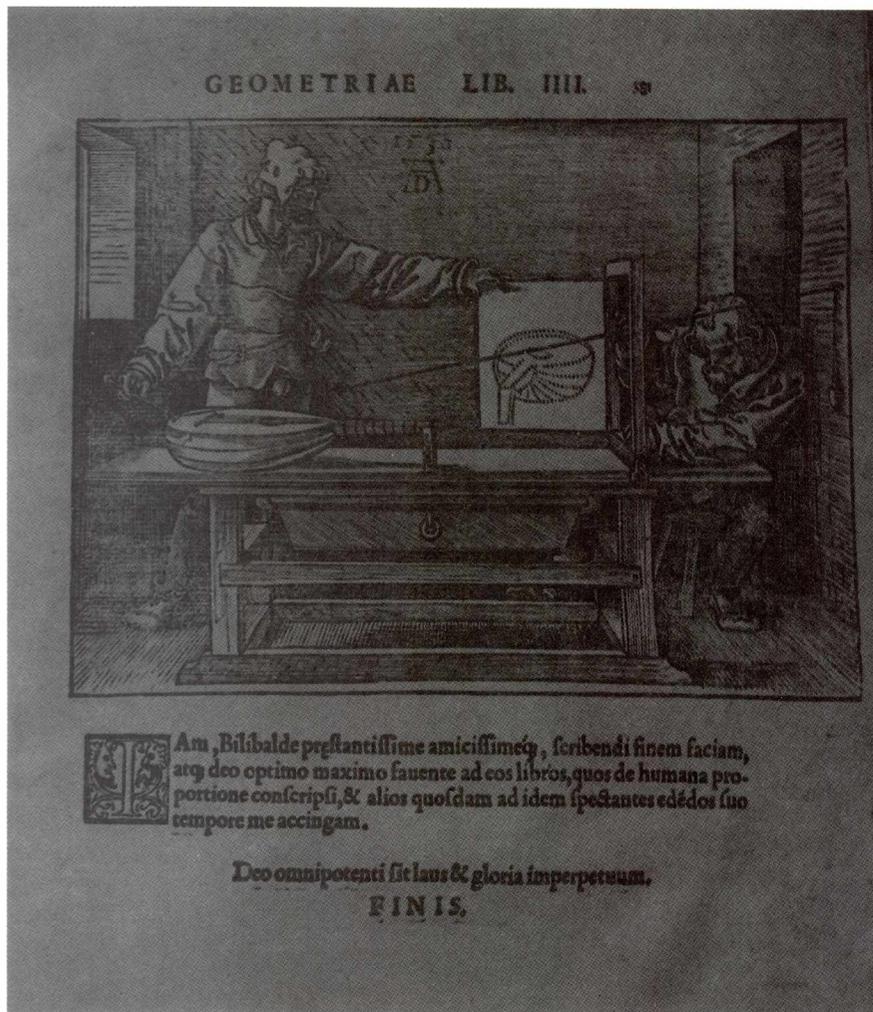
Between 1490 and 1494, Dürer traveled to Colmar, Basel and Strasbourg in order to broaden his knowledge of his craft. Once back in his native land, he married Agnes Frey and began a trip through Venice. This trip was definitive in his life because it was his

first contact with classic art and the Italian Renaissance, which left their mark on the development of his vast subsequent work.

Later, in Saxony, he worked under the protection of Frederick the Wise until, in 1512 and after a new stay in Venice and other Italian cities, he was called on by Emperor Maximilian I to design the stamps of his prayer-book and the gigantic xylograph of the Arch of Triumph.

When Maximilian I died, the pension that the monarch had bestowed on Dürer was canceled, so in 1520 he traveled to Antwerp to seek the favor of Charles V. However, grave illness prompted him to return to his homeland, where he died either April 6 or April 8, 1528 at the age of 57.

Among his engravings considered masterpieces are *The Knight*, *Death and the Devil*; *Saint Jerome in His Study* and *Melancholia*. Outstanding among his paintings are *The Festival of the Rosary*, *The Four Apostles*, *Adam and Eve* and his self-portraits. 



Dürer's work on human proportions was based on measurements of eight men, ten women and a child.

Economic Change and Labor Market Integration In North America¹

Elaine Levine*

One of the most systematically avoided topics in discussions on the prospects of economic integration in the Americas is that of the possibilities for integration of the hemisphere's labor markets. Even in negotiating NAFTA, labor market issues were explicitly skirted. In fact, not many theoretical tools are available as guidelines for carrying out an analysis of the problems involved in such a process. However, the various experiments in regional economic integration taking place in today's world inevitably have a strong impact on the respective labor markets of the countries involved, and to varying degrees constitute some sort of regional labor market, which may in fact turn out to be highly segmented and stratified according to national and/or other types of differentiation.

While labor markets were explicitly left out of the NAFTA negotiations because of the politically sensitive issues involved, the impact of the agreement itself—and of the less formalized but nonetheless real manifestations of regional economic integration—upon working, and hence living, conditions within the region cannot be ignored. Globalization and enhanced competition among the world's leading industrial economies has had an adverse impact on employment and wage levels throughout Europe, in

the United States and Canada, and even in Japan, not to mention the economic and social devastation suffered in most of the less industrialized nations.

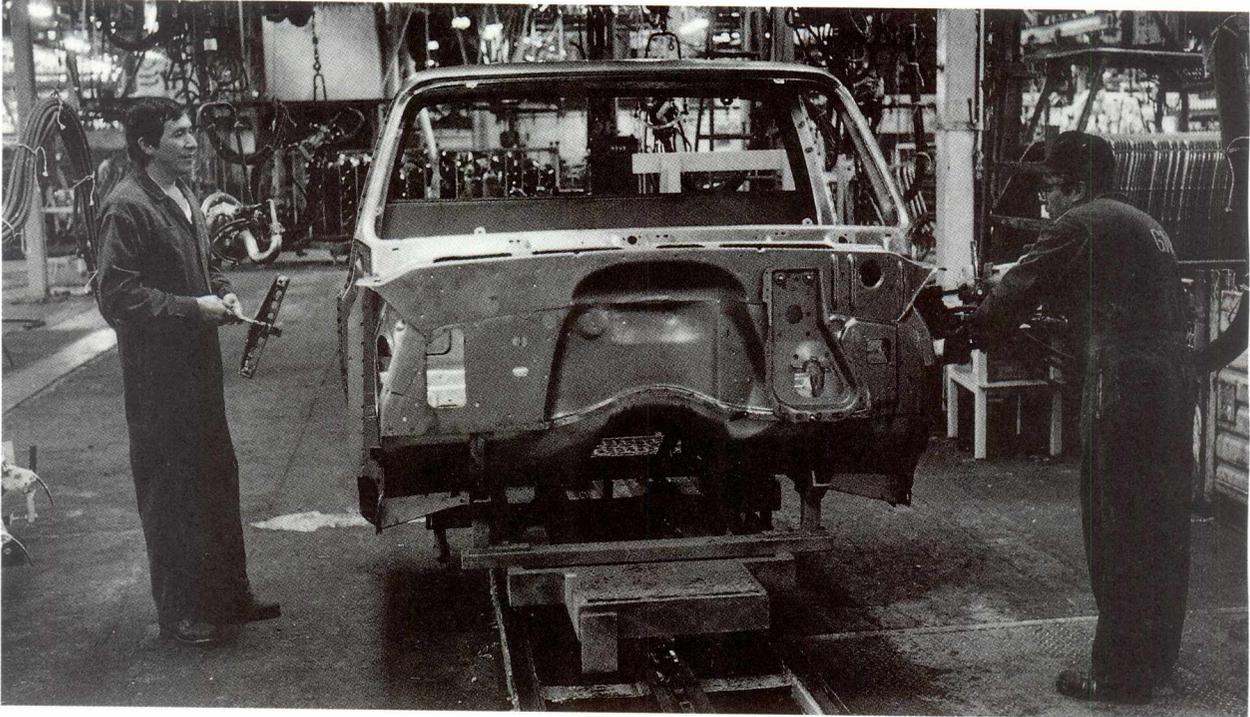
A large part of the working population in the United States has had to confront increasingly adverse labor market conditions over the past decade or so and the situation is likely to continue to deteriorate in the future. Up until recently the U.S. had been perhaps the most successful of the industrialized countries in achieving a high standard of living for most of the working population and their dependents as well as a comparatively high degree of equality in income distribution. However, over the last 20 years real wage levels have stagnated, the incidence of poverty has increased, especially for children, and the distribution of incomes has become more unequal, particularly since 1980.

With the exception of the 20 or 25 percent of those who are most highly trained or specialized in their line of work, the majority of the U.S. labor force has recently suffered from increasing income and employment instability. The unemployment rate has tended to increase. It also takes displaced workers more time to find another job and quite often they are forced to accept lower pay. The number of permanent full-time jobs has declined relative to the growing number of temporary and part-time jobs. The new labor market conditions have been accompanied by increasing inequality in the distribution of incomes and a rapid rise in the number of working poor.

These changes coincide with the relative decline in U.S. hegemony and heightened competition among the highly industrialized nations. The almost instan-

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¹ This article is based on a paper presented at the IX International Congress of the North American Economics and Finance Association held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, from June 29 to July 2, 1995. The paper centers mainly on U. S. and Mexican labor markets.



Steady, well paying jobs are becoming difficult to find.

taneous mobility of capital demands greater efficiency, greater flexibility and constant innovation of productive processes in addition to lower costs for those countries and firms that wish to remain competitive. Changes in the international economic panorama along with internal changes in the U.S. economy have combined to produce what is likely to be a profound and lasting transformation of the U.S. labor market.

Due to increasing international competition and the simplification of various tasks as a result of technological innovation, many jobs in certain branches of manufacturing were eliminated in the U.S. and appeared in less developed countries where the same firms established new plants to take advantage of cheap labor. At the same time, the cost of labor directly occupied on the production line has become a decreasing element of the total cost of many goods. Knowledge-based work or conceptual tasks have acquired an ever increasing and fundamental role in industrial production today.

Between 1979 and 1993, 23.8 million new jobs were created in the so-called service sector of the economy, thereby absorbing most of the natural increase in the Economically Active Population (EAP), as well as

the majority of those displaced from manufacturing industries over the same time span. However, this absorption and relocation process is becoming increasingly more difficult. Since the end of the 1960s the percentage of the unemployed who have gone for more than six months without finding a job has increased steadily and now stands at about 21 percent.²

In addition to the increasing difficulties involved in obtaining and keeping a job, it is also becoming much harder to find a good, steady, well paying job, especially for the approximately 80 percent of the U.S. population that does not have college degrees. At the beginning of 1993 it was calculated that 43 percent of employed persons between 18 and 24 years old held only minimum wage jobs as opposed to just 23 percent in 1981.³ A minimum wage job in the U.S. does not provide enough income to maintain a family of three above the poverty level.

As current Secretary of Labor Robert Reich points out, for the first three decades of the postwar period,

² *Economic Report of the President 1994*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1994, p. 316.

³ John Greenwald, "The Job Freeze," *Time*, Vol. 141, No. 5, February 1, 1993, p. 52.

up until about the mid 1970s, poverty in the United States was generally associated with not having a job. However this premise no longer holds at a time when the number of poorly paid jobs and the proportion of part-time or temporary posts are rising rapidly. Janice Castro, in an article published in *Time*, in April 1993, estimated that one out of three employed persons in the U.S. was in a temporary or part-time post, and that by the year 2000 the ranks of these types of contingent workers might exceed the number of permanent full-time job holders.⁴ Furthermore, there are indications that over the past few years part-time posts have increased rapidly at the expense of full-time employment. These kinds of practices have increased the flexibility and profitability of many firms but in doing so have sacrificed the job security and economic stability of their employees.

Given the dominant role of the U.S. economy in the North American region, and the commercial and financial integration currently underway, it follows that the labor markets in both Mexico and Canada will also be affected by these changes. Unfortunately the enormous differences in living conditions, working conditions and income levels between Mexico and the United States are not likely to be mitigated by the transformations now underway. It is extremely probable that an attempt to emulate and implement working conditions prevailing in the U.S. will have a highly negative impact on employment levels in Mexico. Most U.S. workers have not been able to defend themselves from the increasingly adverse employment conditions imposed by globalization and restructuring, and Mexican workers, who in general have a much lower educational profile, are even less equipped to do so.

There are indications that over the past few years part-time posts have increased rapidly at the expense of full-time employment.

While precarious living and working conditions are certainly not new characteristics for the Mexican economy, as regional integration proceeds they will probably become more rather than less pervasive. Before NAFTA was approved, newspapers frequently quoted government officials who insisted that it would bring more trade, more investment and more jobs to Mexico. Since January 1994, however, the headlines have often been filled with news of plant closings and job losses. The downward spiral intensified rapidly after the payments crisis of December 1994, when the incapacity to meet financial obligations in, and/or indexed to, foreign currency triggered a devaluation and provoked the immediate flight of speculative capital that had poured into Mexico during the year or so prior to the crisis.

Thousands of companies have closed over the past year and a half with the consequent loss of well over a million jobs. While most of those affected were

small or micro establishments, many medium-sized firms have also disappeared and, in fact, entire branches, such as the textile industry, have found it extremely difficult

to survive in a post-NAFTA environment. The recent increase in job losses simply accentuates a tendency which has been prevalent now for more than a decade. Over 200,000 manufacturing jobs were eliminated between 1982 and 1994—representing a decline in employment of approximately 20 percent. Wharton Economics has estimated that between 1985 and 1999 the Mexican economy will only be able to generate 881,000 new jobs in the formal sector, whereas over the same period the number of persons seeking employment will have increased by 17 million.⁵

Official figures recognize an increase of almost 40 percent in the “open unemployment rate” between

⁴ Janice Castro, “Disposable Workers,” *Time*, Vol. 141, No. 16, April 19, 1993, p. 40.

⁵ “La situación de México en cifras,” *Gaceta UNAM*, May 18, 1995, p. 13.

December 1994, when it was reported as 3.7 percent, and May 1995, when it reached 5.1 percent.⁶ However official figures and “open unemployment rates” have little meaning in a country where over half of the economically active population —53.5 percent as of November 1994— is employed in the informal sector of the economy.⁷ In Mexico City and other important metropolitan areas as many as 20 people or more, from toddlers on up, can be observed at major intersections selling all manner of items, from chewing gum and chilled soft drinks to toys or tools or kitchen utensils, and performing all kinds of activities from cleaning windshields, juggling, eating fire, dancing, playing musical instruments, etc. to simply begging.

which now stands at approximately U.S. \$3.00 per day, is equal to less than 40 percent of the peak level it had reached 20 years ago. Wages represented 36 percent of GDP in 1980 and only 22 percent in 1991.⁸ Over three-fourths of the working population in Mexico earn less than U.S. \$3,300 per year.⁹ The poverty rate, which decreased significantly during the 1960s and 1970s —from over 75 percent to less than 50 percent— began rising again in the early 1980s and now stands at around 66 percent.¹⁰

When the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement was implemented, Canadian workers were fearful of losing many of their social benefits, and one of the main reasons cited for opposing NAFTA in both the U.S.

and Canada was the downward impact it was expected to have on employment and wages. Mexicans, on the other hand, were hoping for higher wage and employment levels. It is too early, perhaps, to evaluate the labor market effects of NAFTA itself. However, what has already happened when one of the highest wage countries in the world (the United States) shares a 3,000 kilometer border with one of the lowest wage countries in the world (Mexico) may shed some light on the prospects for labor market integration when a free

trade agreement is implemented but no steps are taken to eliminate, or even take into consideration, the enormous asymmetries existing among the par-



Imagenlatina - Arturo Fuentes

NAFTA has not had as negative an effect on knowledge-based jobs.

Twenty-seven percent of the economically active population earn the minimum wage or less; 63 percent have incomes equal to twice the minimum wage or less; and 78 percent earn three times the minimum wage or less. In real terms the minimum wage,

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ See *La Jornada Laboral*, February 23, 1995, p. 9. Open unemployment refers only to those not working in the formal or informal sector of the economy; in other words, according to this measure the over 13 million persons employed in the informal sector are not considered as unemployed.

⁸ María de la Luz Arriaga, “TLC, precarización y desempleo,” *El Cotidiano*, January-February 1995, p. 11.

⁹ “País de contrastes,” *Reforma*, June 4, 1995, p. 13.

¹⁰ Figures presented by Julio Boltvinik in a panel on “Unemployment, Poverty and Income Distribution,” at the Economics Department of the UNAM on March 6, 1995. For an explanation of how INEGI-ECLA figures underestimate current poverty rates in Mexico see his article “La pobreza en México 1984-1992 según INEGI-CEPAL,” *Economía Informa*, No. 237, April 1995, pp.14-19.

ticipating countries. The increasing numbers of Mexicans who emigrate to the United States each year, both legally and illegally—lured by the prospect of earning in dollars—have rapidly become the most poorly paid workers in that country.

Since incomes, or at least potential incomes, have become more and more closely tied to educational attainment, the employment and earning perspectives for the vast majority of the Mexican children now growing up—both north and south of the border—are becoming more limited. Most of them—like the more than 20 percent of all the U.S. children that are currently living in poverty—will probably be confined to low income jobs and an ever increasing number will be relegated to the ranks of either the working poor or the even poorer under- and unemployed. Recent and ongoing economic transformations have lowered the job security and income stability of most working people in North America and many other parts of the world as well.

As restructuring, downsizing and flexibilization become more generalized, labor markets are becoming more segmented and stratified. Over the past 15 years, increasing poverty rates and greater inequality in income distribution have prevailed not only in Mexico—which is not highly industrialized and where macroeconomic indicators were largely negative—but also in the United States, where growth was mainly quite favorable. Increased competition among the highly industrialized countries has been a driving force behind industrial restructuring and regional integration.

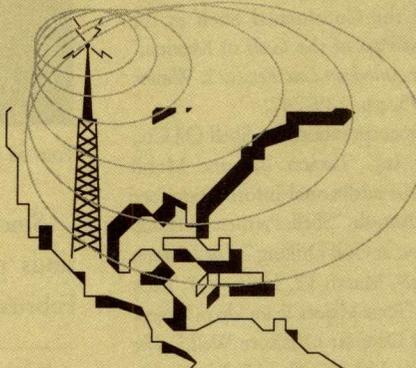
Part of the restructuring process consists of reducing direct labor costs by eliminating workers or reducing the costs of employment by substituting permanent full-time workers with temporary and/or part-time ones. Another aspect is the transformation of the work process itself where, due to the growing importance of knowledge-based work, the costs of conceptualizing and designing the goods to be produced has increased greatly relative to proportionally declining direct production line costs. “Just-in-time production” seems indeed to be evolving towards “just-in-time employ-

ment,” which while increasing the flexibility and profitability of corporations means increased instability and insecurity for the workers.

It also seems that world economic leadership is increasingly determined by being at the forefront not only of product innovation but also process innovation. Thus, changing employment conditions and increasing inequality, in terms of economic well-being, for different groups within the labor force depends on the new competitive position of the different tasks and jobs to be done. Only the highly skilled and highly educated will be assured of steady employment and high wages and salaries, whereas the majority of the labor force in almost all countries and regions will face greater uncertainties and less favorable working conditions. Thus as regionalization continues and the economic transformations now underway intensify, the labor markets in North America will in all probability become more and more integrated into a single but extremely segmented and stratified labor market. 



Las ondas no necesitan visa,
por eso traspasamos las fronteras.



XEPPM, Onda Corta
Largo alcance de México al mundo
Cultura con imaginación

OIL AND NATURAL GAS

A Legal Dispute Brewing In the Gulf of Mexico¹

Jorge A. Vargas*

Recently, the U.S. press reported that four major international oil corporations, led by the Houston-based giant Shell Oil company, are drilling a prospective commercial well in the Gulf of Mexico at a depth of 7,625 feet.² This commercial project, known as the “Baha Project” is situated in the submarine region known as Alaminos Canyon, 200 miles southeast of Corpus Christi, Texas.³

*Professor at the University of San Diego School of Law.

¹ FIRST OF TWO PARTS. This essay is based on Professor Vargas’ article “Mexico’s Legal Regime Over Its Marine Spaces: A Proposal for the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Deepest Part of the Gulf of Mexico,” 26 *Inter-American Law Review* 2, Winter, 1994-95, pp. 189-242.

² The four corporations are Shell Oil Co., Amoco, Inc., Texaco, Inc. and Mobil Corp. For additional information, see Nelson Antosh, “Shell, Partners to Reach New Low in Gulf Drilling,” *The Houston Chronicle*, March 12, 1996, p. 1; Rick Hogan, “Four Majors Team Up in Project to Drill Deepest Offshore Well,” *The Oil Daily*, Vol. 46, No. 47, March 12, 1996, p. 1; and, Agis Salpukas, “Four Oil Companies to Drill Well 7,625 Feet Under Gulf of Mexico,” *The New York Times*, March 9, 1996, p. 39.

³ Shell Offshore, a Shell affiliate based in New Orleans, is the operator of what is



Photos courtesy of PEMEX International Press Office

Four oil giants pooled efforts in the Baha Project to bring up the oil.

Since the existence of this ambitious project was announced in February 1996, “Project Baha” is

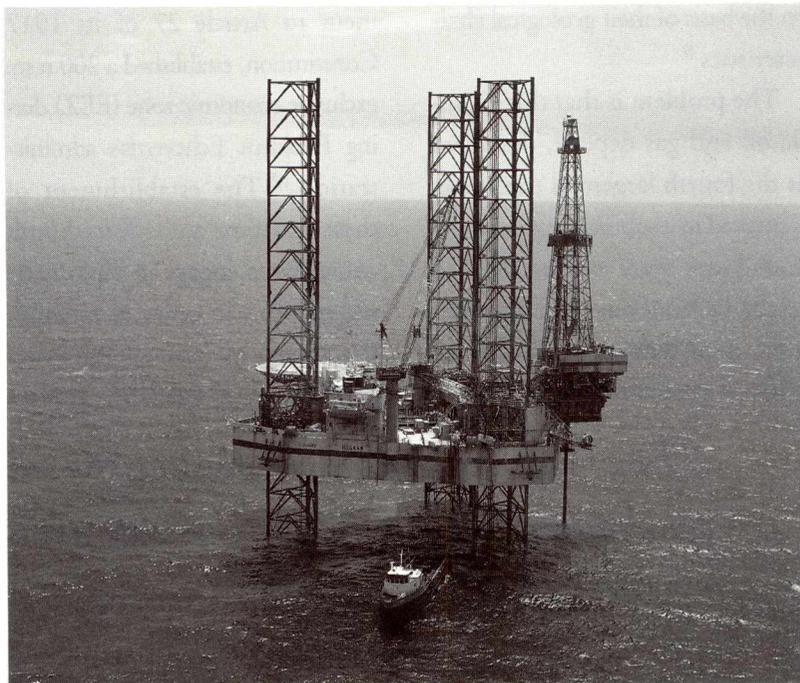
being called the “Baha Project.” The name is from the first letter of each company’s lease in that area: Shell’s Branchiosaurus, Amoco’s Anaconda, Mobil’s Hi-C and Texaco’s Alpha Centauri. Each of the four companies holds a 25 percent stake. See Antosh, Note 2, p. 1.

beginning to attract unprecedented attention in industrial, technological and diplomatic circles. This is the first time that four major oil companies decided to pool their technological expertise and know-how to embark upon a joint venture to commercially exploit oil and natural gas located in the Outer

Continental Shelf. The reason is simple. According to recent scientific studies, the Gulf of Mexico basin continues to be a unique geological phenomenon, described as “one of the foremost petroleum provinces of the world.”⁴

Technologically, this project is to become the deepest underwater oil field to be developed in depths as great as 7,865 feet (2,394 meters), beyond the shelf edge, in the Gulf of Mexico. The existence of vast petroleum potential in the deep-water region of this basin, especially in the deep abyssal plain where the water reaches depths of as much as 12,270 feet (3,740 meters), has been known since 1979.⁵ However, only recently has the oil industry developed the technology to attempt the commercial exploitation of these deep-water sources.

From a diplomatic viewpoint, the drilling activities of the “Baha Project” appear to be the source of grave concern to the government of Mexico.⁶ Two delicate technical questions appear to generate these concerns: first, the deposit Shell Oil Company is targeting in the Alaminos Canyon is just a few miles away from the maritime boundary agreed to by the United



The Gulf of Mexico, one of the world's foremost petroleum regions.

States and Mexico in 1976.⁷ In this respect, the crucial legal question consists of determining whether the oil deposit in question extends beyond the international maritime boundary, physically penetrating an underwater area under Mexico's sovereignty. In other words, the fossil fuels in the Alaminos Canyon may include a submarine area which is physically located under the control of both the U.S. and Mexico, a binational submarine area bisected by the international boundary between the two countries.

The second technical question may be even more problematic. Scientific evidence suggests that the Alaminos Canyon deposit may be contiguous to a gigantic source of

oil and natural gas located in the central and deepest part of the Gulf of Mexico. A U.S. Geological Survey Report published in 1981 estimated that in the “maritime boundary region of the Gulf of Mexico [the] undiscovered in-place resources range from 2.24 billion to 21.99 billion barrels of oil (BBO) and from 5.48 trillion to 44.40 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas.”⁸

The designated “maritime boundary region” comprises approximately 58,940 square miles (152,660 square kilometers) and is divided into six individual assessment areas

⁴ See Richard Nehring, “Oil and Gas Resources,” *The Geology of North America*, Vol. J: *The Gulf of Mexico Basin* 446, Amos Salvador, ed., 1991.

⁵ *Idem*.

⁶ See Nick Anderson, “Mexico Fears U.S. Drillers Will Siphon Off Its Oil,” *The San Diego Union Tribune*, March 31, 1996, pp. 1-2.

⁷ *Exchange of Notes effecting Agreement on the Provisional Maritime Boundary*, Nov. 24, 1976, U.S.-Mexico, 29 U.S.T. 197, T.I.A.S. 8805.

⁸ See Richard B. Powers (Ed.) *Geological Framework, Petroleum Potential, Petroleum Resource Estimates, Mineral and Geothermal Resources, Geologic Hazards, and Deep-water Drilling Technology of the Maritime Boundary Region in the Gulf of Mexico*. U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey (Open-File Report 81-265), 1981 at 1 (Summary).

on the basis of their geological characteristics.⁹

The problem is that this gigantic oil and gas deposit, described as the fourth largest in the globe, is situated in a submarine area whose boundaries were not established by the 1976 agreement.¹⁰ Furthermore, as of today, not only has no bilateral agreement been reached

ment to Article 27 of its 1917 Constitution, established a 200 n.m. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) during President Echeverría's administration.¹² The establishment of these maritime zones forced both countries to engage in diplomatic negotiations in order to establish the respective outer boundaries of these zones, especially in areas

The crucial question is whether the oil deposit extends to an underwater area under Mexican sovereignty.

regarding the submarine boundary of the continental shelf between the United States and Mexico but, perhaps more challenging, each country has adopted a different position with respect to the legal nature of the submarine area in question.

The legal history of this case should be traced back to 1976, when Mexico and the U.S. adopted a 200 nautical mile maritime zone off their respective coasts. During the Carter administration, the U.S. created a 200 n.m. Fishing Conservation Zone.¹¹ Mexico, on the other hand, through an amend-

where they overlapped, as in the case of the Gulf of Mexico.¹³

These maritime boundaries were established not only in the Gulf of Mexico but also in the Pacific Ocean by means of an exchange of notes, November 24, 1976.¹⁴ Legally, two sensitive issues derive

from the content of this agreement: first, that said boundaries were considered to be provisional.¹⁵ And, second, that this boundary did not apply to the continental shelf.

In a diplomatic note that then-Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations Dr. Alfonso García Robles sent to the U.S. ambassador the same day of the exchange of notes, he said:

I take the liberty of pointing out that our two countries have not yet delimited their respective continental shelves beyond 12 nautical miles seaward from the respective coasts and that the present arrangement with respect to maritime boundaries, based on the Treaty to Resolve Pending Boundary Differences and Maintain the Rio Grande and the Colorado River as the International Boundary, concluded in 1970, only extends the maritime boundary to 12 nautical miles.¹⁶

It seems that this provisional character of the boundaries moved Mexico two years later to persuade the U.S. government to conclude a definite, more formal type of bilateral agreement for a maritime delimitation. Thus, during the visit to

⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁰ See Note 15.

¹¹ See *The Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976*. Public Law 94-265, 94th Congress, 16 U.S.C. 1801, Section 2. For a Mexican perspective of this zone, see Jorge A. Vargas. *México y la Zona de Pesca de Estados Unidos*, UNAM, Mexico, 1979. By proclamation of President Reagan on March 10,

1983, the U.S. adopted a 200 n.m. Exclusive Economic Zone. See Proclamation No. 5030, 48 *Federal Register* 10,605, 1983.

¹² In symmetry with the substantive work of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) and in anticipation of its resulting 1982 Convention, Mexico was a pioneer in establishing a 200 n.m. EEZ. This was effected by a presidential decree that added a new eighth paragraph to Art. 27 of the Constitution. See *Diario Oficial*, February 6, 1976.

¹³ Mexico established the outer boundaries of its 200 n.m. EEZ by a presidential decree published in the *Diario Oficial*, June 7, 1976. On this subject, see Jorge A. Vargas. *La Zona Económica Exclusiva de México*, Mexico, 1980.

¹⁴ For the content of these agreements, see Note 5.

¹⁵ The title of this Exchange refers to the "Agreement on the *Provisional* Maritime Boundary" (Emphasis added), *Idem.*

¹⁶ Exchange of Notes, see Note 5 at 199 (Emphasis added). In response, U.S. Ambassador Joseph John Jova agreed with the substance of Dr. García Robles' note, thus effecting the bilateral agreement.

Mexico City of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance a Treaty on Maritime Boundaries was formally signed at Tlatelolco on May 4, 1978.¹⁷ The boundaries in this treaty were identical to those contained in the exchange of notes of 1976.

Until now, no attempt has been made to explain Mexico's diplomatic strategy to formally "elevate" the

tained in the Gulf of Mexico and considering that the 1976 boundaries were agreed to as only "provisional," decided to formalize a treaty, thinking perhaps that the constitutional formalities¹⁸ associated with this kind of bilateral agreement would offer not only a definite and permanent maritime boundary but would also explicit-

tion" over any riches located in the marine spaces under its sovereignty or control, as provided by the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Paradoxically, this attempt to "solidify or strengthen" Mexico's maritime boundaries between 12 and 200 nautical miles seaward led to the current situation caused by the "Baha Project" in the Gulf of Mexico, fraught with not a few concerns. The Mexican Senate approved the Treaty of Maritime Boundaries in a matter of days.¹⁹ From the U.S. side, the treaty's constitutional process was rather disappointing for an expectant Mexico. The Committee on Foreign Relations reported favorably on the treaty in August 1980; however, on September 16, 1980, the U.S. Senate indefinitely postponed consideration of this instrument when questions arose regarding the presence of rich oil and natural gas deposits in the deepest portion of the Gulf of Mexico.²⁰ Since then, the treaty has been in a state of "legal limbo" collecting dust in the archives of the U.S. Senate for the past 16 years.²¹

Dr. Hollis D. Hedberg, a former executive of the Gulf Oil Corporation and professor emeritus of geology at Princeton University, was the first to call attention to



The area in dispute covers 58,940 square miles.

exchange of notes to a more formal and solemn agreement, such as a treaty. It may be speculated now that Mexico, aware of the enormous mineral riches proven to be con-

ly recognize Mexico's "sovereign rights of exploration and exploita-

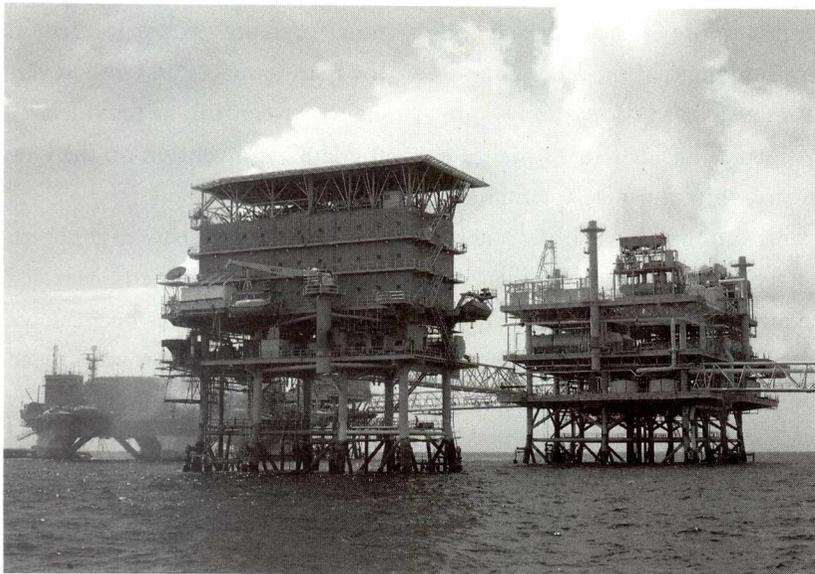
¹⁷ See Treaty on Maritime Boundaries, May 4, 1978, U.S.-Mexico, 17 I.L.M. 1073.

¹⁸ "Treaties" are distinguishable from any other international agreement since they are constitutionally required to obtain some type of approval from the Senate in order to be valid. See Art. 76, paragraph I of Mexico's Constitution and Art. 2, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution.

¹⁹ See "Decreto por el que se Aprueba el Tratado," *Diario Oficial*, January 22, 1979.

²⁰ See 126 *Congressional Record*, S.12, 711 at 25,500 (1980).

²¹ *Idem*.



The deposits are calculated at 21.9 billion barrels of crude and 44.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

As a result of this statement, the U.S. Senate requested the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct a technical assessment of the submarine area in question. This technical agency produced a report in 1981 which clearly confirmed the existence of a gigantic deposit of oil and natural gas in the deepest portion of the Gulf of Mexico.²³ W

the fact that geological data indicated the presence of:

Some of the most promising, though very deep water, petroleum-prospective acreage off the

U.S. coast anywhere, in an oceanic area located in the central portion of the Gulf of Mexico.²²

²² See Hedberg Statement, *Three Treaties Establishing Maritime Boundaries Be-*

tween the United States and Mexico, Venezuela and Cuba: Hearing on S. Exec. Rep. No. 96-49 before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 96th Cong., 2nd Sess. at 28-33.

²³ See Richard B. Powers (Ed.), *Geological Report*, Note 8.

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JAIME GARCÍA TERRÉS

Untiring Cultural Promoter and Outstanding Poet

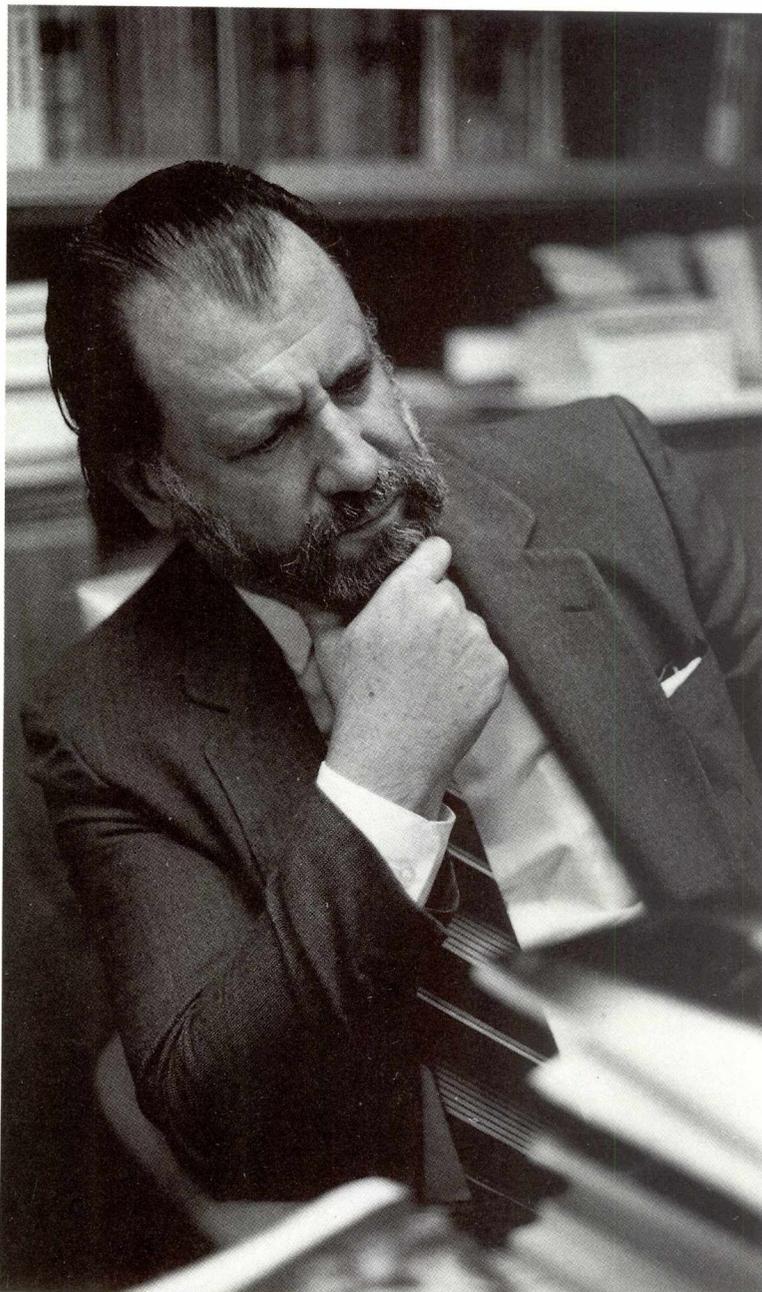
(1924 - 1996)

For Mexico's cultural community, for men and women of letters and for Mexican magazine and literature readers, the death of Jaime García Terrés is an irreparable loss. Not only did he dedicate his life to promoting and organizing different cultural projects, but he was also a guide, promoter and friend of whole generations of young Mexican writers.

García Terrés was a generous man with the surprising ability to find time to become involved in different enterprises. He was a dynamic cultural promoter; a penetrating essayist on a broad spectrum of topics including literature, psychology and politics; an outstanding poet; an excellent translator, particularly of contemporary Greek poetry; and a scrupulous editor.

His link to literature and poetry began in childhood. In his *Introducción a mi Curriculum Vitae* (Introduction to My Resume), he writes, "When I was seven

If García Terrés' life was distinguished by one thing, it was his love of poetry.



Imagenlatina - Marco Antonio Cruz

or eight years old I tried writing a novel. I couldn't finish it because in the first chapter all the characters died one after another."

Although he studied law, his vocation for culture was stronger. Founder of many magazines, his time as editor of *Revista de la Universidad* (University Magazine) was surely one of the most vigorous in that publication's history. He also directed *La Gaceta* (The Bulletin) of the Fondo de Cultura Económica (FCE) publishing house for 18 years; he directed it so well, in fact, that he won the Spanish government's Príncipe de Asturias prize and Mexico's National Journalism Prize. His column "Litoral" (Shoreline) in *La Gaceta* was famous; there he commented and discussed with elegance and good humor the main literary and cultural events of the moment. Toward the end of his life, his great ability as an editor was evidenced when he took charge of the *Biblioteca de México* (Library of Mexico) magazine, a periodical which became one of the most prestigious among the Spanish-speaking cultural community. He showed once again his sharp wit and instinct for good editorial ideas by publishing unknown or little-known texts by authors such as José Gorostiza, José Juan Tablada, Alfonso Reyes, Carlos Pellicer, Salvador Novo, Efraín Huerta and many more, all excellent exponents of Mexican poetry.

His career as a cultural promotor was marked by his ability to establish concrete initiatives. He applied that ability in all the institutions where he worked or that he directed: from when he began as the head of the UNAM's Cultural Department, through the Library and Archives of the Foreign Relations Secretariat, as assistant director of the National Institute of Fine Arts and at the Fondo de Cultura Económica publishing house, up until his last post as the director of the Mexico Library. It was under his direction that the FCE became one of the most important publishers of social sciences and literature in the Spanish-speaking

world. In collections like "Río de la luz" (River of Light), both new and established names from Latin American literature found a voice.

His generous spirit and jovial personality—marked by a fine sense of humor—were two of his most appreciated traits, in addition to his constant concern for making space in his publications for both established writers and young talent. One of Mexico's most important novelists and art critics, Juan García Ponce, said, "The greatest creator of cultural institutions is dead; above all, García Terrés convinced the UNAM to create culture for everyone."

But if García Terrés' life was distinguished by one thing, it was his love of poetry, which he was devoted to as author, translator, promotor and editor. This love pours out of books like *El correo nocturno* (The Night Post), *Los reinos combatientes* (Battling Kingdoms)

and *Corre la voz* (Get the Word Around), in which he presents his clear, simple, yet refined and cultured poetry. Novelist Carlos Fuentes called it poetry "full of refinement, allusions, familiarity with

universal poetry, linked to the landscape and the internal growth of men."

A friend to poets, both alive and dead, of all periods and languages, García Terrés put part of his creative effort into the translation of some of the great poets from other lands. We owe him what are probably the best Spanish versions of Trakl, e.e. cummings, Benn, Novalis, Lowell, Hölderlin and Hökmansthal, but above all, the great poetry of contemporary Greek literature: Kavafis, Elytis and Giorgi Sékeris.

While García Terrés himself pointed to many influences—among them Villon, Dante, Rimbaud, Coerbiere, half a dozen Spanish classics, Donne, Yeats, Ezra Pound and César Vallejo, who he adopted as "distant masters"—perhaps the main influences was Greece: the country itself, its culture, poetry and natural beauty. It was in Greece's wonderful islands that in 1960 he

*García Terrés put part of his
creative effort into the translation
of some of the great poets from
other lands.*

spent his honeymoon with Celia Chávez, the woman who is the explanation of the poet's passion for life. *Grecia 60* (Greece 60) dates from that period. He was also Mexico's ambassador to Greece from 1965 to 1967. His stay in the land of Homer would leave an indelible mark on his life: it was there that he met and befriended Giorgio Sékeris and Ezra Pound, two of this century's most profound poets.

A passionate and multifaceted man, García Terrés' active curiosity led him to sail the seven seas, seemingly distant but actually indissoluble from poetry. In politics, he became an active defender of the Cuban Revolution. Of his interest in psychoanalysis were born the essays for his book *Los infiernos del pensamiento* (The Hells of Thought); and from his admiration for poet Gilberto Owen and his curiosity for understanding the keys to the esoteric was born *Poesía y alquimia en Gilberto Owen* (Poetry and Alchemy in Gilberto Owen). The critics considered both these works to be small classics on major themes.

Jaime García Terrés will be remembered by those who knew him for his human qualities: his tenderness, generosity and incredible capacity for work. For those who did not have the good fortune to know him personally, and for future generations, remains the force of his poetry: reflections on history together with trivial daily observations; humor and melancholy; the anxiety born of daily ups and downs and the sometimes tragic resignation with respect to what cannot be changed; and above all, precision in language and the skillful play of words. ❧

Diego I. Bugada Bernal
Managing Editor

A P O E M

IDYLL

I suffer from futile affections
coupled one to another.
I drink my coffee not without tenderness.
I keep chance portraits and pets.
Street rumors fascinate me,
as do white walls at dawn,
the rain, public gardens.
Old maps, new maps, fill my house.
The most frivolous of music pleases my ears.
Endless and light
like the tresses of the stars,
trifles and mysteries surround my destiny.
A net that life throws at me,
seductive sea in whose landscape I sow myself.

Jaime García Terrés

JULIAN SAMORA

A Silent Warrior

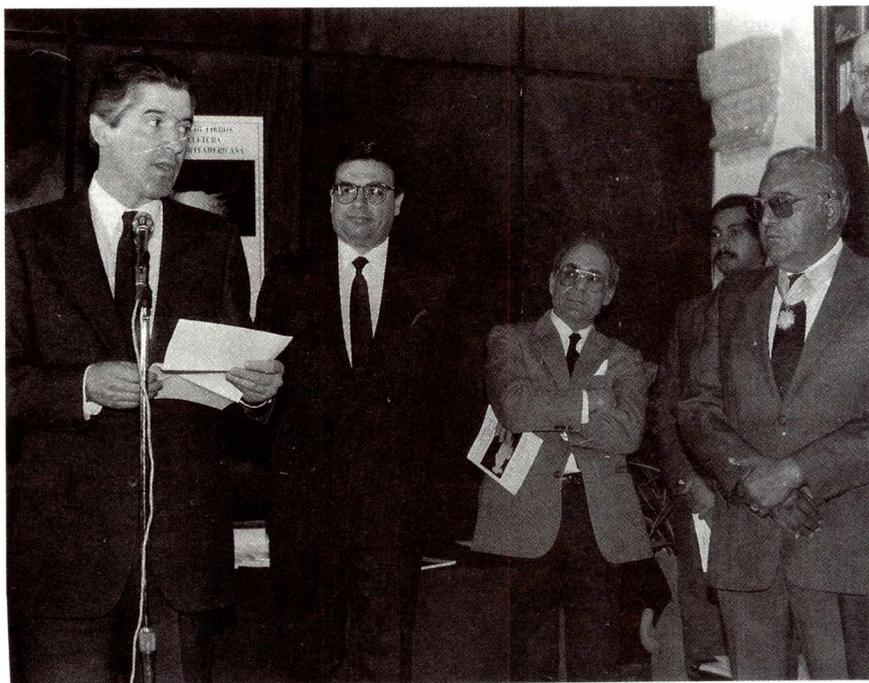
Julian Samora, the first Mexican American to be awarded a doctorate in sociology and a pioneer of the study of the Mexican American community in the United States, died in Albuquerque, New Mexico, last February. As founder of the Mexican American Graduate Studies Program at Notre Dame University, the first and most extensive program of its kind in the United States, Samora's main goal was to educate students of Mexican ancestry and motivate them to do graduate work and research on social, economic and political topics related to their community.

Samora was born in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, in 1920. After graduating from Adams State College in 1942, he became a high school teacher and then taught at his alma mater. In 1947 he obtained his master's degree at Colorado State College, after which he worked as a research assistant in Wisconsin. He later received his doctorate in sociology from Saint Louis' Washington University, at a time when only four or five people of Mexican ancestry had doctorates in any of the social sciences.

One of the first areas of applied research he went into was medical sociology, in which he studied the interaction be-

tween traditional and modern medical practice and the differences in access to health services according to ethnic origin. In 1955 he published "A Medical Care Program in a Colorado Community," co-authored with Lyle Saunders, a case study of the problems and obstacles faced by a Mexican American community in Colorado when it attempted to establish a community health program in 1946.

Later, Samora was invited to participate in a border studies program based at the University of Michigan and organized by Dr. Charles Loomis. Since in the 1950s the border was a research topic hitherto unexplored, this program set up an interdisciplinary net-



Julian Samora (far right) after receiving the Aztec Eagle.

work of researchers in the Southwest and Midwest, later the basis for all border studies. Samora collaborated in different phases of the project, giving of his professional experience and commitment which were invaluable for understanding the border area and its most important ethnic group, Mexican Americans.

During his stay at Michigan State, Samora came into contact with another researcher, Bill D'Antonio, from Notre Dame University, who invited him to work at that university's Sociology Department. Samora and D'Antonio published a joint article in 1962 entitled "Occupational Stratification in Four Southwestern Communities: A Study of Ethnic Differential Employment in Hospitals."

Samora worked at Notre Dame University until his retirement in 1985. Professionally he concentrated on creating awareness in the dominant Anglo society about the national importance of the Spanish-speaking population in the United States. His work with Charles Loomis was the bedrock upon which he based his project of a Mexican American studies program. In the early 1970s he received a large Ford Foundation grant to develop the Notre Dame Mexican American Graduate Studies Program with sociology, political science, economics and history students. Later he acquired other funds to strengthen and enlarge the program, including the setting up of a publishing house. This was one of the most important programs of its kind; more than 55 students have graduated with master's and doctorate degrees, among them distinguished researchers from both the United States and Mexico. Samora identified emotionally with the word "Chicano" and the program is informally referred to as "Chicano Studies."

In 1971, with the collaboration of two of his most distinguished students, Gilberto Cárdenas and Jorge Bustamante, he published the acclaimed *Los Mojados, The Wetback Story*, dealing with Mexican undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Samora was always interested in the interdisciplinary study and the dissemination of the consequences of racism and discrimination against the minority of Mexican origin. He explained that this

came out of his personal experience as a Chicano. "I got involved in doing things about Chicanos because of the discrimination that I suffered in going to school and in trying to get jobs....Very early I decided I was just as good as the next gringo and I'm going to speak English as well as they do. I did, and they still discriminated against me....That, I think, was a big motivation for all my life."¹

Samora played an important role in the development of the political weight of Mexicans in the United States through his relationship with different organizations like the Southwest Council of La Raza, the National Council of La Raza and the Census Committee. Notre Dame Professor Joe Scott called him a "Silent Warrior" because of his interest and involvement in fundraising and supporting minorities through his academic work. Samora commented on his activist-scholar role saying, "There are so few of us that you can't afford to do pure Sociology. And particularly at a time when the [Chicano] population is becoming important in the eyes of other people... where you want Chicanos and Indians and Blacks to be getting grants, you join the review committees... and you insist...and [at the same time] you have to be, from their point of view, a safe person, which is not very complimentary."²

After his retirement in 1985, Samora moved to New Mexico where he studied *mestizaje* [the process of racial mix and the conditions of people with mixed ancestry]. In November 1990 the Mexican government awarded him the Aztec Eagle medal, Mexico's highest decoration given to people of foreign birth. 

Elsie Montiel
Assistant Editor

¹ See Barbara Driscoll, *La Frontera and Its People: The Early Development of Border and Mexican American Studies*, Working paper No. 17, UNAM, Mexico City, 1993, p. 55.

² *Idem*, p. 56.

LOLA LA GRANDE

Singer of the Mexican Spirit

With the death of Lola Beltrán, known as Lola La Grande, Mexico's *ranchera* music loses one of its best performers.

Lucila Beltrán Ruiz was born in Rosario, Sinaloa, 67 years ago. From the age of eight she sang at her local church and, after debuting as a soloist at a town celebration, she became a regular feature at all local festivities. In 1952, when she saw a live radio perfor-

Singing ranchero is pure feeling and a little voice: the feeling makes the voice bigger if it's small and smaller if it's big.

LOLA BELTRÁN

Cuartoscuro



Lola Beltrán in concert.

*Almost immediately,
Lola became “the female voice
of ranchera music.”*

mance of Mexico City’s largest radio station, the XEW, she decided to try for a chance to sing on the radio. She was hired, however, as a secretary. After two attempts, on the third try the newly baptised Lola Beltrán got her chance to sing on *Así es mi tierra* (This Is My Hometown) in 1953.

Her original style and vigor made her stand out from the start. She was also fortunate in working with composers like Tomás Mendez, José Alfredo Jiménez and Rubén Fuentes, whose songs were just right for her voice and temperament. Almost immediately, Lola became “the female voice of *ranchera* music.” Her renderings of songs like *Cucurrucucú Paloma* (Cooing Dove), *Huapango Torero* (Bullfighter’s *Huapango*), *Paloma Negra* (Black Dove) and *Gorriuncillo pecho amarillo* (Yellow-Breasted Sparrow), by Tomás Mendez, brought new vitality to *ranchera* music.

Lola Beltrán rapidly took her place as a favorite of the public and her name became internationally known. Her popularity was never a pretext for changing or trying to adapt to fashion or producers’ demands. She remained loyal to her style and her songs for 40 years; she recorded more than 75 records, acted in 50 films, made frequent television and radio appearances, and sang at fairs, arenas and festivals, as well as at receptions for heads of state and on presidential tours. As if that were not enough, she also broke new ground: in 1976 she performed in Mexico City’s Fine Arts Palace, until then closed to popular singers. Her performance prompted protests that rapidly quieted down in the wake of her unquestionable triumph (the audience broke into song during some numbers). By 1990, she encountered no opposition at all upon returning to the same venue.

Abroad, Lola was considered an ambassadress of Mexican song. In 1988, singer Linda Rondstat called her “a world class singer, on a par with Billie Holiday

and Edith Piaf.” She graced stages the world over; at the Olympia Theater in Paris, she performed before people like Caroline of Monaco, Alain Delon, Johnny Holliday and Sophia Loren. Loren said that Lola knew better than anyone else

how to paint a picture of the Mexican people through her songs.

Thousands went to say farewell to Lola La Grande at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City where a national memorial ceremony was held and in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, where she was buried while a mariachi band played the songs that made her famous. **W**

Elsie Montiel
Assistant Editor

Siglo Veintiuno Editores 

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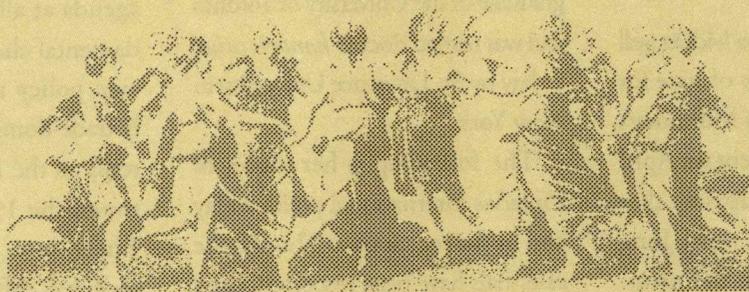


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Universidades

REVISTA DE LA UNIÓN DE UNIVERSIDADES DE AMÉRICA LATINA



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María Teresa Salinas	Eduardo Castillo Castillo
José Martins Filho	Salomón Lerner Febres
Hernán Ayarza E.	Jorge Brovetto

Barbara McDougall, former foreign minister of Canada, granted us an interview last year. She reviews her participation —central at key moments— in her country’s international affairs.

The Honorable Barbara McDougall was appointed secretary of state for external affairs of Brian Mulroney’s Conservative government on April 21, 1991. Upon occupying that post, which she held until June 1993, she also became the presi-

was a financial analyst in Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto; the executive director of the Canadian Council of Financial Analysts; and a financial columnist for the written media and television. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto and was named doctor *honoris causa* in law by St. Lawrence University in New York.

The following is her vision of Canada’s international policy today and in the recent past. Though the essentials have been respected, parts

throughout the world, including in China, [and] Indonesia —regarding East Timor.

The new government has totally downplayed that; they are not really pursuing any human rights agenda at all. That is quite a fundamental change for Canada. Foreign policy now is almost entirely trade-dominated. That came as a result of the 1993 election. But between the 1980s and 1990s, no. There is a fundamental philosophical difference between the

AN INTERVIEW WITH *Barbara McDougall*¹

Julián Castro Rea *

dent of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense Policy. In 1984 she was elected to Parliament for the district of St. Paul’s, Ontario. Before becoming foreign minister, she was minister of state for finance, minister of state for privatization and, simultaneously, minister responsible for the status of women. From 1988 to 1991, she was minister of employment and immigration. Before participating in politics, Mrs. McDougall

of the interview have been omitted for space reasons.

Julián Castro Rea: *What are the fundamental differences of Canadian foreign policy in the 1990s from the previous policy?*

Barbara McDougall: Well, I don’t think there was a big difference. I think there was a difference following the change of government in 1993; but that is because a different political party was elected. . . . One of the differences between our government and the new government has to do with human rights, because our government was a strong advocate of human rights

party that is in power now and the party that was in power. But that came about as a result of the election, not because of anything else².

² One of the first things Lloyd Axworthy did after being appointed minister of foreign affairs in February 1996 was to declare, “Respect for human rights is a critical component of the Canadian identity and therefore must play an important role in our foreign policy agenda. . . . Both trade and the promotion of human rights can serve the same purpose, namely bettering the well-being of individuals.” “Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy,” Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Ottawa, February, 1996. [Author’s note.]

* Researcher at the Center for Research on North America, UNAM.

¹ My thanks to Ann Kinsolver for her help in transcribing this interview.

JCR: The foreign policy priorities of the current Liberal government are upside down compared with the former Conservative priorities: trade is now on the top, human rights at the bottom. Do you think the promotion of human rights is compatible with defence of Canadian economic interests?

BM: Yes, I do. If you have values, you have to have them all the time. You can't just have them some of the time. How you express those values will be shaped by a number of issues, including economic issues. I mean, there would be no point, for example, in a country like Canada unilaterally having economic sanctions against China. I mean, it wouldn't do any good, and it would hurt our industry badly. But in a less-than-perfect world you do what you can, so we really restricted our relationship with China, in ways that had not been done before and are not being done now. The Chinese really like high-level visits, I mean, the current Prime Minister's first trip abroad was to China—it was a big show to our business people.... And that sends out all sorts of signals. There are three reasons that you have to find ways to support human rights. First of all, you want to try to make an impression, to try to make a change in behaviour on the part of (since we are talking about China) Chinese leadership. That is hard to do for a country like Canada. But you also want to send messages to the dissidents inside that they do have friends



around the world who have not forgotten them. And the third thing is that you have to be true to your own values, I mean, that is an ethical axiom. So if you can't do one hundred percent of what you would like around trade sanctions, for example, then you withhold approval in other ways. The only ministerial visits that were allowed while I was a minister were very low-level visits, like the minister for wheat went to China, but the foreign minister didn't, the Prime Minister didn't, because we were withholding our approval. We kept diverse; we kept very strong trade barriers, or

at least restrictions on trade with regard to arms, for example, nuclear, the CANDU³ reactor; we did not send a mission to China with nuclear technology. Well, the nuclear technology, the CANDU people, were very much part of the new [Liberal] trade mission.

So it is not just the focus on trade [of the Liberal government]; it is that everything is being abandoned. It was the same with Indonesia. Now, we

³ CANDU refers to Canadian Deuterium Uranium which are nuclear reactors set up for producing electricity and other non-military uses. [Author's Note.]

don't do a lot of trade with Indonesia: they got 44 million dollars, a fairly large hunk of aid. And all the aid, people said, went after the East Timor killings.... I mean, I wanted to just cut off the whole thing, but the advice I got from the aid people was that you cannot stop projects in the middle. If you are doing an irrigation project, for example, you just cannot stop it in the middle because you would probably do some damage. So all we could cut off was new projects although I would have preferred to just pull out all the dollars.

JCR: *In effecting this change, are the Liberals responding to a shift in Canadian public opinion or are they simply trying to deny the Tory heritage?*

BM: Both. I think some of it is public opinion. Sometimes you have to rise above public opinion, and you have to say you believe Canada should take a stand, and here's why. Some people won't buy it. But some people will, and that is what we tried to do. You can't go against public opinion forever. I mean, you can't take an unpopular stand and go down in flames. It's not very wise.

“I am a big fan of the United States in many ways but they just don't get it about peacekeeping.”

And you've got to bring people along with you; that is the purpose of a democracy.

But coming out of a recession, there is no question of public opinion. During a recession, we would have strongly supported trade of any kind, anything that said “jobs.” If you said anything that wasn't jobs, then it was not very popular. I don't know that there was any real job loss as a result of either of these things. At the margin, there probably was some. There are lots of areas where Canada can expand its trade. I am “underwhelmed” by the size argument of China, that it is one of the biggest countries and [fastest] growing economies. Well, that's fine, but, you know, we've got 30 million people, and we can grow very nicely without China; there are millions of places we can trade with.

JCR: *One of the consequences of Canada's international promotion of human rights was the support of “An Agenda for Peace,” put forth by Boutros Ghali in June 1992. But after the experiences of Somalia and Yugoslavia, do you still think it is worth challenging state sovereignty for the defence of human rights to get these mixed results?*

BM: Yes, I do. First of all, lives have been saved in both Yugoslavia and Somalia. That is fundamental, however botched the missions may have been. And they were hard, because the mandate was not clearly defined and there was a lot of division in Europe, for example, on how to deal with Yugoslavia. The international consensus was very diffi-

“Foreign policy now is almost entirely trade-dominated.”

cult to build. That does not mean you don't do it; that doesn't mean we don't try it again.

Somalia was a bad mission for a whole lot of reasons. First of all, it was not under UN command; it was under U.S. command, and the Americans, bless their hearts—they do lots of things well and I am a big fan of the United States in many ways— but they just don't get it about peacekeeping. They don't understand the whole concept. I mean, they understand shooting wars; they don't understand wars where you have to have a lot of patience, you have to negotiate. That situation fell apart, in terms of being able to resolve it, or being able to keep a lid on it, the day that the Americans said that Aideed⁴ was the villain. In peacekeeping you don't do that. I mean, you know the Serbs are the villain in Yugoslavia, but your job is to bring them to the table. So, as soon as you say they are the villain, you've lost your capacity to be peacekeepers; you are now in a different place.

⁴ General Mohammed Farrah Aideed, a Somalian warlord blamed for the killing of 24 UN soldiers. [Author's Note.]

Now, I still think over time the Agenda for Peace will be a fundamental working document at the UN. Well, maybe not, maybe I am being too optimistic. Those missions were really cobbled together. In Yugoslavia, we called for a very early intervention, but by the time the peacekeepers got in there, into Croatia, both sides were really mobilized. The Serbs were able to arm themselves; the sanctions would have been a blessing given to them because they had this whole period when there was this argument going on about whether the West would send in peacekeepers or whether we would intervene... Of course it's all done publicly now, it's all done on CNN, so, they knew exactly what was going on. I mean, nobody ever stopped them. I think if we had gone in earlier, it would have made a big difference to that situation, before they had the capacity to get polarized.

The second thing that happened was that it took ages to get sanctions in. Everything just took forever, while all this was going on and the situation was deteriorating; and we set up the humanitarian mission and it was used as cover to send arms in... Everything about it just really deteriorated badly, and it came out of a badly defined mandate. I really believe that there are people alive today that wouldn't be if we hadn't got in.⁵

⁵ On November 21, 1995 the forces in conflict in ex-Yugoslavia signed the Dayton Agreement, which provides that the UN multinational forces (UNPROFOR)

There is so much anger now that did not exist in the beginning. I think ordinary civilians are kind of puzzled as to why all this happened. Especially the Muslims. Positions hardened so much that they're just going to hate each other for another 10 generations. It's just awful! I have been there and it is truly bad. JCR: *Canada supported the Gulf War and the U.S. invasion of Panama. Both moves were criticized, the former because there was no clear UN mandate, the latter within the OAS. Are there still differences in the U.S. and Canadian approaches to world security?*

BM: I think so. The Gulf War and Panama happened before I was a minister. I don't think Panama was one of our better decisions as a government.

The Gulf War actually would not have been a UN-led mission... it would not have had UN participation, had it not been for Canada. Because Brian Mulroney told George Bush that he would not support this unless there was UN involvement, that he would send troops as part of the UN and that was all.

Now, it was clearly U.S.-dominated, no question about that. But I think that it was a very traditional cross-the-border sovereignty issue. I mean, Iraq went into Kuwait,

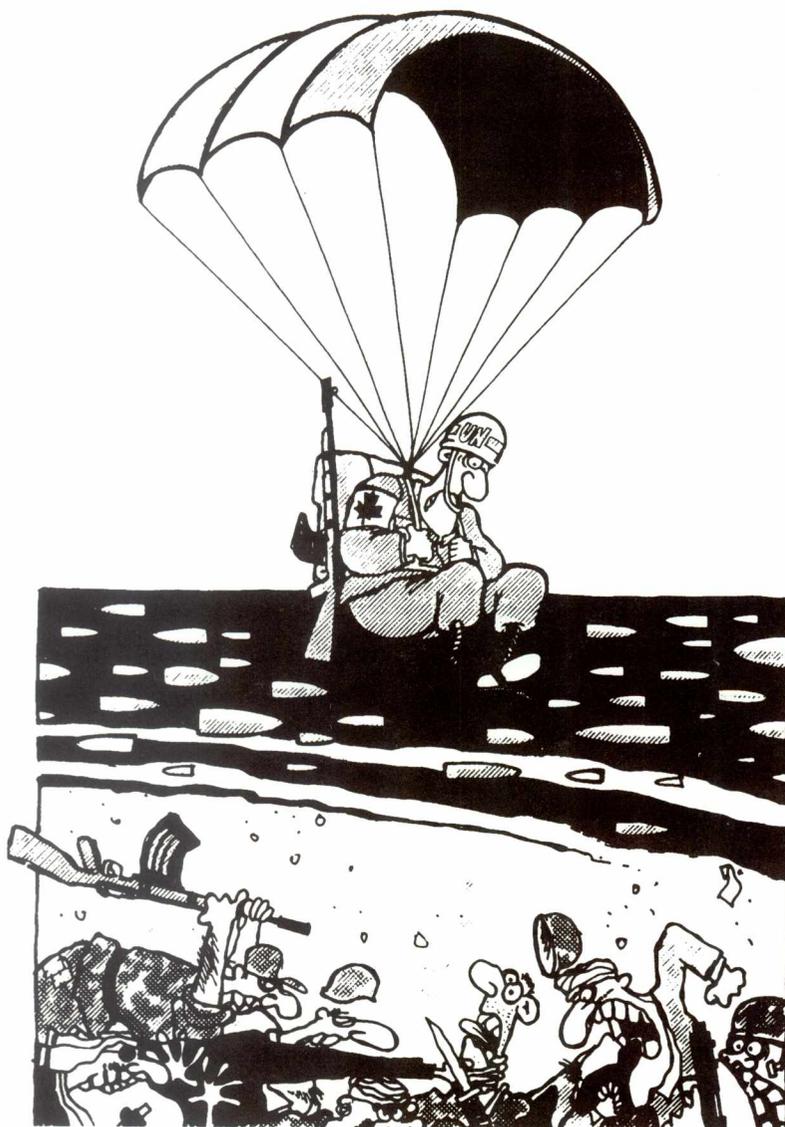
were replaced by a NATO intervention force (IFOR). Canada committed itself to sending 1,000 soldiers on this new mission and to co-operate in Bosnia's reconstruction. [Author's Note.]

“The Gulf War actually would not have been a UN-led mission... had it not been for Canada.”

drew a line in the sand.... No. You cannot do this. The implications of not doing it—aside from the oil, because people who were cynical say the U.S. wanted to go in because of the oil—for stability in the Middle East would have been huge. I think that it would not have stopped with Kuwait. I think that [President Saddam] Hussein had very large ambitions in the region and I think that if we had stood aside and let Kuwait go, it would have gone further than that. And Israel is certainly the most vulnerable in terms of any expansionist dreams that Hussein might have had. They crossed the border and people went in and stopped them... So that all the arguments about sovereignty that existed later and the other stuff did not exist there.

We went into Haiti, and you know the Americans were very reluctant to go into Haiti, and we essentially said you cannot allow this to happen in our hemisphere, now that we've got democracies essentially throughout. Brian [Mulroney] once again talked George Bush into really doing something. And then [President William] Clinton

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In current missions, Canadian peacekeeping forces are sent where conditions for peace are yet to be met.

kind of heightened the U.S. involvement once again, and he was totally briefed by Brian Mulroney. I must say the Haiti event is not over yet. For example, your country did not want to go in.

I understand the sensitivity on the sovereignty issues that the Mexicans have. It is a different approach than we have. I would have appre-

ciated their support. They never wanted to go in, and they never referred to anything we did, and that is too bad because they could be real leaders in the hemisphere. And there were other countries with the same concerns: Chile, I remember, was very concerned about this. But I could just see if we let the military get away with this in Haiti,

without taking it on, all of those kind of precarious new democracies that used to be governed by the military through the whole of Latin America would be really quite vulnerable. Would we let Pinochet come back? I don't know. Probably. But I think you've got to take those issues on.

JCR: *What does Mexico mean for Canada within the NAFTA context, taking into account recent events such as the Chiapas uprising, the financial crisis, etc.? Do you think there is a convergence in the approach the U.S. and Canada have towards Mexico?*

BM: First of all there are —and I had not actually realized this; I haven't been in Mexico very often— very strong ties between Mexico and Canada that have existed for a long time. There are a great many Mexicans who are sent to Canada for their education, right across the country, going back a long time, long before there was any envisaging of NAFTA, or closer ties, or any of those things. Going back several generations there had been affiliations with Canada in one way or another. I was amazed at that, I hadn't realized that. I am ashamed to say they knew a lot more about

“I understand the sensitivity on the sovereignty issues that the Mexicans have.”

Canada than I did about Mexico, except from, you know, going back to the study of history and foreign affairs, which I've always done anyway. But it was essentially a kind of intellectual interest...

And then I started discovering Canadians who had had some involvement with Mexico. In the contemporary context, both Mexico and Canada are always looking for counterbalance to their relationships with the U.S. Canada has always had a kind of love/hate relationship along this great long common border, and I know that you are in the same position. U.S. capital and all those things are really important to you, but there is an unease about, this big guy—up north for you, and down south for us. And it is not an anti-U.S. feeling, it is a balance of power issue, more than not liking the U.S. or not wanting the involvement. I think there is always a striving to look for a more balanced relationship.

In the contemporary context, in the trade world, post-Cold War, globalization, all those things that people talk about all the time, Mexico and Canada can achieve that greater balance of power that they have been seeking for so long. I think a lot of it depends on Mexico continuing down the track of democracy and human rights, because that will affect the relationship.

I think that Canadians concerned about the environment, for example, will continue to be looking at those issues. There is tendency on the part of Canadians

to be quite patronizing about Mexico. I am talking about the broad public and not people who are closely connected.

Mexico and Canada can also be allies in the broader context, the context of the UN, the OAS, putting forth some common agendas... I think we can help each other. Canada, for example, helped Mexico get into APEC⁶ and I worked very hard on that, when I was minister. It happened after, but the ground was all laid while I was there.

JCR: *Do you think Canadians are disappointed about Mexico's recent events?*

BM: Yes, I think they are very uneasy about what's happened.

JCR: *Is their approach changing somehow?*

BM: Not yet, I don't think it has. It has created—not distrust, that is too strong a word—but a sense of unease, and that there will be some kind of hesitance. Not on the part of the business community; they don't care. They care about stability, and to the extent that this adds to instability, they would be worried. I think the fact that the economy may have been badly destabilized as a result of the peso [devaluation], and all of the things around what has happened, which were probably all triggered by Chiapas, at least gunned. Starting with Chiapas, and then going into some of the economic things that occurred, with the devalua-

⁶ With Canada's support, Mexico became the 16th member of the APEC in November 1994. [Author's Note.]

tion and so on. That has actually had a profound effect on the world economy. The peso just destabilized the whole investment climate for developing countries.

I was in South Africa in February, and they were having a hard time attracting capital in the aftermath of that. They said there was a noticeable cooling of people who had expressed an interest before, because everyone is now reexamining all of the issues of political and economic stability. So, that has had wide implications, and it is not over yet. I think it had some impact on the Canadian dollar⁷, but that was very marginal.

JCR: *What should Canada do in that context?*

BM: Well, I think we should stay involved as long as the [Mexican] government remains committed—and I am a little out of touch with this; I haven't been following the issues recently. As long as they stay committed to an open economy and political stability in a democratic framework, we should be there for them. If they veer from that, then we should be the first to say, "Excuse us, here, this is not the country that we signed on with. Now, these changes are not what we want to see happening." ❧

⁷ In 1993, the Canadian dollar was worth an average of U.S.\$0.77; in 1994, U.S.\$0.73. In January 1995, coinciding with the devaluation of the Mexican peso, the Canadian dollar reached its lowest level in the last 10 years when it could be exchanged for U.S.\$0.70. Source: *Principaux indicateurs économiques*, OECD, Paris, August 1995. [Author's Note.]

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Mexico's FLORISTIC Diversity¹

Rodolfo Dirzo*

It is a well-established fact, repeatedly mentioned in recent years, that Mexico's floristic wealth is particularly large. The most notable criteria that make this evident are three: the diversity of natural plant communities (ecosystems and landscapes), the diversity of life forms and the number of different species.

With regard to its natural communities, Mexico's flora is outstanding because it includes most of the world's known ecosystems. In the best known and most quoted anthology dealing with this subject, *Los tipos de vegetación de México* (Mexico's Types of Vegetation), the renowned Mexican botanists Faustino Miranda and Efraín Hernández Xolocotzi determined that the country is home to 32 major kinds of vegetation. Such diversity of natural communities in a single country occurs only in other ecologically privileged regions, such as India, Peru or Australia.

Thus, in order of descending humidity, in Mexico we can travel from evergreen tropical forests or jungles in warm and humid

zones with almost five meters of annual precipitation (such as the Los Tuxtlas region in Veracruz) to extremely dry deserts (in Sonora, for example) where barely a few millimeters of rain fall over a period of years. Between these extremes, we find jungles of varying degrees

Mexico's flora is special, due both to its wealth and uniqueness.



* Head of the Evolutionary Ecology Department of the UNAM Ecology Center.

¹ First published in *Mexican Diversity of Flora*, Patricio Robles Gil (Editor), Rodolfo Dirzo (Texts), CEMEX, Mexico, 1994.



The fame of the diversity of biotypes found in Mexico's arid areas is well deserved.

of humidity and deserts ranging from the very exuberant—such as in certain parts of the Tehuacán Valley—to those of Sonora.

Similarly, classified by altitude, we can travel from areas of coastal vegetation or from the tropical rain forest at sea level, rising through different pine and oak forests or other deciduous or evergreen broad-leaved forests, to reach alpine meadows on the very highest ground. In addition to these gradients of moisture and altitude, we must consider the effects of latitude, mountain orientation and an infinite variety of local conditions, as well as soil types, that generate plant communities such as savannas, palm groves, mangrove swamps, grasslands, vegetation growing on saline or gypseous soils, Mediterranean-type scrubland, reed groves and a wide array of aquatic and subaquatic communities. Different recent studies of Mexico's

vegetation—particularly those by Mexico's most knowledgeable botanist, Jerzy Rzedowski—provide relatively simplified systems for classifying this diversity that nevertheless still emphasize the enormous richness of the communities.

BIOTYPES

Regarding the life forms or biotypes, understood as the morphological types that give plants their appearance (and which, in general, are the expression of the plant's response to environmental conditions), their diversity confirms the privileged situation of Mexico's flora. This has been best documented in arid zones, where the levels attained are truly spectacular. Among these communities, Faustino Miranda has identified 43 kinds of plant life. The following examples

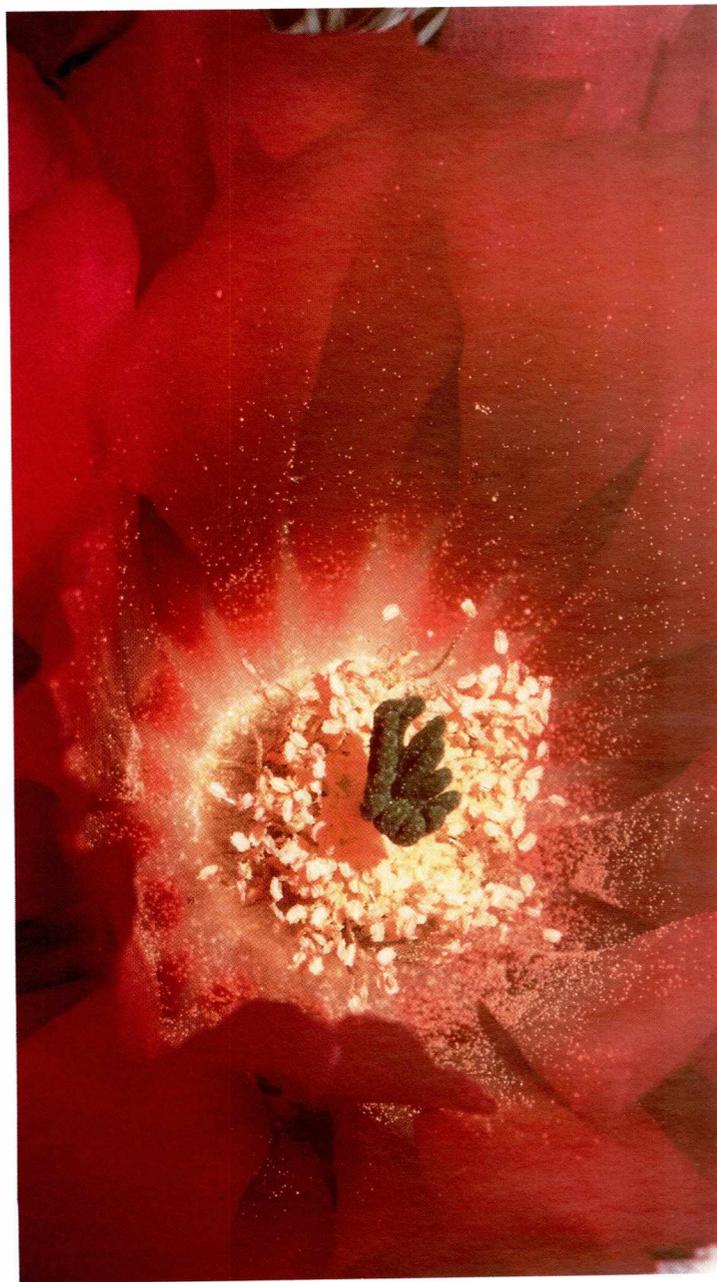
may serve to illustrate the diversity of life forms: the barrel cactus, which can be enormous or small; prickly pears, either tree-sized or tiny; the giant cardon (one of which was chosen to typify Mexican flora at the Seville World's Fair and earned worldwide acclaim); the Spanish bayonet (or "desert palm"); an enormous variety of rosette-shaped plants, such as the agaves; fleshy, spherical, partially buried plants such as the peyote; the walking-stick cholla; the enormous saguaro; the sotol; the boojum tree; and the ocotillo; the echeverias; countless kinds of shrubs; and even twisted dwarf trees such as the Parry pinyon pine.

The fame of the biotype diversity in Mexico's arid areas is well deserved; that of other communities, although less well known, is also surprising. The following are examples found in the tropical rain forests: 50-meter-high trees, fleshy vines, epiphytic cacti (which live on other plants), ground-dwelling and epiphytic orchids, enormous palm trees with leaves eight meters long, herbaceous creepers, semi-epiphytic strangler trees, strictly epiphytic trees, climbing palms and enormous bromelias, to mention just the most notable biotypes. Once again, few nations on earth besides Mexico have such a variety of life forms. Rzedowski mentions South Africa as the only possibly comparable case.

ESTIMATES OF MEXICO'S FLORISTIC WEALTH

There is no national catalogue that would allow us to count the number of species that make up our flora, nor is there a national list to directly identify those species or their distribution across the country. Consequently, to gain an idea of the number of species, we must use estimates reached by indirect methods. The one used most frequently in recent years is that of the Mexican ecologist Víctor Manuel Toledo, who calculated the spectacular number of 30,000 species. More recently, Toledo has adjusted his estimate to 33,000. These calculations have received all the publicity deserved by a flora of such magnitude; his figures would mean that Mexico has a floristic wealth similar to that of China, for example.

Few nations on earth besides Mexico have such a wide variety of life forms.



Estimates of the number of species in Mexico go from 17,000 to 33,000.



However, other recent calculations, particularly those by Jerzy Rzedowski and by Rodolfo Dirzo and Guillermina Gómez, differ from Toledo's estimates. Rzedowski calculates that Mexico's total recognized flora must be around 18,000 species; Dirzo and Gómez made a detailed count of all the species recorded for the country applying a series of corrective factors to their result, to reach a figure of 17,000, very close to Rzedowski's estimate. Since estimates place unrecorded species at around 20 percent of the total, the figures suggested by Rzedowski and by Dirzo and Gómez rise to 21,660 and 20,500 species, respectively. These figures would seem to indicate that Toledo's published result of 33,000 species must be taken with caution. However, it does still point to Mexico's having one of the planet's richest flora, more varied than those of, for example, the United States, Canada, the former Soviet Union or India.

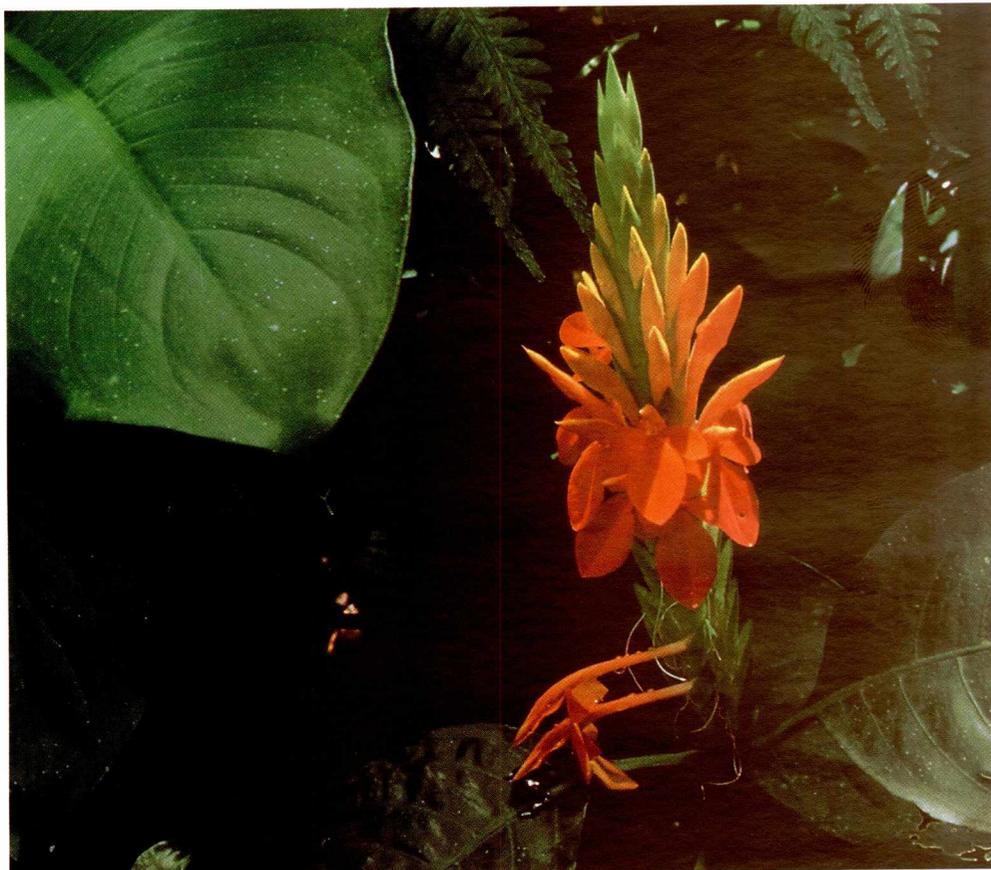
The estimates referred to above include only vascular plants. An additional number, albeit small, would have to be added to include non-vascular plants.

TAXONOMIC DISTRIBUTION

It would be useful to make one further point regarding the distribution of Mexico's floristic richness from a taxonomic point of view, Rzedowski estimates that six families account for approximately 40 percent of the total number of genera and species, and that the most important of these are the composities and grasses, the cacti and the legumes. Furthermore, in addition to their great ecological and evolutionary importance, these families are also of great interest, either currently or potentially, from the economic

point of view. The grass family, for example, includes grasses and cereals; the legume family includes a large number of timber and food-yielding species, along with many that are capable (with the help of bacteria) of absorbing nitrogen from the soil and incorporating it into their tissues; among the cacti there are many edible and ornamental species.

In addition, emphasis should be placed on another important element in the analysis of biological diversity and its conservation: endemism. This term



The diversity of natural plant communities and life forms, plus the number of species, determine floristic diversity.

refers to the restricted distribution of a given taxonomic group. Endemic groups may occupy relatively large areas—such as a region, state, island or continent—and each contains plants from a single taxonomic category, which may be a species, a genus, a family, etc. Thus, for example, in Mexico and its neighboring areas to the north and south, there are six endemic families: the *Canotiaceae*, the *Fouquieriaceae*, the

Mexico has one of the planet's richest flora, more varied than those of, for example, the United States, Canada, the former Soviet Union or India.



Mexico is home to 32 major kinds of vegetation.

Placospermataceae, the *Pterostemonaceae*, the *Simmondsiaceae*, and the *Lacandoniaceae*. The *Lacandoniaceae*, for example, are endemic to the northern part of the Lacandon Jungle, and the distribution of the only known species of this family, *Lacandonia schismatica*, is restricted to an area barely covering a few hectares within that region.

What makes endemism interesting is the fact that endemic species are elements exclusive to a particular, unique flora, that their extinction in the area they inhabit would be irreversible, and that the characteristics of such species, including their potential use to man, only exist in such locations.

The number of endemic genera included within Mexico's flora is estimated at 230, or around 10 percent of the country's total. However, the exact magnitude of the nation's species endemism is not known and we must rely on indirect estimates that, although probably too conservative, are still illuminating. The total number of endemic species in the Mexico of today is estimated at 9,300, equal to 52 percent of the estimated total of 18,000 species. This number rises to 12,900 if the areas adjacent to Mexico to the north and south are included to form a natural ecological area.

Available data on particular taxonomic groups also indicate a figure of around 50 percent. For example, the figure for the *Malvaceae* is 50 percent, for the *Leguminosae* it is 52 percent, and for *Asteraceae* it is 50 percent or more.

The conservative nature of the estimation for endemic species in Mexico is shown by the fact that approximately 20 percent of the country's flora is still unknown and many of these unidentified species will doubtless have limited distribution.

This great floristic wealth and the notable degree of endemism (approximately half of its species) allow us to attest

that Mexico's flora is special, not only in quantitative terms, but also because of its uniqueness. The reasons for this uniqueness, which are either well known or can be inferred easily, are the following:

1. The country's geographical location: the Tropic of Cancer, which cuts across half the nation's territory, delimits a large tract of arid zones to the north and another area with a warm, wet climate to the south. This in turn determines the presence

of types of flora typical of those climates.

2. The country's complex topography: the enormous profusion of mountains creates many different climatic conditions and encourages the presence of a wide variety of ecological conditions.

3. The enormous abundance of different soil types.

4. Historical reasons (mainly —although not exclusively— on a geological time scale. Most significantly, for several tens of millions of years, Mexico has served as a bridge for the passage of flora from North America to South America and vice versa.

A FORMIDABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

The tremendous flow of plant forms across the geographical bridge, the diversity of ecological conditions and the time scale involved gave rise to the vast universe of Mexican flora, comprised of species of both tropical and northern origin, along with a large number of species that have evolved *in situ*. Many of the latter have spread to other parts of the world, but



Our flora is an enormously rich national and universal heritage.

many are still unique species and their distribution is restricted to this country.

In the light of these descriptions, it is not surprising that the world owes a disproportionately large share of its flora to Mexico. If this phenomenon is seen in terms of the number of species, the most conservative estimates indicate that Mexico's flora could well account for 10 percent of the world's total, and that half this percentage corresponds to species exclusively

found in this country. Besides this quantitative consideration, we should bear in mind that, with its flora, this country has made —and has an enormous potential for continuing to make— a formidable contribution to the world: corn, for example, and the flowers of many ornamental plants found across the globe. In summary, our flora is an enormously rich national and universal heritage, which deserves priority attention and whose neglect would be historically irresponsible both nationally and universally.

This great floristic diversity is not distributed uniformly across the country. Although sufficient information to precisely document the distribution of Mexico's floristic wealth does not exist, a general overview can be offered.

DISTRIBUTION OF BOTANICAL DIVERSITY

The regions south and southeast contain the greatest floristic diversity. In particular, the region with the highest concentration of species is found in Chiapas and Oaxaca, from where two strips rise northwards

with a gradual reduction in their floristic diversity as they go: the first of these points towards the center of Veracruz, and the second towards Sinaloa and Durango. This tendency for decreasing floristic richness to the north can also be seen as we approach the Yucatán peninsula which is notably floristically poorer in comparison with Chiapas or Oaxaca. Very generally, we can identify a pattern of greater richness in the warm and humid climates (the tropical trend) located to the south of the Tropic of Cancer than in the areas associated with the strip of land to the north.

Another notable pattern in the distribution of botanical diversity deals with ecology, since floristic richness varies with the kind of ecosystem in question. To appreciate this in simple terms, we can categorize the flora into large groups of ecosystems: xerophilous scrublands and grasslands; coniferous and oak forests; cloud forests or mesophilous forests; and tropical communities of evergreen or deciduous forests. If we consider the share of the nation's territory covered by each of these and count the number of species they contain, we will see that xerophilous scrublands and grasslands, together with coniferous and oak forests, make a proportionately poor contribution, whereas the contribution made by tropical ecosystems is greater than would be expected. Nevertheless, the most notable instance of botanical richness is to be found in the mesophilous cloud forests of the mountainous regions, which, although covering barely one percent of the country's surface area, contain 10 percent of its flora.

In summary, the great floristic richness of tropical vegetation is notable. This can be seen by making reference to the jungles of Los Tuxtlas in Veracruz, a region that is home to plant species that number

only slightly fewer than the total flora of the British Isles, which covers an area 30,000 times greater. Finally, we must not forget that the ecosystems of the scrublands and grasslands and those of the coniferous and hardwood forests, although accounting for a low proportion in absolute terms, still contain an enviable diversity of flora. Thus, the coniferous forests house some 35 species, a figure that is probably higher than any other region on the planet. There can also be no doubt that these Mexican ecosystems are the point of origin and distribution of many of the species belonging to this group currently found throughout the world.

We shall now conclude with a review of the geographical and ecological distribution of endemisms of the flora. First of all, we must point out that the distribution of endemisms bears no relation to that of floristic richness: the largest number of endemic families and genera are found in xerophilous ecosystems. With regard to endemic species, it is the coniferous and oak forests that account for the largest proportion, followed by xerophilous scrub and grasslands and by deciduous forests. In contrast, the evergreen forests come last with only five percent of Mexico's endemic species.

In addition to the predominance of the areas of arid vegetation in regard to endemism, the endemic species found in the following geographical regions are also worthy of note: the Baja California peninsula, where 25 percent of all the species are endemic (explicable in part by its arid climate), some offshore islands such as Guadalupe (21 percent of the species) and the Revillagigedo Archipelago (26 percent), the Balsas Basin and, more locally, the peaks of the high mountains and areas with very selective soils such as gypseous or highly saline ones. 

*The world owes
a disproportionately
large share of its flora
to Mexico.*

Medicinal Plants IN MEXICO

Edelmira Linares*

Robert Bye**

The medicinal use of plants in Mexico predates Spanish contact. Numerous bibliographical sources and codices tell us how the ancient ethnic groups who lived in what is now Mexico made wide use of plants, both for food and to cure illness and alleviate pain. For example, the *De la Cruz-Badiano Codex* (1552) and the *Florentine Codex* written by Friar Bernardino de Sahagún (between 1558 and 1575) list and describe almost 300 medicinal plants and their uses.

Today, many of these medicines and their preparation seem strange to us. The following is the description of the cure for *la enfermedad comicial*, also known as epilepsy or the falling sickness, quoted from the *Cruz-Badiano Codex* (1991: f. 51v):

...the little stones found in the falcon's crop are useful... the root of the *quetzalatzóyatl* [*Barkleyanthus*

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** Director of UNAM's Botanical Garden.



Illustration of medicinal plants from the *De la Cruz-Badiano Codex*.



Photo: Edelmir Linares

Beverage prepared with *nopal* cactus and *zoapatle* used in the treatment of infertility; taken from Sahagún's notes.

salicifolius, known as the *jarilla*]¹, deer horn, whitish incense, white incense, a hair of the dead, burnt mole meat in a pot. All this, well ground, mixed with hot water should be drunk until it produces vomiting.

Undoubtedly, today, these remedies seem unacceptable, but if we analyze them as San Filippo does (1992), we can understand the Aztecs' reasoning. For them, this *mal comicial* was linked to a problem located in the head; this is why they based their cure on ingredients from the head which ensure the return of reason. This is the basis for using deer horn and a hair

of the dead. They also thought the smoke from the burnt mole would penetrate the brain through the ears and the nostrils and hasten recovery.

The cultural context is very important when we study the uses of medicinal plants, because it helps us to understand the reason behind the preparation of certain remedies and the empirical data they were based on. When we, as ethnobotanists,² interview people in the field, we record and respect

the information they share with us. If they mention, for example, that red *toronjil* (*Agastache mexicana*) is used together with the other two *toronjiles* (the white and the blue or Chinese) to make the remedy more effective, this is an important piece of empirical data which gives us clues that we can corroborate and analyze scientifically.

The first time we documented this information it seemed strange

In Mexico, medicinal plants are used daily, regardless of religion, beliefs or social stratum.

¹ Botanical identification provided by the authors.

² Ethnobotany: the science which studies the interactions and the relationships between plants (from an individual plant all the way to an ecosystem) and human beings (on all levels of organization) in biological, cultural and ecological contexts, in geographical and social space, and through time.

to us, since red and white *toronjiles* were taxonomically recognized as the same species. However, people in the field pointed to differences between them. With the help of Drs. Federico García and Ofelia Collera from the UNAM's Chemistry Institute we investigated the differences. The combined results of the phytochemical study and the morphological study allowed us to separate the *toronjiles* into two different subspecies, with different chemical properties (Bye, *et. al.*, 1987). A related study (Galindo, 1982) about the pharmacological effects of aqueous extracts demonstrated that the red form relaxes smooth muscles, while the white one has the opposite effect. In this way, we were able to show that the empirical knowledge of generations was correct and that the effects of the two *toronjiles* are complementary.

At the beginning of this example we mentioned three *toronjiles*

and so far we have only discussed two. The third is the one from the Old World (*Dracocephalum moldavica*). Why is it also added to the remedy if the historical sources make no mention of it?

We suppose that this was the result of syncretism and aimed at attributing certain status to the cure. In this way it became acceptable and was taken by people from different levels of society until it became one of the most highly regarded cures for nervous diseases and *susto* (or “fright,” a cultural disease).³ In Mexico, the use of medicinal plants is a daily practice, regardless of religion, beliefs or social stratum. Proof enough of this can be found just by visiting the mar-

³ *Susto* is caused by a sudden, strong fright; the patient—whether child or adult—suffers from loss of appetite, insomnia and “sadness.” Children cry through the night and do not wish to be left alone. The cures for *susto* vary. [Editor's Note.]



Close-up of the *toronjil* plant (*Agastache mexicana*).

Photo: Edelmira Linares



Illustration of the *De la Cruz-Badiano Codex*; a remedy for the treatment of epilepsy.

kets of medicinal plants where a great number of species are for sale, both fresh and dried. In only one, the Sonora Market, we collected almost 500 species after working 15 years on gathering and documenting samples of the most common species. The *hierberos* (herb sellers/practitioners) mix the plants on site and recommend remedies according to the illness. Most remedies require several species, which are combined depending on their characteristics and qualities (related to the “cold-hot” gradient) (Linares, Bye and Flores, 1990). For example, the preparations for treating cardiac illnesses are “fresh,” while those for gastrointestinal or respiratory problems are usually “hot.” Knowledge of plants and their prepa-

Photo: Edelmira Linares

rations takes years to acquire, is considered a special gift, and is passed on from one generation to another. The majority of the people who sell medicinal plants have many years experience and work in the family tradition.

In some cases, their name reflects the agricultural activity of their community of origin. For example, for generations people who cultivate *epazote* (*Teloxys ambrosioides*) call themselves *epazoteros*. Unfortunately, modern living, the influence of television, the exodus of peasants to the United States and the limited economic possibilities available in Mexico's countryside have meant that the new generations are not interested in acquiring this age-old wisdom.

We think a new focus is needed for the cultivation of medicinal plants in Mexico. If selected species of social and commercial interest are cultivated organically,



Photo: Robert Bye

The sale of medicinal plants in the Sonora Market, Mexico City.

Mexican peasants with smaller and smaller land holdings would have new economic options. Fostering intensive farming of the most profitable species would produce a better yield. In addition, this kind of farming could place a premium on species which could be dried and sold continuously.

Since the sale of medicinal plants is often difficult and not very prof-

itable, many *hierberos* who collected and grew medicinal plants have decided to look for another line of work. This means that some of today's seller-practitioners lack the traditional knowledge handed down for generations and are forced to seek literature on the topic which can give them reliable information. The desire to know more has led the way for ethnobotanists to be able to document the use of medicinal plants in our country, with the idea that this age-old knowledge should be conserved for the benefit of humanity.

Constant, serious work on the part of several research teams in Mexico has produced very important studies in the last few years, such as the *Atlas de las Plantas de Medicina Tradicional Mexicana* (Atlas of the Plants of Traditional Mexican Medicine), *La Flora Medicinal Indígena de México* (Indigenous Medicinal Flora of Mexico), el *Diccionario Enciclopédico de la Medicina Tradicional Mexicana* (Encyclope-

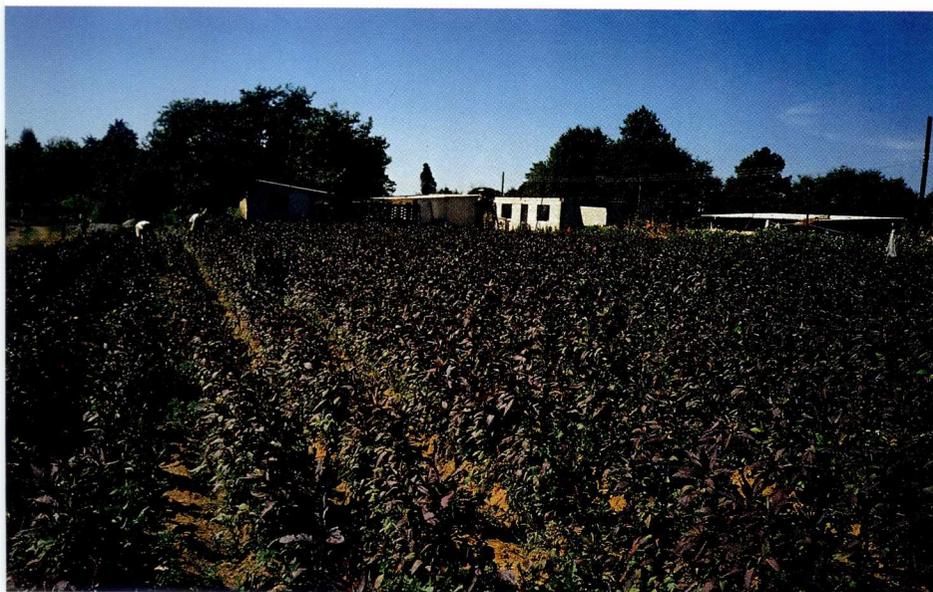


Photo: Robert Bye

Epazote (*Teloxys ambrosioides*) growing in Santiago Mamalhuauca, State of Mexico.

dic Dictionary of Traditional Mexican Medicine) and *La Nueva Bibliografía de la Medicina Tradicional Mexicana* (New Bibliography of Traditional Mexican Medicine), all published by the National Indigenist Institute (INI). Besides these conventional bibliographies, the spread of electronic information has encouraged the Center for the Study of Electronic Technology and Computer Sciences (CETEI) and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) to produce a CD-ROM entitled *Plantas medicinales de México: Usos y remedios tradicionales*.

We hope that these works will certainly encourage the study of medicinal plants and help ensure the preservation of this biological and cultural heritage. 

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Medicinal Plants of Mexico in CD-ROM

Mexico is well known for its extensive herbal tradition. It is estimated that over 5,000 medicinal plants are used by nearly half the Mexican population in herbal cures and treatments.

The CD-ROM *Medicinal Plants of Mexico: Traditional Uses and Remedies*, produced by the National University of Mexico and the Center for the Study of Electronic Technology and Computer Sciences presents many of the most common and representative native and non-native species used in popular Mexican herbal practices. Its primary objective is to document a vast body of knowledge forming an integral part of Mexican culture that, unfortunately, is in danger of disappearing.

Among its main features this work includes: two language options, English and Spanish; a list of plants destined for male or female illnesses, which at the same time separates their use according to the part of the body to be treated (head, chest, abdomen, genitals or legs); the plants' scientific and common names; explanatory texts written by experts in the field and several videos that are part of the "Uses" section.

The use of medicinal plants is presented here from the perspective of preventive medicine and maintaining good health and therefore should not be considered infallible. Their use in moderation is safe, as shown by their widespread consumption by the general public. 





Circular platform with an Aztec sculpture at the center of the room.

THE MEXICAN ROOM *in the* BRITISH MUSEUM

The British Museum opened a permanent room in November 1994 to show its seven million annual visitors a collection of pieces from ancient Mexico. The 200 pieces from six different pre-Columbian cultures are housed in the Mexican Room, located on the ground

floor at the end of the King's Library.

The hall is divided in two. The main space holds pieces from the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Huastec and Aztec cultures that flourished between 2000 B.C. and the sixteenth century A.D., distributed in four different geometric figures. A pyramid holds female Huastec figures; a cylinder, the Aztec pieces; a stele greets the visitor with a serpent of fire; and a metal box, semi-suspended from the ceiling holds the jewels of the collection: ritual objects of turquoise mosaic illuminated with a complex fiber optic

system. The pyramid and cylindrical platforms support the large pieces of the collection, accentuating their scale and expressiveness.

The gallery, separated from the main space by a portico, exhibits five lintels from Yaxchilán, masterpieces of Mayan sculpture, placed on a red stucco wall built with Renaissance techniques.

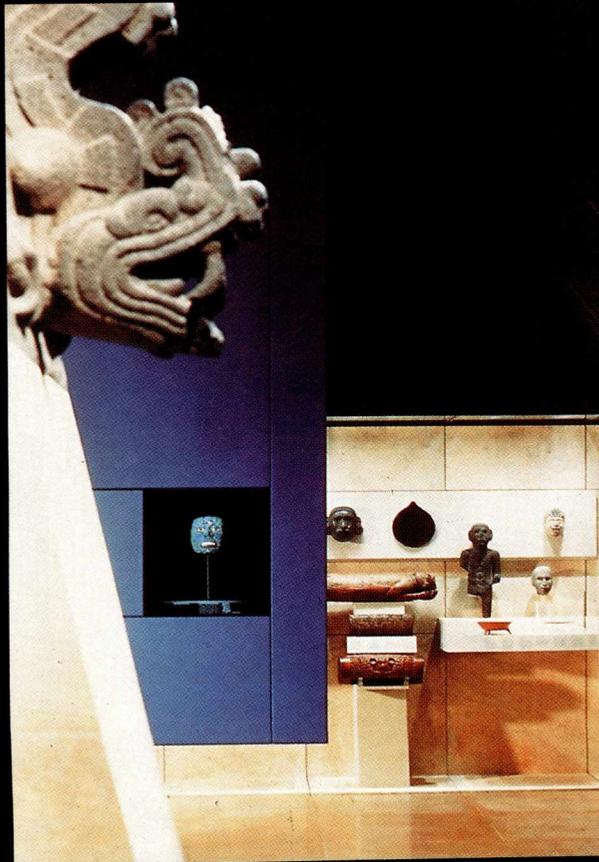
Showcases on the other three sides of the room exhibit pieces which need special security and isolated conditions. Showcase bases, floors and walls are all made from ochre-colored stone, creating visual continuity which opens up the

space. As a whole, this sort of stone sanctuary evokes the spirit of ancient Mesoamerican architecture.

The Mexican Room is the result of the joint efforts of the National Council for Culture and the Arts of Mexico and several Mexican businessmen who funded part of the work. The exhibit was designed by the renowned Mexican architect Teodoro González de León, in collaboration with architect Ernesto Betancourt, the museologist Miguel Cervantes and the British Museum's specialized team of experts, who all worked together to open this window on the wonderful world of ancient Mexico. ❧

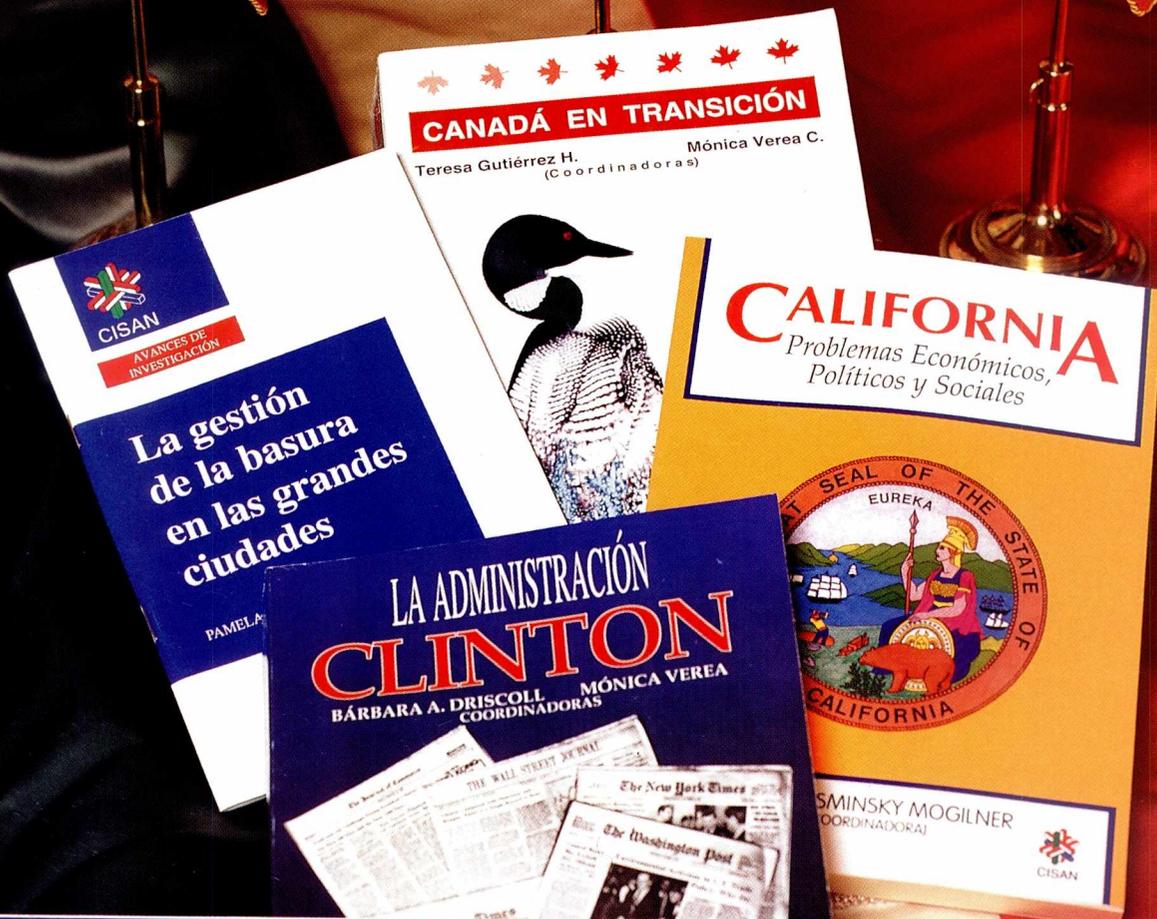
This stone sanctuary evokes the spirit of ancient Mesoamerican architecture.

The right side of the room.



Huastec sculptures on a platform.





CISAN

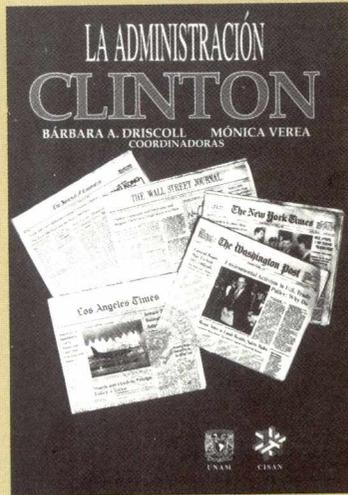
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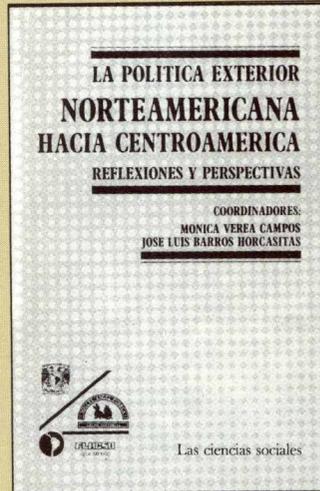
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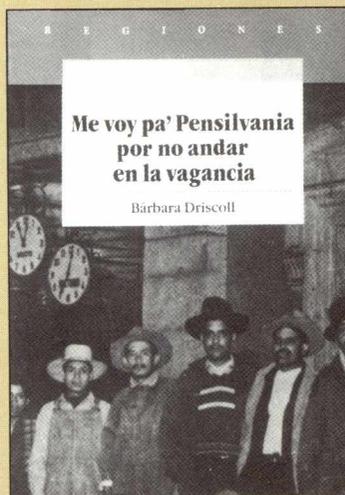
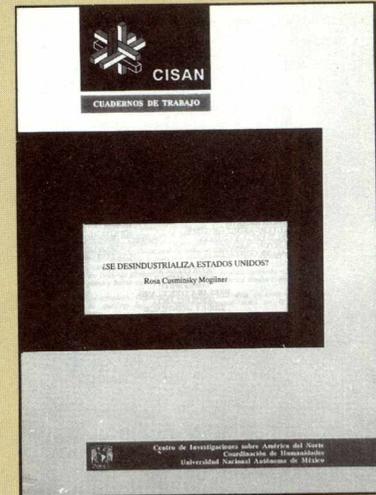
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Mónica Vereá Campos y José Luis Barros Horcasitas, FLACSO, CISEUA-UNAM, Editorial Miguel Angel Porrúa, Serie: Las Ciencias Sociales, 1991, 442 pp.
 This book contains various articles written by North American and Central American specialists regarding the role of the United States in Central America's recent history.



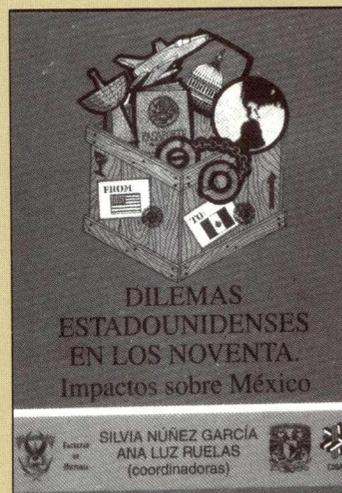
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Rosa Cusminsky Mogilner, Serie: Cuadernos de Trabajo, 1993, 139 pp.
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 This book summarizes current debates on whether U.S. industry has ceased to be competitive.



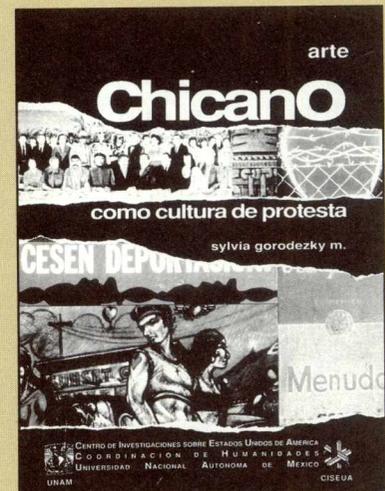
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Dilemas estadounidenses en los noventa. Impactos sobre México
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 Silvia Núñez y Ana Luz Ruelas (coordinadoras)

Reflections on our inevitable integration offers the reader a more horizontal look at current U.S. problems and their impact on Mexico: among others, the crisis of the welfare state, antiimmigrant paranoia, the changeover from a war economy to a more competitive civilian economy.



Arte chicano como cultura de protesta
 Sylvia Gorodezky, 1993, 169 pp.

An incisive analysis of how Chicanos give artistic expression to the effects of the social and political oppression they experience within "mainstream" society. Includes photographs of key murals, sculptures and other works of art.



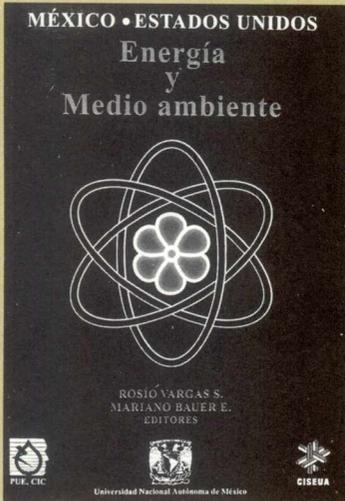
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México-Estados Unidos. Energía y medio ambiente

Rosío Vargas and Mariano Bauer (eds.), 1993, 259 pp.

An overview of Mexican and American environmental legislation as well as its social, political and economic implications in the context of NAFTA. Also analyzes the relation between energy policy and environment in both countries.

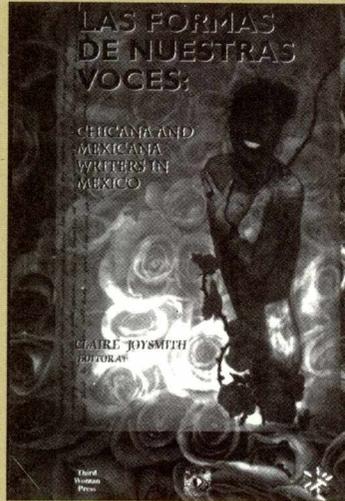


Las formas de nuestras voces. Chicana and Mexicana Writers in Mexico

CISAN/Third Woman Press

México, 1996, 350 pp.
Claire Joysmith (ed.)

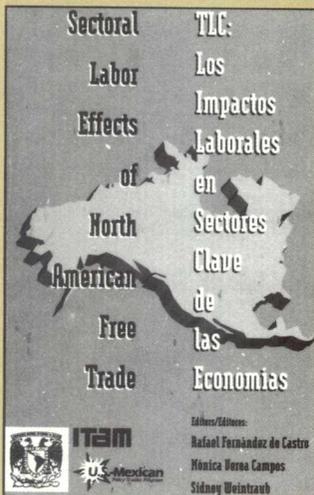
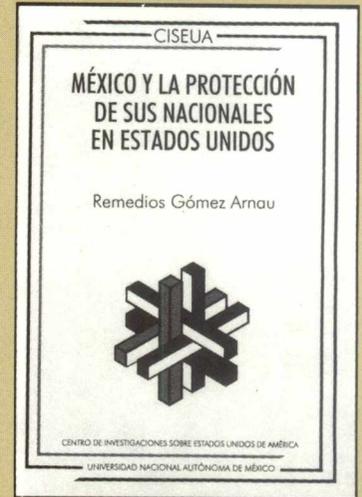
"The chicanas...crossed the 3,000-mile border that separates us from the most powerful country in the world with the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Malinche, the Llorona and Coatlicue on their backs, and they gave them new meaning and an identity they hadn't had before." Elena Poniatowska.



México y la protección de sus nacionales en Estados Unidos

Remedios Gómez Arnau, 1990, 245 pp.

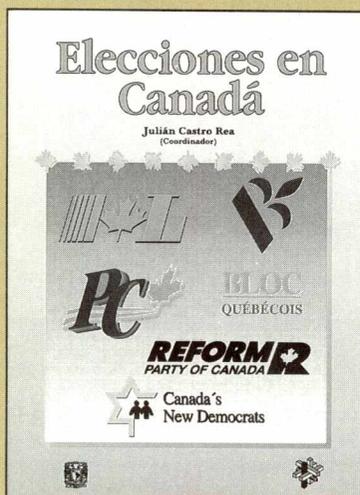
A chronicle of the Mexican government's efforts to protect the rights of Mexican migrant workers in the United States. An impressive study that sheds new light on the issue. Recommended for experts and non-experts in U.S.-Mexican relations and human rights.



Sectoral labor effects of North American Free Trade/TLC: Los impactos laborales en sectores clave de las economías

Rafael Fernández de Castro, Mónica Vereá Campos and Sydney Weintraub (eds.), 1993, 368 pp.

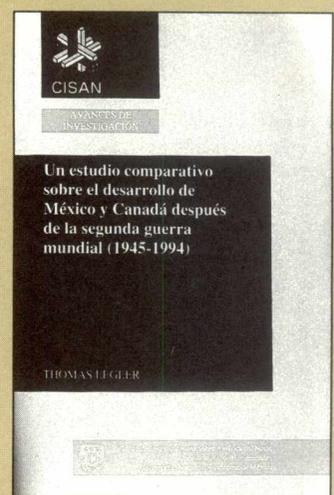
This book examines possible effects on the labor force of the countries involved in NAFTA, particularly in such industrial sectors as autos and textile as well as in agriculture and the *maquiladoras*. Some of NAFTA's legal implications are also reviewed.



Elecciones en Canadá

Julián Castro Rea (coord.), 1995, 152 pp.

On November 4, 1993, Liberal Party leader Jean Chrétien took office as Canada's twentieth prime minister. CISAN asked seven academic and journalistic specialists from Canada's key provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec to analyze the changes expected from the new Liberal government. This publication is one of the few works in Spanish on Canadian politics and repercussions for Mexico.

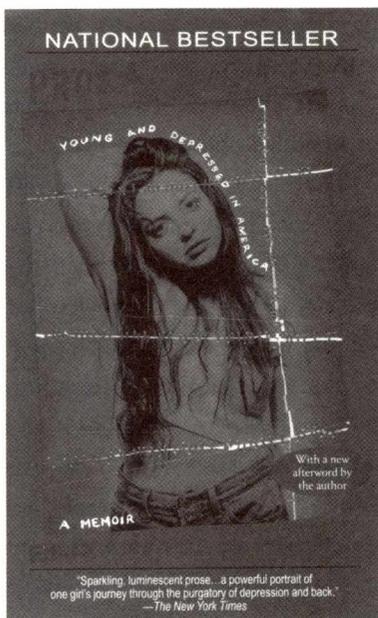


Un estudio comparativo sobre el desarrollo de México y Canadá después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial (1945-1994)

Thomas Legler, 1995, 80 pp.

(42 pp. in Spanish and 38 pp. in English)
A comparison of postwar Mexican and Canadian economic and political models in the international context.

REVIEWS



PROZAC NATION
YOUNG AND DEPRESSED
IN AMERICA

A MEMOIR

Elizabeth Wurtzel

Riverhead Books, New York
1994, 368 pp.

THE CULTURE OF DEPRESSION

It cannot be a coincidence. The afternoon that I finished reading *Prozac Nation*, I turned on the television set just as a documentary about Nirvana was starting. Of course, it centered on the suicide of Kurt Cobain. It was, insofar as

was possible, an homage. After a half an hour, I felt as old as my grandmother. I heard myself saying things that would have felt comfortable coming out of her 80-year-old mouth: “How depressing!” “How awful!” and “How terrible!” were the most frequent. While the performers sang the praises of lithium, their bodies moved slowly and clumsily around the stage. Below, the audience shouted its inexplicable enthusiasm. How can they get excited about it, I asked myself, if the whole show is an anticlimax? My rejection was undoubtedly a reaction to the depression they projected. If I had had to describe somehow what I was watching, I would call it indifference.

Coming back to my point of departure, the non-existent coincidences: A few months ago, *Prozac Nation* was the topic of conversation at every social gathering I went to. The magazine *Viceversa* (January, 1996) even published a fragment in its monographic issue on the Generation X.

Although it is an easy book—that is, neither its language nor its structure is experimental—*Prozac Nation* cannot be read rapidly. To

start with, the cover design is disquieting: the portrait of an adolescent girl with an androgynous body, an innocent face and a lost look, hair disheveled, who covers her head with an arm in a gesture of abandon; the photo has been slashed with a razor blade in eight places and sewn back together with tiny stitches. The epigraph, by Marguerite Duras, is another symbol of what it means to be young and depressed. “Very early in life it was already too late for me.” The title of the introduction says it: the book is the story of a young woman who hates herself and wants to die. What is so interesting, then, about reading 368 pages about the misery suffered by someone with chronic depression? And this is where the circle turns on itself, proving that there are no coincidences. The fact that Wurtzel’s book was a best-seller tells us something about a cultural tendency: the public is attracted by what I would call the culture of depression.

Harvard graduate Elizabeth Wurtzel is a successful journalist. Her life story has sold thousands of copies; it has been translated into several languages. Undoubtedly she is already an icon of what has been called Generation X, just like Kurt Cobain, who, despite being very rich and very famous, shot himself in the head.

Like any autobiography, when you start *Prozac Nation*, you must make a pact with the book: you know that the narrator identifies completely with a real person; the

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aim of memoirs is to relate real events which happened to human beings like you, the reader. Perhaps that is the basis for the incredible impact of *Prozac Nation* on the reading public: when you read, the ghost of the real reference point is always present, as well as the possibility of identification.

Elizabeth Wurtzel's story seems to me to be a sign of the times. A girl born in the era of divorce, her childhood took place on a battlefield where she was the booty. Meanwhile, she, ingrown, cut her arms with razor blades and tried to commit suicide by stuffing herself with antihistamines. Wurtzel's parents were young during the economic boom that culminated in the counterculture of the late 1960s: the collapse of the American dream. The chapters about Elizabeth's adolescence and youth are full of her comings and goings to the psychiatrist: the collapse of the family dream. Despite everything, she lives up to expectations: she finishes high school, she studies at Harvard. Drugs, alcohol. A pathetic pano-

rama because she finds no meaning in her achievements. What is it all for?

As a corollary to this collapsed building of illusions and certainties, it seems logical that at one point in the story she is invited to be on Oprah Winfrey's show on a segment about girls abandoned by their parents. This was long before the book was written and Wurtzel became a famous author; in other words, she was still an ordinary young woman. Another product of the culture of depression. Another sign of the times. Revealing the most intimate suffering before millions of spectators who, from the comfort of their living rooms watch how other human beings sink into the mud, expose themselves like circus freaks, degrade themselves. Television viewers have a catharsis on their sofas and calm their fears thinking that none of that could ever happen to them. However, as in reading an autobiography, the fascination stems from the fact that it just could. Talk show as talisman. But also as the mirror of a society.

And *Prozac Nation*? Is it another mirror? If one of the costs of modernity in First World societies is depression, it cannot be considered otherwise. A mirror, then? Only that? The process is dynamic. The advent of cultural products like *Prozac Nation* or Nirvana's *Lithium* are a response to a real situation: a depressed society whose heroes are the condemned contemporary poets who sing, disenchanted, about

apathy and get a breather in the reign of prozac, the philosophical touchstone of our era. A reflection of U.S. society, then. Wurtzel says, "After all, what is depression if it isn't the most striking, poignant psychic challenge to the American Dream?" Her aim, then, is to call society's attention to the fact that it has not delivered the promised privileges; what is more, it has not even delivered the expectations. Doesn't this sound like the howls of a spoiled child when vexed?

There is no irony in Wurtzel's memoirs. The reader notices no distancing of the narrator from the narration. I read a review that called this the saddest and funniest account of depression around. I found no humor anywhere in this book, and it seems to me that William Styron's *Darkness Visible*,¹ for example, is a much more penetrating treatment of the painful nightmare of living with depression, perhaps because of the superior literary quality of his text. *Prozac Nation* seems unending in its repetition of episodes and passages because they lack the necessary intensity. However, it does not transmit all the darkness of which Styron speaks. It is the same thing with Nirvana. So, even though the problem is socially so important and individually so destructive, you finish reading *Prozac Nation* like any other best seller, with a

¹ William Styron, *Darkness Visible. A Memoir of Madness*, Vintage, New York, 1990. The Spanish-language version has been published in the Espejo de Tinta collection by Editorial Grijalbo.

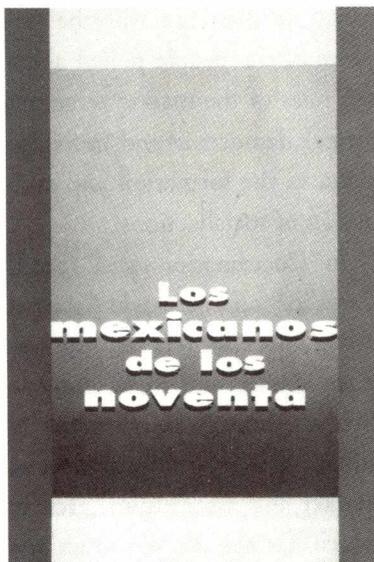
certain feeling of superficiality which does not force the reader to touch bottom. Is this related to that puerility I mentioned before? Yes, but there is also something more. Something surprising and frightening. Wurtzel's book is a cry for protection, an attempt to get a grip on things.

This is perhaps why Wurtzel's book is so successful. And also why Kurt Cobain has become a kind of mythical figure since his suicide. The society which has made them idols longs to bury itself in the safety of traditional values, in "back to basics," and since it cannot find its way there, it submerges itself in infinite sadness, in chronic depression. This is the source of the complete identification with these heroes of their culture.

What is more, I think this is why the conservative discourse has been so effectively reborn, because based on the belief that all times past were better times, solutions come to mind which must be the right ones because they are familiar: in respect for tradition lies security, and therefore, we must not question it.

I said at the outset coincidences do not exist. The depressed are the heroes of today. When prozac is offered as the only panacea to disillusionment, it is too late for illusions. A product of this culture of depression, *Prozac Nation, A Memoir*, is but another example. ❧

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LOS MEXICANOS DE LOS NOVENTA
(Mexicans of the Nineties)
Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales
UNAM, Mexico City
1996, 207 pp.

END-OF-CENTURY MEXICANS

Mexican society has gone through significant changes over the last few years. Suffice it to say that as the end of the millennium approaches, the country has clearly become predominantly urban, its economy has diversified and new forms of social organization and political participation have emerged. Undoubtedly, these transformations have been accompanied by important changes in the way in which Mexicans perceive reality and in the perceptions underlying their judgements and attitudes.

It may be argued, then, that there is a correlation between the transformations in society and individuals' systems of values and attitudes. However, assuming that this correlation is horizontal would negate

the complexity which has permeated Mexico's social development in the last few years. The exploration, then, of just how large an impact the changes in society have had in individuals' perceptions and value judgements was until very recently lacking in Mexican social science.

The six studies presented in *Los mexicanos de los noventa*, therefore, fill a void in the debate and thinking about the changes in Mexican society in the last few years. The essays are the result of the analysis of a national survey designed to determine whether the changes in society, particularly in value systems and attitudes, have a modernizing dynamic or not.

With a review of the main theories about the topic, a comparative outline was set up including three dimensions of the general characteristics of social organization in modern Western countries: a liberal economic model; a political system based on competition in a

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procedural democracy; and the formalization of an individualistic dynamic for action on a societal level. On the basis of this three-component model, a methodological and analytical instrument was constructed to make it possible to examine the manifestations and signs of a complex, heterogeneous social framework. Undoubtedly, one of the major successes of this research is precisely its multidisciplinary focus and methodological rigor.

In theoretical and analytical terms, the model used to evaluate the data is another useful contribution to research into value systems and attitudes. The authors, starting from the premise that judgement systems should be conceived of as a network, manage to surpass the rigid pyramid schema which establish a sort of inverted scale whereby values are consistent and lasting while their expression (opinions) are unstable and specific. By using the logic of networks, judgement systems are understood as a social code and, to that extent, as systems open to the conflictive, complex dynamic of reality. Therefore, it is possible to observe large and small transformations in evaluations, attitudes and opinions without their contradictory nature implying a lack of logical coherence in the perception of reality.

In the first essay, “Modernización” (Modernization), Yolanda Meyenberg explores her topic and the sense of change in Mexican

society, contrasting it with the attitudes of the people polled about the rules of the market economy, formal democracy and individualism in the formation and evaluation of social actions.

In “Coordinación social” (Social Coordination), Fernando Castaños delves into the relationship between change and social order in Mexico through four models of coordination: community, state, market and associations, each of which has specific dynamics and rules which structure the partici-

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pants, define what is pertinent and legitimate and establish a series of rewards for playing by the rules of the game.

“La esfera de lo político” (The Political Sphere) looks at judgements and attitudes regarding the political system. The author emphasizes the contradictory perceptions about the functions of public insti-

tutions and the growing role played in the public’s judgements by expectations of participation.

In “Cultura” (Culture), Julia Isabel Flores explores cultural change. Her analysis shows the paradox of tradition and modernity in Mexico and, more than pointing to ambiguities in the culture, speaks to irregular adaptation patterns according to class, identities, beliefs and traditions.

“Comunicación” (Communication), by Fernando Castaños, establishes the degrees of correlation between communications systems and the lexicons of different social groups. From there, he suggests the existence of a series of contradictions, tendencies and potential limits to people’s changes in attitude. Particularly noteworthy is the point he makes about the need to see change as subject to informational and discussion processes, and how, therefore, it depends on the concurrence of multiple communications systems and on the growth in credibility, the discussion of ideas and their being taken on board by the public.

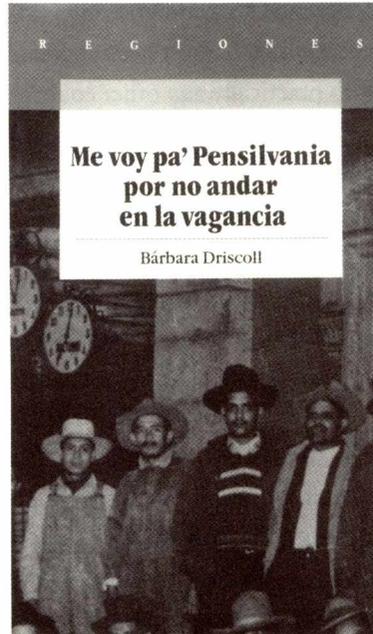
In the last essay, “Modernización y políticas públicas” (Modernization and Public Policy), Ulises Beltrán explores the basis for consensus or disagreement in the transformation of the Mexican state during the Salinas de Gortari administration. He collates this with an analytical index of modernization to establish just what correlation exists between the changes in the country and the assumption

of new values and attitudes as modern.

An important conclusion can be reached from the analyses and abundant statistics in each chapter: Mexicans of and in the 1990s have significantly changed their values and attitudes. They have, very simply, changed their way of perceiving themselves as active members of society. To this extent, while not all the changes have been made at the same pace, there is a tendency to take on the values and patterns of the so-called modernization as a key part of the ways [people] integrate themselves into society.

Mexico's so-called modernization can be evaluated on different levels: it is much more prevalent in the political sphere than in the economy; it can be seen in the plurality of codes available in society and in the complexity of personal codes; it is a constitutional part of the paradox of community practices combined with processes of individualization. In sum, it is a complex process for responding to end-of-century Mexican society's heterogeneity. Understanding this and the different ways of interpreting it are the undeniable merit of the authors of this research. 

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ME VOY PA' PENSILVANIA POR NO
ANDAR EN LA VAGANCIA.

LOS FERROCARRILEROS
MEXICANOS EN ESTADOS UNIDOS
DURANTE LA SEGUNDA
GUERRA MUNDIAL
(Me voy pa' Pensilvania por no andar
en la vagancia

Mexican Railroad Workers in
the United States During
World War II)

Barbara Driscoll

*Trans. Lauro Medina**

CISAN-CONACULTA, Mexico City
1996, 278 pp.

ON THE TRACKS OF MIGRATION AND COOPERATION

On the agenda of Mexico-U.S. relations, immigration —particularly undocumented immigrants— is a priority, second in importance only to drug trafficking.

*The English manuscript has not yet been published.

It is common knowledge that Mexican immigrants find jobs mainly in agriculture, but rarely have the cases of those employed in other areas been documented. This book looks at a little-known example: the railroad bracero program promoted by the Mexican and United States governments during World War II.

To understand more recent migration, it is important to take into consideration the agricultural bracero program implemented by the governments of both countries and in effect until 1964. What few people know is that the railroad bracero program was more successful than its agricultural counterpart.

Barbara Driscoll's wide-ranging historical research analyzes the origins, functioning and close of the railroad bracero program and its impact on bilateral relations. Driscoll maintains that while the agricultural bracero program was the direct precedent for the railroad program and lasted longer, the latter was much more successful than the former for several reasons. For example, the railroad companies incurred more legal responsibilities regarding workers than agricultural employers did. Also, the railroads had to bond each prospective worker, while this requirement had already been eliminated in the case of agricultural laborers.

One of the author's most interesting hypotheses is that the railroad bracero program was binational; both governments collab-

orated to reach a workable agreement. This is why it is important to consider the success of this program in future Mexico-U.S. relations: under certain circumstances—in this case the outbreak of war—a temporary work program involving specific industries (like the railroads) can be implemented. The railroad bracero program eventually became autonomous, with its own importance outside the agricultural program, and declined at the end of World War II since one of its main features was to supply Mexican labor during the emergency.

Another aspect which should be taken into account in the framework of the railroad bracero program is the active role Mexico played in

designing U.S. immigration policy, a role which has not been repeated with practically any other country.

The railroad bracero program shows that Mexican immigrants have worked significantly in non-agricultural sectors of the U.S. economy and that historically, it is possible to have a bilateral focus on immigration.

The book also underlines the role of the strong U.S. railroad worker unions, which were anxious to defend their labor market since, in the last analysis, at the center of the immigration program is the question of jobs and the labor supply. The impact of the railroad bracero program on the economies of both countries, though difficult to calculate, is undeniable.

The author's impressive use of great numbers of reference sources testifies to the academic rigor of the research that went into writing this book. Her use of primary sources (archival documents) from both sides of the border and in several cities, in addition to a broad, up-to-date bibliography, is outstanding.

Barbara Driscoll's study opens up areas of discussion not only about the railroad bracero program as such, but it also brings out this fundamental—and little known—precedent of Mexico-U.S. relations regarding immigration. **W**

Dolores Latapí Ortega
Head of Publishing
 CISAN, UNAM



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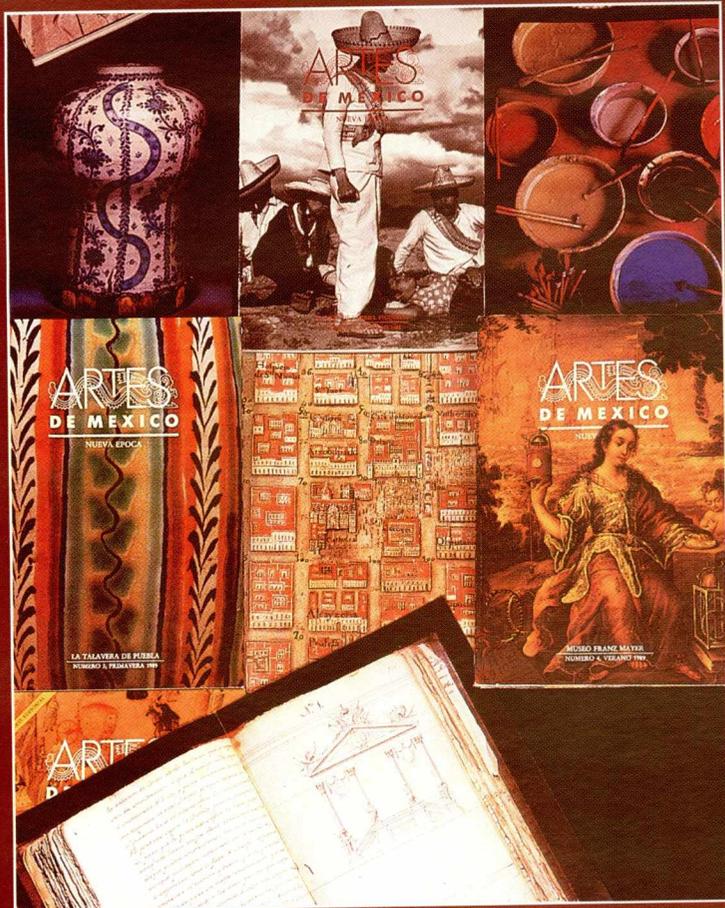
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